

RAY O' LIGHT NEWSLETTER

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The 2016 U.S. Election: the Last Two Months of the Presidential Campaign and Beyond

by RAY LIGHT

Coming out of the Republican and Democratic Party National Conventions in July, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton officially became the “Republocrat” candidates. Clinton and Trump, however, had been treated very differently by their respective political parties. This was due to the fact that, given the mass anger against them, the Wall Street ruling class had only succeeded in getting one of its puppets, Hillary Clinton, “picked” during the presidential primary season.

The Republican Convention was characterized by two virtually unprecedented facts:

1. **The open attempt**, led by Mitt Romney, the previous Republican presidential candidate, **to block the nomination of Trump** in the opening salvos of the convention.

2. After the failure of that political coup attempt, the **boycott** of the convention by **most of the Republican establishment**, including the two most recent Republican presidential candidates, McCain (2008) and Romney (2012), as well as the two most recent Republican presidents, two-term President, George W. Bush and his father, George H.W. Bush, who was elected way back in 1988. Among the other Republican “heavyweights” who failed to

(contd. on p. 2)

Colin Kaepernick and The Blood Splattered Banner

by CINDY SHEEHAN



About three months after my son Casey Sheehan was killed while being used as a “bullet sponge” by the US Army in the immoral and destructive US war against the people of Iraq, my then husband and I were invited to go to a minor

league baseball game in Sacramento. The next day was my birthday, so we accepted thinking it may be a good outing to take our minds off of our immense grief and spend time with loved ones at a pastime that used to give us a lot of pleasure.

Patrick and I were to meet our friends at the game and we arrived a little late. As soon as we walked up to the gate the traditional playing of the Star Spangled Banner (SSB) commenced. I remember grasping some wrought iron fence posts as if I were going to fall into a black abyss, putting my head down and sobbing.

Of course, I have always thought the SSB is a horrible song sung to a horrible melody, but I had

(contd. on p. 6)

Do you know who said it??

“Shamefully, the decaying Democratic Party works to block millions of voters from having a choice of progressive third-party candidates. No country in the Western World places more obstacles to third-party and independent candidates getting on the ballot than the United States. Democrats and Republicans built this exclusionary duopoly ... A political monoculture with safe, gerrymandered incumbents serving myopic commercial interests is systematically undemocratic.”

Hint: This person is speaking from personal experience and is defending the right and need for current Green Party Presidential Candidate Jill Stein to continue to run a strong campaign in the race featuring the highly unpopular Clinton and Trump.

—Still stumped? See page 10 for the mystery answer.

Also included in this issue:

Follow NFL Kaepernick's Fine Example	page 7
ILPS Condemns Turkish Invasion of Syria	page 8
Flint Water Crisis and the Class Struggle	page 9
Stop Dakota Access Pipeline!	page 11



appear was John Kasich, the current governor of Ohio, the state that hosted the Convention. The Trump Team had to resort to having Trump's immediate family members and corporate employees speak one at a time, endorsing Trump for President.*

Thus, Trump, the person at the top of the ticket for one of the two major political parties that share power in the USA on behalf of Wall Street imperialism, had been opposed and then deserted by the Republican party establishment.

The exact opposite treatment was accorded Clinton. She was so brazenly promoted by the Wall Street-backed Democratic establishment that Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz had to resign on the eve of the Democratic Convention and forfeit all her prominent duties there because of her blatant and overwhelming bias in favor of Clinton and against Senator Bernie Sanders. WikiLeaks had published damaging emails that established this bias beyond a doubt. (Wasserman-Schultz was immediately hired by the Clinton campaign.)

Meanwhile, Sanders had promised ahead of the campaign (in a deal of some kind) that he would support whatever Democrat was nominated through the primaries at the Convention. Despite the fact that WikiLeaks had made clear that the Wasserman-Schultz-led DNC had rigged the Democratic primary process in favor of Clinton, Sanders "kept the faith" with Clinton, the Democratic Party and the U.S. imperialist ruling



class. He played the key role in suppressing and sabotaging his progressive, pro-people and pro-working class base during the Democratic Convention and heartily endorsed Clinton.

