

Egyptian military wins in rigged referendum

BY JEFF MACKLER

Egypt's Supreme Electoral Committee hailed the two-day, Jan. 14-15, vote on the military's proposed new constitution. They were not embarrassed to report that the vote was 98 percent in favor, with some 39 percent of the electorate participating. This was as compared to, they stressed, the 33 percent who participated in the 2011 vote that had approved the proposed constitution of the now deposed Muslim Brotherhood (MB) President Mohammed Morsi.

In Egypt today, numbers are important, as when the leader of the July 3, 2013, coup, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the expected candidate and winner in the upcoming presidential elections, insisted that some 17 million people had rallied in Cairo to demand Morsi's resignation. The "people's general" and Minister of Defense, Sisi, readily complied with the demand, repeatedly emphasizing that there were more people in the streets on June 30 calling for Morsi's resignation than had voted to elect Morsi a year earlier.

The fact that Sisi's numbers were inflated at least 17-fold mattered little to this self-declared democrat, who proceeded in the weeks following his coup to slaughter in Tahrir Square and in house-to-house searches, some 6000 members of Egypt's largest political/religious grouping, the 10-million-member Muslim Brotherhood (MB). His objective was to justify his bloody coup to the world in mathematical terms while no one was allowed to confirm the precise number of his victims.

Having outlawed and demonized the Muslim Brotherhood—seizing its property, banning its meetings, and arresting virtually all its leaders—Sisi, to the tragic cheers of perhaps a majority of Egypt's "democratic" and pro-capitalist "liberal left," not to mention elements of the "anti-capitalist left," extended the ban to all would-be oppositionists. Trade unionists, student youth, intellectuals, and small socialist currents who dared to issue the most mild of statements protesting Sisi's decrees were similarly hounded, beaten, arrested, and jailed.

"The near unanimity of the vote," said the Jan. 18 *New York Times*, "was plausible because the government thoroughly suppressed any opposition to the new charter [constitution]. A campaign of arrests and mass shootings has crippled the Brotherhood, the main opposition group, which was formally outlawed



(Above) Cairo plain-clothes police officer detains a supporter of ex-President Morsi during Jan. 26 celebration of 2011 revolt.

three weeks ago, and it had called for a boycott of the plebiscite. Almost no critics of the charter were able to express their views in the news media or on the streets. And several activists were arrested just for hanging signs urging a 'no' vote."

Nevertheless, the U.S. Congress has proceeded with plans to grant Egypt's military dictatorship its usual annual military aid package to the tune of \$1.3 billion, but not before Secretary of State John Kerry issued yet another pronouncement encouraging the dictatorship, after first electing Sisi, to later include members of the MB. Sisi's anticipated two-round election system is designed to allow him to first consolidate power by decree and then to organize elections with an essentially pre-determined result.

Kerry gently chided the bloody July 3 coup-makers when they arrested Morsi, "the elected president," and urged that Sisi's bloodbath be restrained a bit. Pressing the new dictators to open negotiations with the deposed president to find a formula wherein a hopefully compliant MB would exchange their prison cells for token posts in a U.S.-facilitated new regime was then a priority U.S. objective.

Ukraine: What's at stake?

See page 2.



But this U.S. "diplomacy" failed to convince the MB leaders to negotiate any agreement unless and until they were released from prison. Sisi, meanwhile, had his ego inflated as he presented himself as a liberator to cheering crowds, who tragically and in significant numbers, accepted his carefully crafted appeal as if he were the reincarnation of Gamel Abdel Nasser, Egypt's left nationalist leader of the 1954 anti-colonialist

revolution upsurge. Sisi turned a deaf ear to Kerry and company, knowing full well that the U.S. had no better ally in the region than Egypt's military, whose reach extends to controlling an estimated 40 percent of the Egyptian economy.

In the twisted view of imperialism's top policymakers today, the "mistakes

(continued on page 9)

**INSIDE
SOCIALIST
ACTION**

Ukraine — 2
Lynne Stewart — 3
Kshama Sawant — 4

Boeing & IAM — 5
Obama / Snowden — 6
Canada news — 8

Aboriginal rights — 10
Turkey / Kazakhstan — 11
World War I — 12

Ukraine protests: What's at stake?



Alexie Furman / European Pressphoto Agency

By NICK KEYS

The protests that have rocked Ukraine are making worldwide headlines. The largest protests began in December and were attended by anywhere between 250,000 and 300,000 people.

The initial protests were much smaller and were a response to Ukraine's unexpected refusal to sign an association agreement with the European Union. The EU and the Ukraine had been negotiating the terms of their agreement for nearly a decade, so it came as a bit of a shock to those in the Ukrainian bourgeoisie whose interests are, for the moment, more closely aligned with the EU. Since the initial protests, the manifesta-

tions have had ebbs and flows, and the demands have changed with time.

The catalyst to the movement was when the very first and small protests were met with police brutality. This gave the movement a decided jolt. It illustrates again that the agents of capitalism fail to learn that brutality against peaceful protesters always inflames the passion of a people's cause. In this case, it helped ignite the biggest protests since the "Orange Revolution" of 2004. However, instead of protesting electoral fraud, the Ukrainian people were voicing their rejection of police brutality and the continued economic relationship with Russia.

The Ukrainian government was acting well within its power by rejecting

the agreement. After all, the EU had demanded a number of changes in Ukrainian economic and political policy, and the Yanukovich government righteously refused.

The most odious part of the agreement was a loan from the EU, contingent upon meeting various demands of the International Monetary Fund. Among its demands was a restructuring of its economy by currency devaluation, government austerity, the freezing of wages, and a rise in oil and natural gas prices.

In short, it was more "bitter medicine" to a country that is already experiencing economic and social contraction. This economic issue was to temporarily take the back seat as the government continued to make missteps.

The latest round of protests is a response to "anti-protest" laws that were passed on Jan. 16. These laws place a ban on putting up structures, making amplified speeches, and "slandering" public officials. This round was perhaps the most militant. Protesters briefly occupied the Ministry of Justice, although they left after the government threatened to impose a state of emergency. Also, whereas early protests were focused in Kiev, newer protests have been reported in regional capitals as well.

In a stunning about-face, the Ukrainian government agreed to repeal the new "anti-protest" laws and offer amnesty to protesters who had occupied the Ministry of Justice. The government of Viktor Yanukovich even went so far as to offer the opposition leader, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, the position of Prime Minister, which he promptly rejected. In a final concession, the Ukrainian prime minister has resigned, and with him the parliament. It is a testament once again to the power of mass movements and

people mobilizing in the streets!

But one must ask the crucial question for any protest movement: who are its actors and principal instigators? And who is actually attending these protests?

While it is impossible to know the exact class composition of these protests, we can make an educated guess given the attendance of certain parties. Oil and gas magnate and billionaire Evgenia Tymoshenko, father of jailed former Prime Minister Yulya Tymoshenko, far-right groups, patriarchs of the Orthodox church, and Ukraine's neo-Nazi Svoboda (Freedom) Party were present.

In later protests, John McCain, that rejected and forgotten pariah of the Republican Party, was present to deliver his message, "We are here to support your just cause, the sovereign right of Ukraine to determine its own destiny freely and independently." Never mind that the Yanukovich government was elected in free elections, and determining its economic policy is well within its mandate; such hypocrisies clearly don't bother the agents of imperialism. Cameo appearances aside, the leading political groups in the protest movement clearly point to a reactionary character.

However, we can also assume that given the sheer amount of protesters, the working class is certainly represented. The right wing is exploiting working-class anger, which is often the case in economically depressed areas. The Ukraine is one of Europe's poorest countries and has all the accompanying social indices, such as high infant mortality rate.

Furthermore, due to ongoing budget crises, the Ukrainian government canceled unemployment benefits in June 2013. The resulting social morass is definitely a cause for concern and well worth protesting. Moreover, the history of fascism teaches us that when there is a lack of revolutionary leadership during social upheaval, reactionary groups happily fill the void and exploit the working class.

Although the Ukrainian government initially accepted an economic lifeline from Russia to the tune of \$15 billion and an agreement to cut the price of natural gas, the Russian government has since suspended their agreement until the Ukraine is able to convene a new parliament. In other words, it wants to make sure it has a government that will continue to be preferential to the Kremlin.

Whether the pro-EU or pro-Russian wings of the bourgeois class come to the fore in Ukraine, the subjugation of the working class will continue. The choice at this point essentially boils down to either a government that will sell out to Russian oligarchs or one that will sell out to EU oligarchs; both are worthless for the working class. The Ukrainian working class needs organizations that represent it independently of its own national bourgeoisie and EU and Russian influence.

'Russification' in Ukraine

The Ukrainian people have long suffered under what Lenin referred to as the "Great Chauvinism" of Russia. They were subjected to centuries of "Russification" policies by the Romanov Tsars. Lenin and the Bolsheviks, on the other hand, offered the right to full self-determination to all oppressed nationalities within the Empire—including separation and independence if they chose.

The October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution quickly spread to the working class of the Ukraine. A long struggle ensued with the reactionary bourgeois government, which invited the German army to occupy the region and put down the revolution. Following the defeat of Germany, civil

war raged in the Ukraine for four more years, as the Red Army fought French, Polish, and various White reactionary armies.

After the Soviet victory in 1921, Lenin pushed for a policy that would promote Ukrainian national rights, culture, and language. However, Stalin brought Ukraine firmly back into the Russian "sphere of influence" shortly thereafter, and there it has remained.

Ukraine suffered some of the worst depravity of those years, including the "Holodomor" famine, which claimed the lives of millions of Ukrainians. This storied history helps contextualize why an economic pact with Russia is unsavory to so many Ukrainian people. ■

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!



Tony Savino / Socialist Action



Marty Goodman / Socialist Action

(Above) Lynne Stewart arrives at La Guardia airport on Jan. 1, after release from prison.
(Left) Lynne's husband, Ralph Poynter, speaks at rally last year demanding her freedom.

The Sentencing of Lynne Stewart

By MICHAEL STEVEN SMITH

On Dec. 31, Federal Judge John Koeltl ordered that Lynne Stewart be granted compassionate release from prison, citing her metastasized breast cancer. This victory followed many months of protests, legal action, and letters from around the world demanding her release. Lynne arrived home on Jan. 1.

Lynne Stewart is a friend. She used to practice law in New York City. I still do. I was in the courtroom with my wife Debby the afternoon of July 15, 2010, for her resentencing. Judge John Koeltl buried her alive.

We should have seen it coming when he told her to take all the time she needed at the start when she spoke before the sentence was read. It didn't matter what she said. He had already written his decision, which he read out loud to a courtroom packed with supporters. It was well crafted. Bulletproof on appeal. He is smart and cautious.