Furthermore, throughout the skillfully choreographed Democratic National Convention, The Wall Street/DNC/Clinton team had a string of "A list" movie stars and entertainers, and their own billionaire, former New York City Mayor Bloomberg, along with former President Bill Clinton, current President Obama as well as First Lady Michelle Obama and Vice President Joe Biden all give stirring testimony endorsing Clinton. Sitting President Obama even claimed that Hillary Clinton is the best prepared candidate for U.S. President in history! (Our Democratic National Convention leaflet observed: "**President Barack Obama,**



one of Wall Street's most valuable Presidents ever, has now openly declared his loyalty to Wall Street's chief remaining candidate by endorsing Hillary

Clinton as 'the best prepared candidate for President in U.S. history.' Her preparation includes the following: Clinton has taken huge bribes / "speaking fees" from the likes of Goldman Sachs, the biggest Wall Street winner in the current economic crisis thanks to the George W. Bush and Obama Regimes. As Secretary of State, Clinton helped to oust President Zelaya of Honduras and then helped Obama to prevent the elected President's return. She helped lead Obama's colonialist war on Libya, under the Qaddafi Regime, the most successful country on the African continent and now a ruined nation-state. And, with blood on her hands, in true white supremacist fashion, she infamously declared, regarding the cold-blooded murder of Qaddafi: 'We came, we saw, he died!' Indeed, Clinton is well prepared to take the helm of the U.S. Empire.")

Just so we couldn't miss the point: Clinton received the ringing endorsement of former CIA Director Leon Panetta and a rousing, belligerent and militant endorsement speech by retired four

*To add insult to injury: Texan Senator Ted Cruz, who had finished second to Trump in the Republican primaries, spoke at the Convention and defiantly refused to endorse Trump! Perhaps not surprisingly, Texas is currently a dead heat between Clinton and Trump.

(contd. on p. 3)

star general John Allen, flanked by about forty other high ranking retired military



officers from all the services. Especially after Sanders' concession speech, with military precision, the organized Clinton delegates repeatedly shouted down the anti-war chants of (die-hard, though discouraged and disoriented) Sanders delegates with "USA! USA!" Remarkably, at the conclusion of the Democratic National Convention, the WikiLeaks revelations that had resulted in DNC



Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz' resignation at the outset was transformed by the monopoly capitalist-controlled media from a serious political problem facing Clinton into a Trump problem based on anti-Russian hysteria in which the supposed "wild man" Trump was accused of working with and being "soft" on Russia and its leader, Vladimir Putin.

In fact, Trump had indeed raised the truth that it was not Putin and Russia that had been menacing the USA but the U.S. government that had treated Russia in a bullying and provocative way! (Remember that Reagan promised Gorbachev that NATO would not surround the former USSR when the Warsaw Pact was disbanded! Now Russia is completely surrounded.)

Until now (early September), this is the way the campaign has proceeded. Anyone you meet who claims they are supporting Clinton because "Trump is crazy. We don't want his finger on the button, etc." and "We are against war and for peace" should be challenged on the basis of the anti-Russia hysteria in the USA that has now caught Trump up in it and is currently the biggest flash point for a major world war under a new Clinton Administration. Clearly, Clinton is one of the biggest imperialist war-mongers in the world. Hence, serious pacifists should be challenged to consider voting for Trump

in order to stop Clinton!!! *Then they should reject both.**

Finally, thus far, this Presidential Campaign between the Republican and Democratic candidates is most reminiscent of the 1964 campaign between Democratic President Lyndon Johnson (the Texan who had replaced John Kennedy upon his assassination in Dallas in 1963) and Barry Goldwater, the Arizona Republican Senator who represented the "far-right" of the Republican Party in those days. Arguably the most famous and effective TV political ad in U. S. history was the Atomic Bomb mushroom cloud allegedly showing what would happen if Goldwater was elected. Eerily similar today is the widespread worry that Trump doesn't have the judgment to be the commander in chief with his hands on the nuclear arsenals.



1964 Presidential Ad Against Goldwater

Also, in 1964, there was much speculation that the Goldwater campaign was throwing the election to LBJ. Similarly, there is much speculation today that Donald Trump and/or his team is actually throwing the election to Clinton. *The Nation's* Deadline Poet, Calvin Trillin sounds this theme in his current (9/12-9/19/16) humorous ditty: "Trump Team Strategy?" "*For moderates, we'll bring in Bannon, The loosest sort of alt-right cannon. And even if that tactic fails, We'll win the gals with Roger Ailes. The only thing this campaign lacks Is David Duke to lure the blacks.*"

At any rate, it is instructive to note the observation of Daniel Ellsberg, the man who later leaked the Pentagon Papers to help stop the U.S. War in Vietnam. According to Ellsberg, on the very day of

*Dahoud Andre, Brooklyn-based Haitian radio host and Komokoda activist (Committee to Mobilize Against Dictatorship in Haiti) who supported Bernie Sanders against Hillary Clinton in the Democratic Primary, argues in a 7/29/16 blogtalkradio interview with Alice Backer that "the lesser of the two evils" is Donald Trump. Andre characterizes Trump as a "dog who barks loud but never bit anyone" in contrast to the Clintons who "have caused death and destruction around the world."