After about an hour into his pronouncement, he came to the buried alive part. He prefaced it by citing the unprecedented 400 letters of support people had sent him, all of which he said he read. He noted Lynne's three decades of service to the poor and the outcast. He stressed that she is a 70-year-old breast cancer survivor with high blood pressure and other serious health problems. And then he laid it on her: 120 months. Everyone in the courthouse divided 120 by 12.

He had given her a death sentence, we all thought. She'll never get out. He almost quadrupled the 28-month sentence he had originally pronounced. She had told him that 28 months was a horizon, that she had hope. But no more.

Lynne's granddaughter gasped. Then started sobbing. She kept crying even as Judge John Koeltl kept reading. And reading. And reading. It was awful. The sentence was pitiless and cruel. How to understand it? Lynne's lawyer Jill

Shellow Levine rose after the judge finished. She asked him why. He was candid. He was told to do it by his supervisors, the judges on the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

This court is an institution of the elite. It is considered the second highest court in America next to the Supreme Court because it presides over the financial center of the empire, not its capital, that is in D.C., but its real capital.

This court makes policy and Lynne Stewart was to be made an example of in "the war against terrorism" just as a half a century before, in the same court, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were condemned to death in the war against communism, told that they had caused the deaths of 50,000 U.S. soldiers in the Korean War, and found guilty of the ridiculous charge of "stealing the secret" of the atomic bomb, when there was no secret, it was only a matter of technology. The sentencing Judge Kaufman knew they would leave behind two orphan children, Robert and Michael, ages six and three. In 1947 George Kennan, the ideological father of the cold war, wrote that the United States had but six percent of the world's population and 50 percent of its wealth. The problem was to keep it.

Anti-communism served as the ideological cover the U.S. ruling classes used. But communism ceased to exist after capitalism was restored in the Soviet Union in 1991. A new ideological cover has been constructed in the wake of the Sept. 11 criminal attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon: the War against Terror.

Nationalist opposition to U.S. economic and foreign policy in parts of the Arab world is no longer led by communists but by fundamentalist Muslims. Lynne Stewart represented one of them, Sheik Abdel Rahman, who was the leading oppositionist to the U.S.-sponsored Mubarak dictatorship in Egypt, which gets more money from America than any other country in the world except Israel.

In 1993, at the behest of the Egyptian government, Sheik Rahman was criminally indicted and later convicted of the

crime of "sedition" for suggesting to a government informer that rather than blow up New York City landmarks he choose "a military target." It was on the occasion of a post-conviction prison visit that Lynne helped her client. She released his statement to Reuters press service announcing his withdrawal of support for a ceasefire between his group and the Egyptian government. This was in violation of a Special Administrative Measure (SAMs) that Lynne had agreed to with the U.S. Government. She wasn't supposed to be a medium for communication between her client and the outside world.

She should have challenged the constitutionality of the SAMs, she now realizes, and not just have violated them. She wasn't prosecuted for what she did, not under the Clinton administration, nor during the first years of George W. Bush. Then came 9-11. Bush's Attorney General John Ashcroft flew into New York City in 2003 and announced Lynne's indictment on the David Letterman show. The crime? A novel one. Conspiracy to provide material aid to a terrorist organization. What was the material aid? Her client. When Ashcroft did that, as the nation's highest law enforcement officer, he committed an ethical violation for which any other attorney would have been sanctioned.

He made sure that from the very beginning of her ordeal Lynne Stewart never had a chance. Not with the level of fear the government was able to generate and the scare they put into her jury. In 2006 she was convicted and sentenced. The maximum was 30 years, but thanks to the superb legal work of National Lawyers Guild attorneys Elizabeth Fink and Sarah Kunstler and the outpouring of public support Judge Koeltl gave her 28 months. The government appealed the sentence to their U.S. Court of Appeals. Game over. The selective prosecution of Lynne Stewart was accomplished.

Judge John Walker, George W. Bush's first cousin, sits on that court. His family made their fortune selling munitions during World War I. He wrote that the 28 months was "shockingly low."

Judge Koeltl was given his orders. The seemingly kindly boyish-looking jurist about whom it was said that he walks to work and looks after an elderly mother—not exactly a sadistic old lady killer—then reversed himself and on the same evidence nearly quadrupled the sentence, putting a 70-year-old grandmother on chemotherapy away for 10 years and two years' probation after that for good measure.

This is much more than meanness. It is ideology. ■

Michael Steven Smith is the co-host of the WBAI radio show *Law and Disorder* and sits on the Board of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

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Kshama Sawant's inauguration speech



By KSHAMA SAWANT

We reprint below the inauguration speech of Socialist Alternative member Kshama Sawant, who was elected Seattle's first socialist city council member in almost a century. Socialist Action hails her election as a victory for the entire socialist movement.

My brothers and sisters, thank you for your presence here today.

This city has made glittering fortunes for the super wealthy and for the major corporations that dominate Seattle's landscape. At the same time, the lives of working people, the unemployed and the poor grow more difficult by the day. The cost of housing skyrockets, and education and healthcare become inaccessible.

This is not unique to Seattle. Shamefully, in this, the richest country in human history, 50 million of our people—one in six—live in poverty. Around the world, billions do not have access to clean water and basic sanitation and children die every day from malnutrition. This is the reality of international capitalism. This is the product of the gigantic casino of speculation created by the highway robbers on Wall Street. In this system the market is God, and everything is sacrificed on the altar of profit. Capitalism has failed the 99%.

Despite recent talk of economic growth, it has only been a recovery for the richest 1%, while the rest of us are falling ever farther behind.

In our country, Democratic and Republican politicians alike primarily serve the interests of big business. A completely dysfunctional Congress DOES manage to agree on one thing—regular increases in their already bloated salaries—yet at the same time allows the federal minimum wage to stagnate and fall farther and farther behind inflation.

We have the obscene spectacle of the average corporate CEO getting seven thousand dollars an hour, while the lowest-paid workers are called presumptuous in their demand for just fifteen.

To begin to change all of this, we need organized mass

movements of workers and young people, relying on their own independent strength. That is how we won unions, civil rights and LGBTQ rights.

Again, throughout the length and breadth of this land, working people are mobilizing for a decent and dignified life for themselves and their children. Look at the fast food workers movement, the campaigns of Walmart workers, and the heroic activism to stop the Keystone XL pipeline!

Right here in SeaTac, we have just witnessed the tremendous and victorious campaign for fifteen dollars an hour. At the same time, in Lorain County, Ohio, twenty-four candidates ran, not as Democrats or Republicans, but as 'Independent Labor' and were elected to their City Councils.

I will do my utmost to represent the disenfranchised and the excluded, the poor and the oppressed—by fighting for a \$15/hour minimum wage, affordable housing, and taxing the super-rich for a massive expansion of public transit and education. But my voice will be heard by those in power only if workers themselves shout their demands from the rooftops and organize en masse.

My colleagues and I in Socialist Alternative will stand shoulder to shoulder with all those who want to fight for a better world. But working people need a new political party, a mass organization of the working class, run by—and accountable to—themselves. A party that will struggle and campaign in their interest, and that will boldly advocate for alternatives to this crisis-ridden system.

Here in Seattle, political pundits are asking about me: will she compromise? Can she work with others? Of course, I will meet and discuss with representatives of the establishment. But when I do, I will bring the needs and aspirations of working-class people to every table

Sawant on Obama

Following President Obama's State of the Union Address, on Jan. 28, Kshama Sawant, the newly elected socialist city council member in Seattle, gave her response. It can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh7LBtrBq1g>.

Throughout her talk, Sawant underscored the hypocrisy of Obama's new populist rhetoric. She began by noting that although Obama made "deepening inequality" a major theme of his speech, the growth of poverty has become a hallmark of his own presidency. Some 95 percent of the gains in income during the so-called economic recovery, she stated, have gone to the wealthiest 1 percent.

"Obama's focus on income inequality is an admission of the failure of his own policies to rectify such inequality," said Sawant. And this admission "has been forced by outrage over the widening gulf between the super-rich and those of us who are working to create the wealth of this society."

More specifically, she said, this admission has been forced by the rallies and pickets of fast-food workers and low-wage workers demanding a minimum wage of \$15 an hour. These protests, she stressed, are the only reason that politicians are now discussing the issue. However, Obama's call for a minimum wage of \$10.10 an hour, or \$20,000 a year "for those who are lucky to have a full-time job, is not a ticket out of poverty for working families."

Sawant pointed out that under Obama "while the criminals of Wall Street are bailed out, courageous whistleblowers like Edward Snowden are hunted down, and the unconstitutional acts that he exposed are allowed to continue." Also, "Obama claims to be ending two wars, while he continues to intensify a brutal campaign of drones in multiple countries, killing hundreds of innocent civilians, to say nothing of U.S. soldiers returning home with permanent medical conditions and declining benefits." Obama's broken website, she said, "is a symbol of the broken hopes of millions who believed his promises for affordable health care."

"Obama says that climate change is a fact," Sawant noted. "Here's another fact: climate change is getting worse and worse on his watch. There has been a massive increase in incredibly destructive practices like the use of coal and fracking." Leadership against the XL Pipeline, she said, has not come from him and Congress but by courageous protesters in the streets.

The socialist council member also pointed out that Obama shouts, "Fix the immigration system!" while "he is the president with the record number of deportations."

"My brothers and sisters," Sawant concluded, "these problems are not new, and they are not an accident. Working people have faced nearly four decades of wage stagnation and rising income inequality. ... Four decades that show that neither party [Republicans or Democrats] is capable of solving these problems and that they fundamentally represent the same interests—the interests of the super-wealthy and big corporations."

"We will make progress only on the basis of a fundamental and systematic change. We need a break from the policies of Wall Street and corporate America. We need a break from capitalism. It has failed the 99 percent. ... We need our own political party, independent of big business and independent of the parties that serve big business." ■

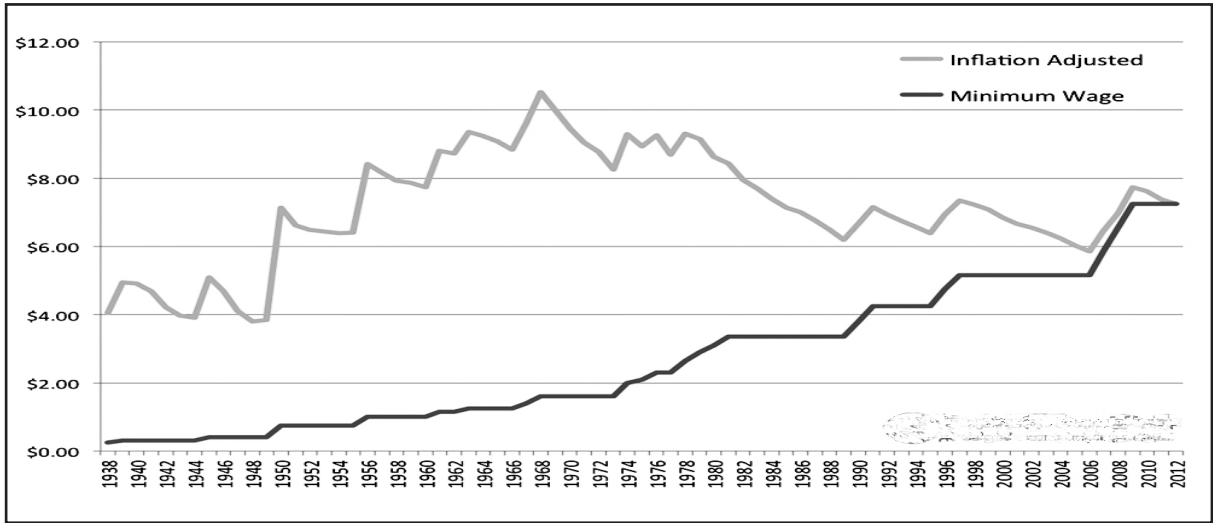
I sit at, no matter who is seated across from me. And let me make one thing absolutely clear: There will be no backroom deals with corporations or their political servants. There will be no rotten sell-out of the people I represent.

I wear the badge of socialist with honor. To the nearly hundred thousand who voted for me, and to the hundreds of you who worked tirelessly on our campaign, I thank you. Let us continue.

The election of a socialist to the Council of a major city in the heartland of global capitalism has made waves around the world. We know because we have received messages of support from Europe, Latin America, Africa, and from Asia. Those struggling for change have told us they have been inspired by our victory.

To all those prepared to resist the agenda of big business—in Seattle and nationwide—I appeal to you: get organized. Join with us in building a mass movement for economic and social justice, for democratic socialist change, whereby the resources of society can be harnessed, not for the greed of a small minority but for the benefit of all people. Solidarity. ■

Upper line in graph (left) shows that U.S. minimum wage, when adjusted for inflation, has drastically declined since high point of 1960s.



By ANN MONTAGUE

In November, the International Association Of Machinists (IAM) District Lodge 751 showed the labor movement what a fightback looks like. The machinists organized, rallied, and received solidarity for their struggle against Boeing from unions throughout the Seattle area. Boeing wanted major concessions in the midst of their current contract and used threats to leave Washington and build the 777X in another state.

Boeing's demands for big concessions on pension and health benefits started only days after Washington's Democratic Governor Jay Inslee signed the biggest state tax break in history into law—a package that will give Boeing up to \$8.7 billion in benefits through 2040.

The union called their bluff and rejected Boeing's proposal 67% to 33%. Union members across the country took heart in the machinists' victory. They are a union that has gone on strike five times, and Boeing was now coercing their members to accept concessions that included ending their defined benefit pensions. Since the current contract had not yet elapsed when this threat took place, the workers could not legally strike.

After the machinists had rejected the concessions, Boeing then commenced a high-profile cross-country jaunt, meeting with local politicians in other states concerning deals to move operations to their areas. Armed with a renewed threat to relocate, they then came back to Seattle with another proposal for the machinists. The local leadership rejected the new offer, stating that it was not substantially different than the one they had just rejected. Thomas Wroblewski, president of Machinists Union District Lodge 751, said, "Because of the massive takeaways, the union is adamantly recommending members reject this offer." (Wroblewski has resigned effective Jan. 31 for health reasons, stating that he has been in the hospital twice in the last couple of months for "stress.")

District 751's leaders opposed Boeing's demand that the machinists approve a deal that would freeze their pensions in favor of less generous, riskier 401(k) plans, and eliminate pensions for new hires. These leaders also voiced dismay that the deal would increase out-of-pocket health spending (by as much as \$4000 over 2011 levels over the life of the contract), and that it would include raises of merely 1 percent every other year.

But in December, the IAM International leadership stepped in and forced the local to hold another vote. They scheduled the vote for Friday, Jan. 3, before many members had returned from vacations during the holiday plant shutdown. Many machinists also say they were not being given enough time to study and discuss the revised proposal. The new vote was announced four days before Christmas. It passed 51% to 49%. The revised contract will ban workers from striking until 2024. To sweeten the taste of the concessions they demanded, the company will give each worker a "bonus" of \$10,000 later this month, and another \$5000 in 2020.

Jim Levitt, a 35-year machinist at Boeing, described the voting procedure in Everett, Wash., the location of the largest airplane assembly plant in the world:

Boeing gets concessions from Machinists in Seattle



"Members needed an eligibility card, sent to them by mail, to obtain a ballot to vote on the contract. A huge number did not receive the card in time. They thus needed to obtain a 'good standing' card, requiring a stop at the front desk in the union hall. Problem: only two or three office employees were available at the Everett hall. There are only two or three computers for them to use to check the necessary rosters in any case. Result: thousands of union members spent two hours or more waiting in line out in the cold outside the union hall. I'm astonished there wasn't an explosion."

Jim Bearden, a spokesperson for IAM District Lodge 751, told the media that Boeing production workers "faced tremendous pressure from every source imaginable. The politicians and the media, and others, who truly didn't have a right to get into our business, were aligned against us and did their best to influence our folks' votes."

Connie Kelliher, the IAM District 751 director of communications, commented that one-third of the workers were on vacation when the vote was called. Many members were still on vacation the day of the vote. Less than half the members voted, and many are calling for a revote or a recount.

She noted that by forcing a second vote the International gave Boeing time to start their campaign

against the machinists. Starting from November, after the first vote was taken, they did a major campaign including round-the-clock radio ads telling machinists they would lose their jobs and be responsible for the financial ruin for the state.

Thousands of flyers flooded the factories in the days right before the vote. And because there is a contract in place for the next two years, the right to strike was taken away if there was a "no" vote. "We did not have that weapon," Kelliher stated.

The request for the revote has to go to the International to decide, and they are the ones who chose the date in the first place.

Boeing executives chose to remain silent the day after the Machinists' vote. But the *Seattle Times* stated that the top officials from the IAM National Headquarters who were in Gov. Jay Inslee's office were "almost giddy." "It's going to be sunny in Seattle for another 40 or 50 years," gushed Rich Michalski, who represented the International Association of Machinists (IAM) national headquarters in the 777X negotiations.

"Boeing is going to be here forever now. It's all about being able to compete with the rest of the world," he added, sounding just like a Boeing executive.

Local aerospace analyst Scott Hamilton says that though the 777X deal puts this state in a better position to win the work of building future Boeing airplanes, it's "hyperbole" to talk about guaranteeing future work. When the jet-maker launches its next new airplanes, likely a 757 replacement around 2019 or a 737 replacement around 2020, "Boeing will take us through this all over again," he said.

"Boeing will come back to the unions and say, 'Give us more concessions,'" Hamilton said. "It will come back to the state and say, 'Give us more tax breaks.'"

Wilson Ferguson, president of Local A (the largest local within District Lodge 751), stated in a message to his members, "There is a lot of talk of pulling out of the International, that is a self-defeating proposition. Our best strategy is to remove Buffy (IAM President Tom Buffenbarger) from office. That campaign starts today. The loss of our pension is a big blow. Not only to us but to workers across the country." The new system places more of the risk of retirement security on the workers, leaving the company largely risk-free. It will match employee contributions up to a certain level, but there's no guarantee that it won't seek to cut that commitment in the future.

John Kleiboeker, a Boeing worker of 16 years and the president of the Machinists local Lodge 63 told *The Oregonian*, "I've got 15 years to retirement and I am looking at a loss of \$250,000."

There will also be a loss to the white-collar workers at Boeing, organized in the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA). Those 21,000 local members will clearly be next in line to have their pensions frozen when the union's contract expires in 2016. Weakening Boeing's strongest union will make SPEEA's position much weaker.

Perhaps the most shocking concession of all—given the claims of politicians and IAM officials that this of-

(continued on page 11)

Boeing & IAM: Disappointed but not surprised

By EDUARDO QUINTANA

How could it be otherwise? Reopened contract? One week to vote? Election forced on them by the International, spearheaded by a retired (not accountable to future elections, former vice-president of the IAM). Boom. Politicians pressuring, pension stealing, health costs rising, eight-year concessionary contract accepted.

Giving up pensions for new hires means no one will have them in the future. It is also part of the relentless attack on unions that has been going on since Reagan's destruction of PATCO in 1981. It is union busting on the installment plan, with a long-term perspective that will never stop. It is part of the plan to pauperize the entire working class and turn the clock back to the time of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and debtors' prisons.

It is corporations and their government using the same divide-and-conquer strategy that pits worker against worker, union member against union member, local unions against international, region against region, young against old, Black against White or White against Brown (Arizona's SB 1070), the future against the present, right-to-work states against closed shop, Washington against Utah, Texas, and South Carolina.

Unions, including my local, have been reeling

from this strategy for years, most years, accepting concessions because of strategies that promote meek collaboration instead of courageous fightback. On the shop floor it is "look out for yourself" individualistic self-interest instead of collective self-defense of all members.

It is business unionism (you elected us to lead, go away and let us lead) instead of reliance on our collective strength. In the political arena, our strategy means accepting a so-called compromise between Democrats (supposedly pro-worker) and Republicans (pro-corporate) where working people lose every time.

These types of concessionary contracts and losses will continue until unions reject individualistic self-interest, build independent political action and embrace solidarity of the entire working class.

"Workers of the world awaken. Break your chains, demand your rights. All the wealth you make is taken, by exploiting parasites. Shall you kneel in deep submission from your cradle to your grave? Is the height of your ambition to be a good and willing slave?"—Joe Hill

The assault on us, the working people, will never end until we end it. ■

Eduardo Quintana is a retired former president of IAM Local Lodge 933, Tucson, Ariz.

Obama affirms spying as Snowden is demonized



BY JEFF MACKLER

Thirty years after George Orwell's futuristic and predictive novel, "1984," Orwell's 1949 police state prediction is here in full bloom.