(contd. on p. 4)

the 1964 Presidential election, the top Pentagon and State Department officials of LBJ's Democratic administration (including Ellsberg himself) were meeting on the issue of Vietnam, the main political issue of that election. Ellsberg admits that all the options they were considering were so-called Goldwater options! Thus, when LBJ defeated Goldwater in a landslide, the results were used by LBJ and U.S. imperialism to push aggressively into Vietnam as Goldwater was promising to do. The people thought they were electing the more pacific leader. Instead they got the longest war in U.S. history until Afghanistan.

Given the line-up of military, political, economic and intelligence authorities at Clinton's DNC coronation in July, it seems quite possible that a Clinton landslide in November could lead quickly to a major war with Russia in particular. Furthermore, whatever left-progressive movement exists in the USA and whatever labor movement has any working class militancy, certainly given their sorry records during Obama's two terms, would give Clinton plenty of leeway on the economy as well as the question of war and peace. This would allow Clinton and her openly pro TPP Vice President, Tim Kaine, in coordination with other "Republicrat" servants of Wall Street, to implement the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and other pro-business, anti-labor and anti-democratic measures.

On the flip side, if Trump were to win, it would encourage the white supremacist base but at the same time produce less desperation and urgency, at least for a while, in going after whatever targets it sought. A Trump win would also disrupt whatever level of stability Wall Street has the capacity to create in which to maximize its obscene banking and corporate profits. U.S. participation in the TPP would most likely be blocked, a real, *if temporary*, reprieve for the oppressed and exploited of the USA and the other eleven TPP countries. And it would quickly arouse whatever resistance among Afro-Americans, Latinos, labor, Green and Sanders activists and others. If Trump loses, watch out for an immediate upsurge in fascist mobilization up to



and possibly including the violent overthrow of the "elected" government, perhaps a military-connected coup and even greater disruption on a countrywide scale than if he wins, upsetting Wall Street's profit maximization in the process.

Indeed, as we observed in the DNC leaflet, "In style and substance, **Donald Trump** is a fascist politician in the classic Adolph Hitler and 'National Socialist' (Nazi) sense. This billionaire's angry campaign combines demagogic populist rhetoric proclaiming that the system is rigged against the majority of us, on the one hand, with chauvinistic hatred toward Latino immigrants, Muslim religious believers, Afro-American citizens and many other 'non-white American' ethnic groups here and around the world, on the other. He argues further that because of his immense personal wealth, he is 'independent' of the Wall Street rulers. Regarding the U.S. Empire in decline, he promises to 'make America great again.'...But Trump's similarities to Hitler and German fascism of the 1930's does not automatically make him the *main* political target who must be stopped at all costs at this particular historical moment. Fascism comes to power through different paths as shown, for example, in the experience of Fascist Italy as compared to Nazi Germany. Comrade Dimitroff observed that, 'Bourgeois governments usually pass through a number of preliminary stages and adopt a number of reactionary measures which directly facilitate the accession to power of fascism. Whoever does not fight the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie and the growth of fascism at these preparatory stages is not in a position to prevent the victory of fascism, but, on the contrary, facilitates that victory.'"

CONCLUSION: Clearly, from the standpoint of the working class and oppressed nationalities within the USA, there is no good outcome of the 2016 Presidential Election. This is even more true for the international working class and oppressed peoples of the world.

What should be done by us, then, in the months leading up to the November election? What should our approach be to the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election going forward?



Priority #1: In most places, we need to wage political struggle on behalf of a *BOYCOTT of the presidential race, casting a blank ballot for president, while exercising our right to vote down ballot* — for Senators, House members, Governors, state legislators, etc. This casting of a blank ballot for president will register our disgust with the Republicrat Rule and some level of commitment to help smash it.

Priority #2: In some specific locales in at least a few states, *we should get involved with the Green Party Stein-Baraka presidential campaign*, we should be able to activate our own forces and engage contacts on behalf of Stein et al. This is in line with our call in the DNC leaflet “to stay in the streets and continue to fight for the Sanders Campaign platform demands. And unlike Sanders ... protest the Obama-led imperialist wars, including the current wars throughout the Middle East.” It is in line with our call “to expose and isolate the Democratic Party and work to build an anti-fascist, labor/oppressed nationalities Third Party.” While the Stein/Green Party campaign does not have the same mass base that the Sanders Campaign had, it does have the advantage of already being independent of the rotten and corrupt Democratic Party of U.S. imperialism.



Priority #3: Cast a protest vote for some other third party campaign. This, too, will help register your opposition to the “Republicrat” Rule of Wall Street.

Priority #4: We need to involve our newly organized political groupings in Referenda campaigns on Sanders Campaign-type issues like single-payer universal healthcare, defense of the environment and breaking up of the big banks, and run independent candidates in local elections around the country.