Wikipedia's description of "1984" is apt indeed. Readers will forgive my bracketed insertions aimed at bringing Orwell's Oceania to life: "Life in [the United States] the Oceanian province of Airstrip One is a world of perpetual war, pervasive government surveillance, and incessant public [Truman Show] mind control, accomplished with a political system euphemistically named [democracy] English Socialism (Ingsoc), which is administrated by a privileged [Democratic and Republican] Inner Party elite. Yet they too are subordinated to the totalitarian cult of personality of Big Brother, the deified [one percent] Party leader who rules with a philosophy that decries individuality and reason as [advocacy of privacy and civil liberties] thoughtcrimes; thus the people of Oceania are subordinated to a supposed ["national security" state] collective greater good."

Not to belabor the Orwellian analogy, but Washington, D.C., Federal District Court Judge Richard Leon in his Dec. 16, 68-page opinion demanding an end of blanket government surveillance couldn't resist describing as "almost Orwellian" today's national security state. Said Leon, "I cannot imagine a more indiscriminate and arbitrary invasion than this systematic and high-tech collection and retention of personal data on almost every single citizen for the purpose of querying and analyzing it without prior judicial approval."

President Barack Obama's Jan. 17 speech before the Justice Department didn't convince anyone that substantive changes are on the agenda regarding the government's now admitted U.S. and worldwide surveillance of virtually every phone, e-mail, and other public and private communication system.

With the exception of a promise that a handful or so of select, still unnamed heads of state who are deemed to represent "friendly and allied nations," no one, including top government officials around the world, would be exempt from National Security Administration (NSA) spy operations. BIG BROTHER Obama—who has been mercilessly exposed by the ongoing revelations of former NSA contractor Edward Snowden—felt compelled to affirm a previously and rigorously denied truth that every ruling-class leader in the world takes as an article of faith: Spying on everyone is fully justified. How else to keep a privileged tiny minority elite in power while exploiting and oppressing the vast majority?

Spying on one's allies and enemies alike is absolutely necessary to defend the "national security" interests of the ruling rich everywhere. The so-called war on terror is nothing but today's overt pretext to do what has always been done to advance the interests of the

'In truth, we live in a hologram world, created by an Evil Empire that justifies its looting of the planet by ever invoking its national security interests.'

few against the many as well as the few against their competing elites everywhere.

Following Obama's defense of the NSA's "robust" spy operations, presidential adviser David Phouffe crudely uttered Obama's basic argument, "There are people out there every day who are plotting. The notion that we would put down a tool that would protect people here in America is hard to fathom."

No data was presented to prove this assertion. Indeed, of the tens if not hundreds of trillions or thousands of trillions (quadrillions) of NSA-intercepted communications, the Obama administration has to date proved incapable of presenting a single example of a successful operation that has prevented an act of terror. Or if I am exaggerating a bit, perhaps it is true that less than a handful of cases have been presented, albeit most refuted by the facts, to justify U.S. spy and surveillance operations against the whole world.

Within hours of President Obama's speech, the heads of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees—Republican Mike Roger and Democrat Dianne Feinstein—met briefly with Director of National Intelligence James Clapper and then issued a joint statement supporting the government's spy program.

A few days later, these same officials and others asserted that Snowden had acted, or might have acted, in collaboration with Russian and/or Chinese spy agencies in collecting classified government files. A Jan. 20 *New York Times* article headlined, "Lawmakers Suggest Snowden Link To Russia Before He Leaked Data," went to considerable length to indicate that no confirmation of these charges has been presented. Two days later, *The Times* reported, "Officials at both the NSA and the FBI have said their investigations have turned up no evidence that Mr. Snowden was aided by others."

Yet the notion that Snowden went far beyond exposing the virtually universal nature of U.S. government surveillance operations was no accident, especially when Snowden's alleged crimes now include releasing critical military secrets to the Russians and Chinese.

"Even if he did not intentionally do so," argued several U.S. spymasters, they remained convinced that Russian and Chinese technology would likely have been employed to retrieve Snowden's files from his five computers. No doubt, upping the ante from Snowden's widely supported opposition to blanket spying on the

(Left) Barak Obama as BIG BROTHER in film of George Orwell's "1984."

world to Snowden being a Russian agent is seen by BIG BROTHER as justification for the continuation of all NSA spy programs and the further persecution and prosecution of this courageous whistleblower.

Snowden's response was published in *The New Yorker*. It's not the smears that mystify me," he said. "It's that outlets report statements that the speakers themselves admit are sheer speculation."

One might wonder, however, just what harmful military secrets so worry Snowden's would-be persecutors. He did, after all, release President Obama's order mandating cyberwar against any target. Perhaps Snowden has new military information on the illegal 10-year U.S.-funded Contra War against Nicaragua, or the U.S.-organized military coups that brought the Shah to power and stole Iran's oil in 1953, or the 1954 U.S.-organized coup that removed President Arbenz in Guatemala, or the U.S.-backed neo-fascist 1973 Pinochet coup in Chile, or the U.S. invasions of Grenada and the Dominican Republic, or the 1.5 million murdered in Iraq based on U.S. intelligence regarding "weapons of mass destruction," or the 4 million murdered in Vietnam based on the manufactured Tonkin Bay incident, or maybe even secret U.S. intelligence regarding who used sarin gas in Syria, or the U.S. deployment of death-squad armies in Afghanistan, or U.S. military actions aimed at the re-colonization of Africa today, or military information on the U.S. drone wars that murdered some 5000 civilians in Pakistan?

But alas, we already know most of these atrocities in some detail. Would Snowden violate any moral principle on earth if he were to expose yet new war crimes committed by the Empire?

Obama's speech did promise to solicit congressional input regarding possible changes, but no one considered that any such changes would be substantial. The president also suggested that the massive trove of everyone's communications might be transferred from government computers to "private hands" or to some other unspecified "independent" agency. Perhaps a few more judges might be consulted before tapping into everyone's personal communications, said the president. He neglected to mention that the previous panels of secret FISA Court judges had approved *all* NSA spying requests.

In each and every instance, however, whatever constraints Obama suggested would, he insisted, be negated in cases of "emergency" or "national security" concerns—the very mantra that every government employs to lie, cheat, and steal with impunity. Even *The New York Times* (Jan. 19, 2014) felt compelled to note, "The assurances Mr. Obama offered his critics may be made more nebulous, by exceptions written into any new policies" (emphasis added).

A few weeks earlier, *The Times* published a lead editorial enumerating the government's blatant violations of elementary civil liberties while urging the Obama administration to put an end to Snowden's seemingly never-ending and shocking revelations that almost daily undermine its credibility. *The Times* urged Obama to grant Snowden clemency. With an estimated 1.7 million government spy documents in his possession, the newspaper's editors reasoned, in accord with the Negligence Law maxim, "the risk to be perceived defines the duty to be obeyed," a Snowden who was free, perhaps after having received a mild slap on the wrist, is a lesser threat to ruling-class interests than having to endure countless more exposés of government wrongdoing—*crimes* would be more accurate.

The deal that *The Times* envisions would be that Snowden return the government's documents, with a promise that he and others to whom he sent the documents would publish no more, in return for an agreement that he would be free from any government prosecution.

Coming from perhaps the nation's most important

(continued on page 7)

(continued from page 6)

newspaper of record, which often expresses the views of important sections of the U.S. ruling class, *The Times* proposal has stirred considerable controversy. NSA history buffs in these spy matters have countered with the hope or opinion that Snowden, “like all spies before him,” would soon tire in his efforts; or perhaps disappear from public view, like other “spies” before him; or become mentally imbalanced due to prolonged isolation and depression; or perhaps, like others before him, become an alcoholic and pass into oblivion with no further damage done.

These are the hopes and dreams of the hard-nosed secret service cloak and dagger elements who daily pursue U.S. capitalism’s brutal course with impunity. But few are convinced by this argument, if for no other reason that the magnitude of Snowden’s files is unprecedented, his political course is increasingly to the left, and his political development is buttressed by possessing future time bombs can be exploded at will, thus further alienating the vast majority from any notion that the U.S. government represents them. The latest polls indicate that the credibility of the U.S. Congress has reached historic lows, with less than 9 percent indicating confidence in the government’s credibility.

Further, no one fully knows who else might have the secret documents in their possession. In a Jan. 18 television interview with Glenn Greenwald, for example, Bill Maher, host of HBO’s popular “Real Time” news/comedy show, stated that Greenwald had physical possession of Snowden’s 1.7 million document trove. While Greenwald, a staff writer for the British *Guardian* newspaper now living in exile in Brazil, stated that the number 1.7 million was an exaggeration, he did not deny that he had possession and indeed was in collaboration with Snowden.

At least some of these documents similarly appear to be in the possession of *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Der Spiegel*, and others. If this proves to be the case, the U.S. government would have to secure their agreement along with Snowden’s.

What was most telling about the Maher-Greenwald interview, however, was their exchange regarding “national security.” Here Greenwald boldly asserted two interrelated propositions. First, he insisted that as a journalist, he was as qualified, if not more so, than the U.S. government to determine what constituted a legitimate “national security” issue. Greenwald went further, asserting that in the event he believed that any of the Snowden revelations *did* endanger the government’s “national security” interests, he would self-censor. How he would do was not clear. Greenwald, like Snowden, at best hails from American liberal traditions wherein a semblance of credibility is given to the government’s “national security” concerns.

In the case of *The New York Times*, its assigned Snowden reporters all agree beforehand to submit whatever they propose to publish to the CIA or NSA directly. These professional guardians of what is good or bad for the U.S. ruling class are thus accorded the “right” to keep secret at least some government crimes from public view.

No doubt Chelsea Manning’s 2007 leaking of a 39-minute helicopter cockpit video of “go to” U.S. soldiers’ murdering 11 innocent civilians and a Reuters news reporter in Baghdad, was sufficient to qualify as material that required censorship. Manning is serving 30 years on charges of espionage for exposing this truth.

“Too big to fail,” the ruling class maxim adopted near unanimously by Congress when it bailed out the nation’s thieving banks, insurance companies, and leading corporations to the tune of \$20 trillion, or perhaps \$30 trillion, should also be seen as a necessary “national security” dictum employed to protect the nation’s ruling elite.

Similarly, J.P. Morgan Chase’s \$2.6 billion slap-on-the-wrist fine for looking the other way when Bernard Madoff and his Ponzi scheme associates fleeced investors of qualitatively more than that sum should be added to the list of items in which “national security” interests trump human decency. J.P. Morgan’s fines for violating the law by lying to the government regarding the value of its near worthless mortgage bonds last year totaled a pathetic \$14 billion, with no prison time served. Again, “national security” necessitates that real crimes go virtually unpunished. J.P. Morgan Chase, the names of the merged banking interests of the Morgan and Rockefeller families, literally paid a few pennies or less on the dollar in comparison to their \$4 trillion holdings, not to mention with regard to the money that it is said to have stolen.



Snowden’s latest “crime” is the incredible January 2014 revelation, again via the government’s own documents, that the NSA and its ilk physically installed microchips in hundreds of thousands of computers before they were delivered to the unwary purchasers. Worse still, Snowden’s revelations demonstrated that since 2008 NSA spies installed countless permanent “bugs” in countless computers around the world via a refined radio wave technology that requires no physical contact with the victim’s computer. Zap! And your computer is wired for permanent government perusal!

One couldn’t help but recall President Obama’s visit to China last year when he sought to inform Chinese leaders that the U.S. makes a fundamental distinction between spying to defend its “national security interests” and spying to steal scientific, industrial, economic, or intellectual property secrets. The latter categories, insisted Obama, were off limits, if not morally repugnant to the “democratic principles” that Obama claims to champion. The Chinese were said to have responded that national security and economic security were one and the same—inseparable. No doubt, Obama’s platitudes aside, no self-respecting American capitalist would disagree.

But that exchange took place in 2013. Snowden’s documents released by *Der Spiegel* and others in early January 2014 reveal that the NSA knows no such self-restraints. Undoubtedly, the well-trained, and surely “morally” instructed secret NSA radio wave implanters will refrain from using their wondrous technology to gain unfair advantage over their capitalist competitors! We are a nation of laws after all! Everyone knows, for example, that in the stock market “insider trading” is banned! Corporate secrets are therefore safe and sound. It’s just an accident, of course, that a handful of billionaire investors just happen to guess right at the exact moment when stocks rise or fall.

Bloomberg News told the story in a May 11, 2011, article on the subject. “Raj Rajaratnam, the hedge-fund tycoon and Galleon Group LLC co-founder at the center of a U.S. insider-trading crackdown, was found guilty of all 14 counts against him in the largest illegal stock-tipping case in a generation.”

The article reported that billionaire Raj had “engaged in a seven-year conspiracy to trade on inside information from corporate executives, bankers, consultants, traders and directors of public companies including Goldman Sachs Group Inc. (GS). He gained \$63.8 million, prosecutors said.” One can only wonder if Raj’s friends, the “corporate executives, bankers, consultants, traders and directors of public companies, including Goldman Sachs Group” knew that they were giving their billionaire associate, Raj, illegal information!

The federal prosecutor in the case, U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara, told the media that illegal trading on Wall Street was “rampant.” But again, sending this “rampant” crew of thieves to jail is not in the “national security interests” of the U.S. government. It’s sufficient to send a select few to prison for a few years perhaps, only to be quietly pardoned when the departing president exercises his

right to “free the rich.” Here, I won’t bother to research the names of those criminals who received a “Get Out Of Jail Free” card from capitalism’s highest elected officials.

I have always been fascinated by those Star Trek episodes that include Captain James Kirk and Spock fighting courageously against one or another of their infamous enemies, whether they are from the Klingon Empire or from other evil galaxies. But just when the Enterprise hero’s predicament seems almost irreversible, someone throws the switch and the hologram reality instantly disappears. Spock and Kirk open a door and return safely to the real world.

In truth, we live in a hologram world of sorts, created by an Evil Empire that justifies its looting of the planet by ever invoking its “national security interests.” In this name—today the war on terror, yesterday the war against the “communist menace”—every conceivable evil is tolerated, if not promoted. Turning off the hologram switch, the false world that the ruling elite creates to justify its minority rule, is a prerequisite to organizing the vast majority to challenge its subordinate status.

Edward Snowden’s revelations have gone a long way to lifting the veil of secrecy and foul play that is the norm in capitalist America. He has hastened the time, when BIG BROTHER’S rules of engagement—and all forms of ruling-class oppression—are brought to an end forever.

Snowden, Chelsea Manning, and all the other courageous whistleblowers deserve our full support, along with other victims of capitalist injustice. Their contribution to humanity’s cause is immense and brings us closer to a time when the “national security” interests of the few give way to the collective interests of all the earth’s peoples, who have everything to gain by riding the planet of capitalist horrors in all their manifestations.

A Socialist Action pamphlet

Obama’s National Security State Exposed —

The Meaning of the Edward Snowden Leaks

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





The Canadian Press

Kellogg's takes the money and runs

By BARRY WEISLEDER

How can they get away with it? Ontario taxpayers have given millions to cereal-maker Kellogg Co., which amassed \$2 billion in operating profits last year. In 2007, the Liberal government gave the breakfast food giant \$2.4 million to buy processing and packaging equipment for its London, Ontario, plant, two hours west of Toronto. A year later, the

government provided Kellogg with a \$9.7 million low-interest loan—about 10 per cent of the total cost of opening a new plant in Belleville, Ont., two hours east of Toronto. And until Kellogg announced on Dec. 10 that it is closing its 90-year-old plant in London, and thus killing 610 jobs by the end of 2014, Queen's Park was set to give Kellogg another grant for \$4.5 million.

In other words, the Ontario government has been helping Kellogg to build a new, non-union manufacturing plant in Belleville so that the company could shutter an older, unionized operation in London, Ont. The corporate move is part of an overall restructuring, which by 2018 will include closing a plant in Australia and expanding a facility in low-wage Thailand.

We've seen this film before. In 2008, the Ontario and federal governments helped bail out General Motors. But when GM became profitable again, the company closed one of its two Oshawa assembly lines, and shifted some production from Ingersoll, Ont., to Tennessee. How's that for gratitude?

In recent years, Massey-Ferguson in Toronto, and the U.S. Steel Corp. in Hamilton behaved similarly.

So, to return to the question posed at the outset, how is this possible? It is both possible and inevitable because the politicians and governments bestowing the public largesse on those greedy, anti-social firms are the servants of the super-rich.

Why don't leaders of the unions and the labour-based New Democratic Party challenge the discredited practice of foolishly feeding the corporate elite, and instead advance the democratic idea of public ownership under workers' and community control? Surely society is capable of planning the production of useful things without having to bribe private profiteers who operate for a while, then flee, with stuffed pockets, to greener pastures.

To put the democratic option on the table will take direct mass action from below—like Kellogg's workers in London occupying the plant they made profitable with their sweat and toil—before its doors are locked forever. ■

Ban on talking about job action

By JULIUS ARSCOTT

The assault on labour in Canada intensified recently with new legislation rushed through the Alberta legislature. It targets the actions of public sector unions prior to collective bargaining.

The ruling Progressive Conservatives, under Premier Alison Redford, passed Bills 45 and 46, the Public Sector Services Continuation Act and the Public Service Salary Restraint Act. They came into effect on Dec. 11. Both bills were introduced only a week earlier, and without warning.

The law applies to the province's negotiations with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, which represents 22,000 public sector employees. Many are furious at the Redford Government for its plans to gut their pensions in a scheme announced in mid-September. The union has been without a collective agreement since late March 2013.

The law eliminates AUPE's option of going to binding arbitration. Instead, there is a negotiation deadline of Jan. 31. After that, a legislated four-year deal with no increases over the first two years and one-per-cent increases in each of the next two would come into effect.

This law significantly increases fines for illegal strikes or strike threats. Specifically, discussion of labour actions, such as an "illegal strike," by the union or by union activists will be deemed illegal. There are heavy fines to be imposed on the union if rank-and-file members even raise job action in public or at union meetings. Punishment ranges from fines of \$500 to \$1 million per day.

Bill 45 includes a prohibition on "strike threats," vaguely defined in the bill as "an act or threat to act that could reasonably be perceived as preparation for an employees' strike." Also:

(1) No employee and no trade union or officer or representative of a trade union shall cause or consent to a strike.

(2) No employee and no officer or representative of a trade union shall engage in or continue to engage in any conduct that constitutes a strike threat or a strike.

(3) No trade union shall engage in or continue to engage in any conduct that constitutes a strike threat.

(4) No person shall counsel a person to contravene subsection (1) or (2) or impede or prevent."

Point No. 2 makes it illegal to canvass the opinion of "employees to determine whether they wish to strike," or to freely express a view that calls for or supports strike action.

The fourth point appears to extend beyond public sector employees and union leaders to the general public, prohibiting counseling union members to strike or threaten a strike. Activists not directly involved with an Alberta union, like yours truly, could be prosecuted for suggesting that a strike is the only recourse to protect public services, pensions, benefits, or to draw attention to unsafe working conditions that put the health of workers and the general public at risk.

The legislation has been called draconian and undemocratic in its sledgehammer approach to denying freedom of expression to the public. Even the *Calgary Herald*, an ally of the ruling P.C. party wrote, "The passing of Bills 45 and 46 on Wednesday night marks a dark chapter in Alberta History." Even the more right-wing Wild Rose Party voted against this legislation.

Alberta NDP leader Brian Mason called the bills "legislation that would make Margaret Thatcher blush." He added, "I am prepared to resist this bill in order to defend the rights of all Albertans to freedom of speech and freedom of association." How far he'd go to resist it is not clear.

The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees vows to fight the bills in court. Guy Smith, president of the union, says AUPE is filing another complaint with the Alberta Labour Relations Board, as well as a complaint with the United Nations International Labour Organization. He told the Canadian Press that the conditions placed on negotiations is akin to the government's bringing "a gun on the table," and he won't negotiate on that basis.

The response by organized labour to this brazen attack has been tepid. Litigation can take up to a

decade to complete. Meanwhile, the impact on the working class in Alberta and beyond will be staggering.

The Alberta Federation of Labour launched a tepid campaign calling Premier Redford a bully. "Alison Redford has poisoned labour relations in Alberta's public sector, perhaps for years," Alberta Federation of Labour President Gil McGowan said at the press conference. "If she thinks that threats, bullying and intimidation will stop workers from standing up for themselves and against her senseless agenda of cuts and rollbacks in the midst of prosperity, she has another thing coming."

The president of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), James Clancy, said, "Bill 45, the Public Sector Services Continuation Act, places further restrictions on over 100,000 unionized workers in Alberta who already are denied their right to strike. It broadens the definition of a strike to include 'any slowdown or any activity that has the effect of restricting or disrupting production or services.'" No plan of action to defeat these bills has been announced.

The AUPE has been playing footsie with the parties of big business. Recently, observers have noted that the union leadership support has tilted towards the more right-wing Wild Rose Party. Its opposition to Bills 45 and 46 indicates that this may be the case.

The union leadership may think that a Wild Rose government led by Opposition Leader Danielle Smith could hardly be worse than the one now led by Progressive Conservative Premier Alison Redford, but that is foolish. The notion that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" may put pressure on the P.C.'s in the short term, but it will spell disaster for the labour movement in Alberta.

The AUPE should urge a vote for the provincial New Democrats, and fight for a Workers' Agenda within the labour-based party.

The Alberta Federation of Labour should organize mass strike action, and seek support from organized labour across the country.

The left should organize a cross-union movement of labour militants to challenge the bureaucratic union leadership and press for actions needed to defeat anti-union laws. ■

... Egypt

(continued from page 1)

of George Bush” in Iraq must not be repeated, wherein Bush’s invading army wiped Iraq’s political and economic slate clean by removing and banning all of Saddam Hussein’s Bath Party leaders from office and installing an essentially all-Shiite government. It would have been better to have included some of Hussein’s experienced Bath Party leaders and/or some Sunni militia chiefs, the new *realpolitik* presidential advisers reasoned, than to risk their becoming the core opposition to any U.S. puppet government.

Indeed, U.S.-funded Sunni militias have recently been employed to smash the latest Fallujah insurgency in Iraq.

This Machiavellian “strategy,” in several variants, has since become U.S. policy following its removal of Muammar Gadhafi in Libya and with regard to Afghanistan and Syria today. In Libya, the U.S. effort to give a piece of the action in that conquered and devastated nation to various militias, each seeking a share of the oil and territory, has resulted in near anarchy. A few months ago, some of these “democratically minded” militias stormed the hotel housing the new president, kidnapped him, and in essence held him for ransom—that is, for an agreement for a bit more control of Libya’s oil.

It was only when these “rebels” got the word that the United States was prepared to launch a few drones to convince these kidnappers to do the right thing that the president was released. In the aftermath, the U.S. announced that it was assembling and training a military force of 5000 troops to help maintain the “peace” and “order” in Libya’s disintegrating state, so that the right people would have more exclusive access to the oil booty.

In Syria, where the U.S. arms and funds, directly or indirectly (through its proxies in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey), practically all “rebel” forces, from the Free Syrian Army to al-Qaida-linked militias, the similar objective is “regime change” of a special type—remove the dictator but keep in place his well-established repressive capitalist state apparatus. The present shaky Geneva negotiations are aimed at a temporary transition government with or without Assad, to be followed by another without Assad and inclusive of more com-



(Left) Egypt’s Defense Minister, Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

pliant capitalist elites agreeable to U.S. dictates.

Egypt in 2011 was a prime example of imperialist flexibility, where the 30-year U.S.-backed Mubarak dictatorship became an obstacle to maintaining U.S. interests in the region. Mubarak’s removal by his subordinates was privately given the nod by the Obama administration, and the Tahrir Square mass mobilizations were eventually praised as “revolutionary” by U.S. mouthpieces. Shifting U.S. political loyalties from one dictator to another has never been a problem and is often quite helpful to better serve imperial interests and disorient mass rebellions.

Following Mubarak’s removal, U.S. advisers bided their time while advising the re-packaged military regime on how best to set the stage down the line for yet another coup to remove Morsi and re-establish direct military control. Morsi’s one-year presidency, as expected, proved that his MB variant of capitalism was incapable of significantly changing the lives of Egypt’s oppressed masses. But his demise was also promoted by the military’s still intact “felool” (the deep-state apparatus left over from Mubarak’s regime), which employed subtle means to undermine the Egyptian economy, including denying Cairo access to basic food supplies, gasoline, and electricity. The aim was to blame Morsi for the endless food and gas lines that became the survival norm for millions.

The massive June 30 Cairo protests, today more accurately estimated to be one million people, demanding Morsi’s resignation and new elections, while

initiated by the youthful Tamarrud (Rebellion) petition activists and democratic-minded supporters, undoubtedly were backed, promoted, and financed by Egypt’s bourgeois opposition—including billionaire financiers and the thinly-disguised populist-democratic-posturing old-guard military regime. Egypt’s “June 30 second revolution” in the streets was, three days later, with near-zero resistance, commandeered by Sisi’s military.

Soon afterwards, the slaughter of peaceful Muslim sit-in protesters began; and then, all others who dared to resist were punished with impunity.

The well-briefed U.S.-instructed officials, of course, decried the removal of the “democratically elected” Morsi, only to quickly give way to the new reality, in which the coup was declared to have given Egypt a “second chance” at democracy.

Sisi and his ilk have declared that the mid-January 98 percent approval of the new constitution, which was certainly not unexpected, lent unquestionable legitimacy to his July 3 ouster of Morsi. Ehab Badawy, a spokesman for the office of the interim president, hailed the vote as a triumph, “another defining moment in our road map to democracy.” But U.S. Secretary of State Kerry, being careful not to stamp the official U.S. imprimatur on the vote and still pressing for MB inclusion, remarked that “elections are not everything.”

Kerry added, perhaps with a crocodile smile, that “the brave Egyptians who stood vigil in Tahrir Square did not risk their lives in a revolution to see its historic potential squandered in the tran-

sition.” In difficult times, Kerry demonstrated that bourgeois politicians do well by adopting “revolutionary” rhetoric to suit their needs.

Kerry continued with this specious praise of the Egyptian people: “They’ve weathered ups and downs, disappointment and setbacks in the years that followed [the Tahrir Square mobilizations], and they’re still searching for the promise of that revolution. They still know that the path forward to an inclusive, tolerant, and civilian-led democracy will require Egypt’s political leaders to make difficult compromises and seek a broad consensus on many divisive issues.”

Kerry said further: “Democracy is more than any one referendum or election. It is about equal rights and protections under the law for all Egyptians, regardless of their gender, faith, ethnicity, or political affiliation.”

Egypt’s new constitution now forbids “religion, race, gender, or geography” from being the basis to form a political party—a provision aimed at affirming the present ban on the MB’s Freedom and Justice Party, among others. Like most constitutions in capitalist states, Egypt’s new “law of the land” guarantees freedom of religion and grants Coptic Christians the right, for the first time, to build churches without permission of the president. Women are recognized as equals in Egyptians society. Would it be that words were deeds!

The Sisi coup represented a major setback for the Egyptian people. It demonstrated once again a number of iron rules of any revolutionary process. First and foremost, the revolutionary mobilization and engagement of the masses in charting society’s future social configuration is a prerequisite to any fundamental change in the social order.

Second, is the massive participation in this unfolding process of a deeply-rooted revolutionary socialist party aimed at the abolition of capitalist rule in all its manifestations. The combination of these two elements, in every nation on earth, will in the future—whether it be months, years, or decades from today—is the only guarantee that the just anger and hatred of capitalist oppression everywhere will not be channeled into pitiful “reformist” alternatives, whether they be “enlightened dictators,” as in Egypt, or “lesser evil” Democrats in the United States. ■

What the U.S. gained in World War I

By JAMES P. CANNON

James P. Cannon was the principal founder of the Trotskyist movement in the United States. Below is an excerpt from his pamphlet “America’s Road to Socialism,” based on lectures he gave in 1953.

Along about the turn of the century, America’s conquest of its own continent was just about completed and there was no place else to go. Father Neptune drew a line at the water’s edge of the Pacific and said, “You can’t go any farther here.” The free land was gone, and all the new territories were pretty well settled up.

The problem of new markets for the ever-increasing surpluses, piled up by the ever-increasing productivity of American labor, was becoming Problem No. 1.

In 1907 there was a crisis. And again in 1914 there was mounting unemployment. It was then that the European capitalist nations, America’s perennial Santa Claus, once again came to the rescue of American economy.

They involved themselves in a destructive war over markets, colonies, spheres of influence and fields of investment, and America warmed its hands by the fire.

Remaining benevolently neutral on the side of the Allies for the first three years of the war, America found in the war itself the richest market it could ever have dreamed of.

While the normal peace-time economy of the Western Allies was dislocated by the war, American factories worked overtime to supply their deficiencies. America

was still a debtor nation when the war started, but the huge purchases which France and England were compelled to make in America soon canceled out all indebtedness. America emerged as a creditor nation, even before the war was over.

At the same time, while the Western Allies and Germany were busy in their life-and-death battle, America obligingly edged them out of the South American market. This provided another outlet for the endless supply of goods rolling from the assembly lines in all kinds of factories from one end of the United States to another.

So great were the demands of the war in Europe, for goods and materials, that America was obliged to expand its productive plant, and thereby its productive capacities to supply them.

When America, after a hugely profitable delay of three years, finally entered the war in order to protect her loans to the Allied powers, she only had to tip the scales a bit to finish off the Kaiser’s army. ...

The First World War brought America to the position of leading power in the capitalist world, having no further need of any more capital investments from Europe, or any more of Europe’s manpower. Since then, America has been concerned only with the problem of propping up Europe with loans, sufficient to enable it to ward off collapse and the danger of revolution, without allowing it to enter the world market again as a real competitor.

Capitalist America, the beneficiary in its youth of the aid of capitalist Europe, became in the period of its maturity the ungrateful nemesis of this same Europe. ■

... World War I

(continued from page 12)

military bases across the continent to bolster its ability to exploit the mineral and oil riches. But Europe and China are also interested in the vast wealth, making Africa a staging ground for a new round of imperial competition. The United States backs one repressive regime after another (Saudi Arabia, a medieval monarchy with vast oil reserves, being a shining example) to advance its own imperialist ends.

Recent and continuing revelations by Edward Snowden point to just how low the United States will sink to gain an upper hand over its competitors. Inter-imperialist squabbles are everywhere. Japan and China (and the U.S.) are engaged in territorial disputes over islands. A European financial crisis brought on by capitalist speculation threatens to tear Europe apart. The U.S. continues to flex its military muscle from Syria to Yemen to North Korea, needlessly provoking the citizens who would have no interest in hostilities.

Capitalist expansion will continue to inflame these underlying tensions until the people of the world unite to fight the only war worth fighting, the class war, and for the only goal worth fighting for—socialism. ■

Humour: An unlikely weapon for aboriginal rights



By BARRY WEISLEDER

“The Inconvenient Indian—A Curious Account of Native People in North America,” by Thomas King, published by Anchor Canada, a division of Random House, 2013. 314 pp.

Thomas King, best known as the creator and star of the hilarious CBC Radio One series, “The Dead Dog Cafe Comedy Hour,” is the author of a funny book about the very sad tragedy of North American indigenous people. The book is a best-seller, proving again that a serious message can reach a huge readership through the medium of satire, without debasing the cause.

Born in Sacramento, Calif., Thomas King is of Cherokee, Greek, and German-American descent. As an adult, he migrated to Australia, where he worked for years as a photojournalist. After moving to Canada in 1980, King taught Native Studies at the University of Lethbridge in the early 1980s. He also served as a faculty member of the University of Minnesota’s American Indian Studies Department. King is currently an English professor at the University of Guelph, about an hour west of Toronto. King was the NDP candidate for Guelph in the Oct. 14, 2008, federal election, finishing fourth behind the Liberal, Conservative, and Green Party candidates.

“The Inconvenient Indian” is a short, post-modern version of “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.” King recounts the massacres inflicted by the European colonial powers, records many of the lies, broken land treaties, the physical displacement, and the cultural genocide that still masquerades as education. He postures as the skeptic, and proceeds to eviscerate the skepticism that surrounds corporate media coverage of aboriginal issues.

Why does he use the antiquated word “Indian” when First Nations is the term of choice in Canada, and Native Americans is preferred in the United States? King calls it “the North American default.” Then he amusingly disparages his decision to name the non-native population “Whites.” “Well, I struggled with this one. A Japanese friend of mine likes to call Anglos ‘crazy Caucasoids,’ while another friend told me that if I was going to use the term ‘Indians’ I should call everyone else ‘cowboys.’”

King identifies three kinds of Indian: Dead Indians, Live Indians, and Legal Indians. Dead are the ones that “are the stereotypes and clichés that North America has conjured up out of experience and out of its collective imaginings and fears.” Society sees “war bonnets, beaded shirts, fringed deerskin dresses, headbands.” “You can find Dead Indians everywhere. Rodeos, powwows, movies, television commercials.” They pose no threat to power.

Live Indians, on the other hand, were an “annoying part of life in the New World.” European diseases killed about 80 per cent of them. The American newspaper mogul Horace Greeley said in 1859, “The Indi-

ans are children ... the very lowest and rudest of human existence. ... These people must die out—there is no help for them.” King sarcastically adds: “Problem was, Live Indians didn’t die out.”

The Canadian census of 2006 records the existence of 565,000 Status Indians. The total indigenous population in Canada then, including Indians, Metis, and Inuit, was 1.2 million—not counting at least 22 Indian reserves, overlooked according to Statistics Canada. In the United States, federal “recognition” is granted to tribes rather than individuals. In 2009 the U.S. Federal Register recognized 564 tribes, encompassing about 950,000 people. The total number of Indians in the U.S. is around 2.4 million, or a few hundred thousand more or less, given the vagaries of the census.

Legal Indians have certain rights and privileges—because of the treaties both countries signed with Native nations. About 40 per cent of Live Indians in North America are Legal Indians. King caustically observes that “while North America loves the Dead Indian and ignores the Live Indian, North America hates the Legal Indian. Savagely.”

He acerbically describes the treaties as an error in judgement that the establishment has been trying to correct for the last 150 years. Legal Indians are “inconvenient.” That’s because their legal rights stand in the way of Private Profit—er, I mean Progress. (Sorry, I’m starting to sound like the author.)

But why can’t indigenous people just melt into the population at large? Sure, they’ve been robbed, kidnapped, displaced, and much worse than decimated. But why can’t they just say, “let bygones be bygones,” and just “get over it?” Well, should Jews, gays and Roma people just “get over” the Nazi holocaust? Should Blacks “get over” the murderous Middle Passage and nearly 300 years of slavery? Does the commitment to “Never again” require an historical memory?

How about Aboriginal self-reliance? King writes: “I’ve been told any number of times that we have to learn to stand on our own two feet and develop the skills necessary to manage on our own, without relying on government generosities.

“In the same way that Air Canada, AIG, Bombardier, Halliburton, General Motors, and the good folks out in Alberta’s Tar Sand Project manage on their own, without relying on government handouts. ... I suppose I could have mentioned Enron, World Com, Bre-X, and Bear Stearns as well, but these disasters were more greed than incompetence. Weren’t they? Though I suppose the one does not preclude the other.

“So, if I’ve got it right, while North America is reluctant to support the economic ‘incompetence’ of Native people, it is more than willing to throw money at the incompetence of corporations. And why not? After all, if we’ve learned nothing in the last century, we should have learned that government support of big business is capitalism’s only hope.”

That’s a surprisingly radical analysis for a one-time NDP candidate, even if it is not accompanied by a concrete programme for radical change.

Here’s another way to look at the self-reliance idea, as it’s posed under capitalism. Some workers belong to a union. That gives them strength lacked by workers who don’t. Some indigenous people have treaty rights, which gives them a toe-hold, and a bit of leverage on the capitalist state. In the absence of a cooperative commonwealth for all, does it make sense to give up the little they’ve got, however “inconvenient” they may be to big business?

To be sure, “The issue has always been land,” insists King. “It will always be land, until there isn’t a square foot of land left in North America that is controlled by Native people.” It’s a sensitive issue, as discovered by 13-year-old Tenelle Starr from the Star Blanket First Nation, 90 kilometres northeast of Regina, Saskatchewan. She was sent home from school in early January because she was wearing a pink hoodie bearing the slogan “Got Land? Thank an Indian.” The good news is that now Tenelle’s friends are sporting the slogan, and the social media is buzzing.

In the meantime, indigenous land titles continue to stand in the way of corporate resource extraction, even of military training bases (like the one at Stoney Point Ojibway reserve in Ontario, where provincial police shot and killed native protester Dudley George in 1995).

Fortunately, indigenous peoples’ opposition to pipeline construction has helped to forge an alliance with farmers, workers, and environmentalists concerned about pollution and climate change. This convergence is reflected in the broad public support for the Idle No More movement that arose in late 2012.

The path that capitalists and their governments have taken to remove the native land obstacle to profit maximization is called “termination.” If the policy sounds deadly, it’s no accident.

Neither is it anything new. After centuries of dispossession and genocide, “modern” governments stepped up to the plate. Duncan Campbell Scott, head of Canada’s Department of Indian Affairs from 1913-1932, put it bluntly: “Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department. ...”

In 1953, the U.S. Congress passed the Termination Act and the Relocation Act concurrently. It allowed Congress to terminate all federal relations with tribes unilaterally, while Relocation “encouraged” Native people to quit their reservations and move to the cities. In 1969, the Canadian government tried to do the same thing with its White Paper. Then-Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau suggested that there is no such thing as Indian entitlement to land or Native rights, and urged First Nations people to assimilate into Canadian society. The reaction was massively and fiercely negative.

What do you suppose would happen if Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau advocated that today? While the Conservative government of Stephen Harper drags its feet, Tory ideologue Tom Flanagan openly campaigns for the termination of Native status, and for dispersal and privatization of aboriginal lands.

The interests of the working class lie in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. The reasons are clear. One is the practical need for unity between workers and all oppressed peoples against the bosses and their state. Another is based on recognition that the struggle of Indigenous people to preserve their collective land rights constitutes a powerful obstacle to the agenda of capital—which is to turn all of nature into a commodity, for sale to the highest bidder, subject to ruthless despoliation.

Thomas King’s “The Inconvenient Indian—A Curious Account of Native People in North America” is remarkably witty, often hilarious, and a truthful companion for the important battles ahead. Read it, and use it well. ■

“Louis Riel & Gabriel Dumont”, by Joseph Boyden, Penguin Canada, Toronto, 2013, 204 pages.

This is a semi-poetic portrait of Riel, the Metis mystic and political leader, and Dumont, the buffalo hunter and military tactician. It is also a sympathetic and factual history of the rebellions that shook the early Canadian state. Giller prize-winning author Joseph Boyden is a Canadian of Irish, Scottish and Metis roots who lives, at times, in Northern Ontario and Louisiana. His latest book is the acclaimed historical novel “The Orenda.”

“LR&GD” reminds us of the farcical trial that preceded the execution of Riel. It rode the wave of bigotry directed at the Metis and Quebecois, amplified by the Orange Order, the ruling business elite, and Conservative Prime Minister John A. MacDonald. The entrails of the national question in Canada are played here for public examination. — B.W.

Crisis within Turkey's ruling bloc

By YASIN KAYA

The Istanbul Prosecutor's Office initiated a "corruption and bribery operation" on Dec. 17. About one week later, the Ministers of Economics, the Interior, and Urban Development all resigned after their sons were arrested. Events accelerated at a dizzying pace. Prime Minister Erdogan fired seven other ministers. The chief prosecutor was taken off the case. Hundreds of police officers were removed from their posts.

Although Erdogan claims that the scandal was a foreign plot, and blames the "interests-rate lobby" for trying to harm Turkey, many see the unfolding drama as a civil war between his AKP (Justice and Development Party) and the Gulenists.

The Gulen Movement is a global Islamist network led by Fethullah Gulen, a Muslim cleric who lives in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania. The Gulenists were among the strongest political groups that had supported the AKP since it came to power in 2002. They joined forces with the AKP to prosecute secularist generals, and hundreds of other alleged coup plotters since 2007. Not only the top military officials, but also many innocent journalists and politicians were arrested on the basis of "fabricated evidence, secret witnesses, and flights of investigative fancy"—thanks to the Gulenists' infiltration of the judiciary and police.

Such undemocratic underpinnings sustained the corrupt neoliberal economy. This meant unprecedented profits for domestic and foreign financial capitalists and their conglomerates on the one hand, dispossession and pauperization for workers and peasants on the other.

As previously reported in *Socialist Action*, numerous protests spread across Turkey after the Turkish police brutally attacked protesters in Taksim Gezi Park in summer of 2013. The popular upheaval against the authoritarian government and its neoliberal policies had a working-class character. Nevertheless, the revolt lacked political leadership and a clear political perspective. Revolutionary spirit was on the wane, but anger generated by the corruption scandal has revived it. Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets on Dec. 29. Although the number of protesters were less than in the summer, the masses proved to be as committed and determined as before.

The conflict within the ruling bloc continues as we go to press. Political instability is only one of the fears of the Turkish capitalists. The Turkish economy is heading into a crisis. Turkey's gargantuan current account deficit worsens against the backdrop of the U.S. Federal Reserve's decision to end its loose monetary policy—thanks to which the Turkish economy recovered from the severe hit it took from the global recession in 2008 and 2009.

Moreover, Turkey's aggressive foreign policy failed in the Middle East, where the popularity of its government and capitalists has crumbled. This further limits



Turkish capitalism's room for maneuver because it had high hopes for economic activism in Middle Eastern markets. In short, the exploiters are not able to "live and rule in the old way," as Lenin put it, anymore. And popular demands for change resonate to the core of the Turkish economy.

The CHP (Republican People's Party), the main opposition, has now replaced its Kemalist-secularist rhetoric with a social democratic phraseology in order to absorb democratic demands. It seeks the support of pro-imperialist and pro-Zionist Gulenists to replace the AKP, and it strengthens its ties with the big business.

The Kurdish movement missed yet another great opportunity. Its leaders' lukewarm opposition to the corruption scandals shows that it doesn't want to risk the so-called "peace process" that it initiated with the AKP elites behind close doors. Of course, its reluctance to join forces with Gulenists and CHP against the AKP is understandable, since these two political forces have always been obstacles to any democratic solution to the Kurdish question. The Kurdish people do not need another tragedy to see that their national struggle has nothing to gain from capitalists and their political parties.

The Left is still fragmented and lacks the ability to organize public dissent, although its ideas are enjoying a revival.

(Above) Contingent from the anti-capitalist Freedom and Solidarity Party in a Dec. 21 protest in Ankara against government corruption.

Intense warfare within Turkey's ruling bloc is a sign of escalating conflicts between the capitalist class fractions as the Turkish economy hurtles towards a crisis. It also shows that the imperialists are not sure whether they should bet on Erdogan or Gulenists. Imperialists employ zigzagging political tactics while their room for maneuver is narrowing in the context of the escalating crisis of imperialism in the Middle East. American and Canadian workers' solidarity is needed with their brothers and sisters in Turkey. Our slogan should be "Imperialist Hands off the Middle East!"

The situation in Turkey demonstrates the results of a crisis of political leadership. Although the masses withdraw their support from the existing bourgeois political parties, in the absence of a realistic revolutionary alternative, new pro-capitalist pseudo-alternatives flourish to channel the people's anger against the corrupt system that is based on private ownership of the means of production.

The cracks in the ruling capitalist bloc can be utilized by the working class and its allies, such as the Kurdish movement, only if an independent course of working-class action is pursued. The key task is building an independent working-class party in Turkey. ■

Kazakhstan hit by layoffs

By PAVEL CANTRELL

ASTANA, Kazakhstan—The worldwide capitalist crisis has extended its reach to Kazakhstan—which the World Bank touted only a few months ago as a model of "solid growth." The effects of the crisis on working people were shown as the multinational corporation, ArcelorMittal—the world's largest steelmaker—announced that it will cut around 2500 jobs in this country in 2014. A trade-union spokesperson has unveiled the discrepancy between the existing roster of workers and the new company plan for 2014. As a result of the cut, the workforce will be reduced by 17%.

One week after billionaire chairman Lakshmi Mittal's visit to the steel plant in Temirtau, Kazakhstan, and two days after the news broke out, the local branch of the company issued a statement explaining that the resizing is mostly due to the global crisis, which has driven down the demand for the steel industry, now ailing worldwide.

Vijay Mahadevan, CEO of ArcelorMittal Temirtau, penned the statement and emphasized his commitment to the improvement of the company's performance through a thorough restructuring. Orders for the company's products diminished by 12.5% in the last two years, and the company grew a \$165 million debt by the end of 2013. Mr Mahadevan emphasized that "in 2013 it was possible to cut less jobs thanks to the introduction of a special part-time rotation, which met

with the displeasure of the workers."

Mahadevan was scolded by Mittal during his visit to the company's headquarters last December, when he reportedly said: "We cannot afford to carry out any improvements until you learn to save money and start making money" (*Novyi Vestnik Karaganda*, Dec 19, 2013). It's reported that Lakshmi Mittal organized a wedding for his nephew for \$80 million. Workers underline in contrast that the monthly payroll for the workers in the coal (i.e. the main) department is \$18 million.

Mittal left with the promise of more investments in Kazakhstan once the situation at the company takes the right path towards efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Right now, the 2014 business plan is "unacceptable" for the Indian billionaire.

On their part, workers are dissatisfied with the cuts, because this entails longer shifts and more responsibilities. One worker lamented that he could "barely physically manage to have the time to do everything he was required to" given that his department suffered "a cut of more than 60% of the workforce."

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev worked in the Temirtau steel plant during the Soviet era. Undoubtedly, a crisis in the industrial heart of the country might lead to public distress. Trade unions wrote a letter to the company's management warning that these policies may climax in "workers' discontent and lead to social tension and confrontation." ■

... Boeing pact

(continued from page 5)

fer had to be accepted to preserve jobs building the 777X—is contract language that allows Boeing to outsource union work. It reads: "Boeing may contract or outsource certain 777X wing fabrication and assembly work packages in whole or part."

This contract creates a new "normal." Why wait until a contract is expiring? Just tell the union that it has to make concessions, and that it has to be done now, not during contract negotiations, in order to eliminate the right to strike.

Clearly, the anger against the International's role in this travesty is boiling over. A reform slate of candidates—including Jay Cronk from local Lodge 1112 as candidate for International president—is running a reform campaign that calls for: Reducing the size and salaries of the Executive Council (Buffenbarger's 2012 salary was \$304,114, and nine other IAM International employees were paid more than \$265,000), holding union elections every four years, ending practices of nepotism and cronyism in the union, and stopping spending on luxury items like \$1 million a year to maintain the union's Lear jet, among other proposals. For their complete platform, see IAMreform.org.

These are important reforms but hopefully after the Boeing defeat they will expand their platform to include new strategies that will be based in a class-struggle perspective that would have said to Boeing officials: You can't escape us! If you flee to South Carolina or Alabama, we'll follow you there, organize the workers, and make your corporate lives a living hell! ■

The War to End All Wars turns 100



By JOHN SCHRAUFNAGEL

The 100th anniversary of the great imperialist slaughter known as World War I takes place this year. With 37 million casualties, over 16 million dead, and 20 million wounded, it was one of the bloodiest chapters of history.

In the coming months the bourgeois press and historians will write about the causes and will give all the answers except the correct one, which is that the war was the logical outcome of capitalism's relentless pursuit of profit, regardless of the consequences. The more honest bourgeois historians might say that nationalism, imperialism, and militarism caused the war, but these are merely effects of capitalism's drive to "accumulate, accumulate, accumulate." War has proven an excellent tool in the endless quest to accumulate.

Prior to World War I, bourgeois apologists were pointing to the 100 years of relative "peace" that the rise of capitalism had brought—the last major European war had been the Napoleonic war, approximately 100 years earlier. But peace "at home" was bought with blood in the colonies and the mass murder of indigenous peoples throughout North America.

Capitalism was promising that everyone's living standards would gradually rise without the ugly business of revolutions. Even many Marxist parties, including the largest—the Social Democratic Party (SPD) of Germany—accepted this gradualist approach and reserved talk of workers' control and a socialist economy for speeches at May Day parades and political rallies.

But beneath the surface, the internal contradictions inherent in capitalism continued to play out. What Marxists call "the crisis of overproduction" left many countries worried about opening new markets abroad because their own markets were saturated—hence the need to expand through imperialism and carve up the world into colonies. Germany got a late start and was busy scrambling for a foothold in Africa. There were diplomatic incidents in Morocco, adding to the tensions in Europe.

Competition with other colonial powers requires a military, support for which is won by fanning the flames of nationalism, which can get out of hand. Germany was building up its navy, to rival Great Britain on the high seas.

And Tsarist Russia had its eyes on the Balkans and



War has proven an excellent tool in capitalism's endless quest to 'accumulate.'

the rotting Ottoman Empire, specifically Turkey.

Prior to World War I, a massive arms race took place, and all the European countries were armed to the teeth—there was no "peace through strength." At the same time, socialist parties were gaining steam, and labor unrest was growing. One British officer summed up the situation: "A good big war just now might do a lot of good in killing Socialist nonsense and would probably put a stop to all this labor unrest."

War has served capitalism well. The capitalists use militarism, national patriotism, and imperialism to distract people from the core exploitation that is the capitalist system. War takes peoples' minds off the exploitation of the bosses and class conflict and focuses them instead on hating some "other"—the citizens of another capitalist state. The last phrase in the Communist Manifesto begins "workers of the world unite." It is not "workers of the world, first help your capitalists slaughter other workers and then unite." The SPD in Germany discarded this most basic tenet of Marxism—internationalism. The working class must not fight the working class of other countries but the ruling class of their own country.

V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky saw through the capitalist smokescreen and opposed the war throughout. When a comrade said to Lenin, "war is terrible" he replied, "Yes, it is terrible, terribly profitable." The Bolshevik slogan "land, bread, and peace" and their continuous opposition to the war helped propel them to power.

But when a movement like the Bolsheviks in Russia rises up and questions the irrational nature of the capitalist war-making system, the capitalists will do everything in their power to quash or deform it. The capitalists will never forgive the Bolsheviks for publishing their secret treaties, pointing out the undemocratic nature of their governments and the stupidity of the slaughter that was occurring in World War I.

Despite the Bolsheviks' offering very favorable treaty terms to the capitalist nations, their governments insisted on trying to crush the Bolshevik revolution with an invasion force from at least 14 countries, material and financial support for the White armies, and block-

(Right) Two wounded British soldiers walk arm in arm with a wounded German soldier to a hospital.

(Left) U.S. recruiting poster during World War I.

ades and sabotage of the devastated Russian economy.

In our time as well, capitalist governments, media, and bourgeois intellectuals continue to disparage and dismiss the Russian Revolution and communist ideals as if the inevitable outcome must be brutal dictatorship. If they were being honest, they would observe the more intimate and direct connections between capitalism, militarism, and war.

Capitalist dogma likewise lauds the maximization of private profits. Bourgeois economists repeatedly state, without any proof, that capitalism is the most rational and effective system for distributing "scarce" resources. If we assume (as economists love to do) that the system is wonderful and that war is terrible, defenders of capitalism are left with the unenviable task of explaining all the capitalist wars. They tie themselves in knots blaming such elements as human nature, misunderstandings, miscommunication, or the assassination of some worthless monarch.

The paradox that cannot be resolved is that capitalism requires an entire society to accept as its goal the maximization of profit by a few powerful individuals. While this outcome might make sense for the powerful individuals, it is illogical for society as a whole. Militarism and war become the method for solving this contradiction.

Capitalists do not want to pay the price for research and development; they only want the profits that result. Through the military budget (the U.S. spent \$518 billion on the Pentagon in 2013), these costs are socialized. This massive distortion of spending priorities away from what "rational" people would collectively choose—tackling the climate crisis, producing clean energy, health care for all, education for all, eradicating poverty—cannot be accomplished in the presence of true democracy. Therefore, we have fake democracy and a population made irrational with fear of some mysterious other rather than the true enemy. The inevitable outcome is perpetual war.

History never repeats itself exactly, but the world today looks much like it did prior to World War I. China, the United States, and Europe are carving up Africa—AGAIN. The United States is scrambling to build

(continued on page 9)