Priority #5: We need to organize to oppose the drive toward fascism in the USA — including defense of the Afro-American people against police brutality and Latino immigrants against ICE raids and against increased militarization of the domestic police and U.S. Society.

Our main goal in this election period is the most effective exposure of the *bankruptcy of the so-called two party system*



in the USA, its inability to provide any real voice for the 99% of us. We have to do the maximum to *help smash Wall Street's political duopoly.* In this election cycle we are aided by how incredibly unpopular Clinton and Trump, the standard-bearer for each of the two major monopoly capitalist and imperialist parties, both are. This is a reflection of how the U.S. Empire is losing its political hold on the people of the USA and is disintegrating.

In the aftermath of the stolen 2000 presidential election, and for several years thereafter, we referred to George W. Bush as the “illegitimate president of the USA.” In the forefront of our political exposure of the U.S. Empire for the foreseeable future let us place great emphasis on the unpopular and anti-people character of the new U.S. president and on the anti-democratic process that elevated that person to the Presidency.

Clearly, the aftermath of the U.S. presidential election will put the U.S. working class and the 99% of us in a more difficult position at least in the short run. However, there may well be more opportunity for militant mass struggle against finance capital in the upcoming period. The more clearly the U.S. workers and oppressed and the 99% repudiate the Trump/Clinton “choice” to lead the U.S. Empire, the stronger our mass resistance to U.S. imperialism will be.



(Cindy Sheehan continued)

always dutifully arisen (no hand over my heart, though) to wait out the seemingly interminable (and often bad) singing of it to cheer “Play Ball” very loudly when it was over. However, on 9 July of 2004, as I sobbed, I knew I would never, ever show that song, or the flag it represented any more of my formerly misplaced respect. After all, one was folded and handed to me with all the formal pomp and somberness at the graveside of my oldest child. Since then, not only have all the patriotic trappings of this violent empire disgusted me, they remind me of the worst day of my life.

Even though I have been a lifelong baseball fan I have never really connected with football. Again, in the last 12 years since Casey’s death and my deepening anti-war and anti-Imperial work, I recognize football as a miniature war game that can cause its players real and lifelong damage due to traumatic brain injury and other traumas. However, since I live in Northern California in “49er Country,” I had heard of their immensely talented but ultimately disappointing quarterback, Colin Kaepernick. Imagine my surprise when “Kap” caused such a stir by not standing during the National Anthem and putting out this statement about it:

“I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder.”

In the milieu of the NFL and its supporters, I believe that Kap’s stand was courageous, and long, long past due.

The SSB, written by Francis Scott Key during the Battle of Fort McHenry in Baltimore during the war of 1812 has deep roots in racism and “Frank Key” was a very close friend and in the Kitchen Cabinet of Indian Killer Andrew Jackson. Key was very much against abolitionists and their philosophy and believed that “negroes” were “mentally inferior.”

During the War of 1812 Frank Key was a Lieutenant in the US forces and was bested by a group of “Colonial Marines” who were a group of slaves who were promised freedom by the British forces for running away and fighting for the British. The third verse of the SSB reflects Key’s bitter distaste of the group:

*And where is that band who so vauntingly swore,
That the havoc of war and the battle’s confusion
A home and a Country should leave us no more?
Their blood has wash’d out their foul footstep’s pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.*

The Colonial Marines were an affront to Key’s views about slaves being morally inferior and he was offended by the bravery of some to have the temerity to fight for their freedom.

The terror of police violence against Afro-American communities and other people of color is real and I am sure Kap was inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement to sit down in this belated protest against oppression. But when has the U.S. ever NOT murdered and oppressed these “demographics?”

The Blood Splattered Banner “waves” over the occupied lands of almost 200 countries where the US military maintains a military presence, whether large, or small; active bombing, or a more quiet, but unyielding and potentially violent force.

The Blood Splattered Banner rode in the front of the invading forces from US cavalries that exterminated native populations — never distinguishing between warrior, or woman; young or old. The bloody flag waved over Wounded Knee and Sand Creek where the human gore was knee deep and the feeling of “moral superiority” of the genocidal troops over the people they slaughtered precisely echoed Scott’s views about slaves and the same justification the Empire uses against Islam now and communism earlier.

One of the great ironies about the brouhaha over this is that it has been proven that the Pentagon pays tens of millions of dollars to the NFL every year for “patriotic” military recruitment product placement, AND the NFL is income tax exempt. Maybe if any of us were benefitting so handsomely by pretending to be patriotic, we would also push the anthem and fake umbrage against principled protests.

So many centuries of imperial violence and many millions of ruined lives later, one football player sits down and the media commentary is around “disrespect” of the other players, fans, and veterans (who don’t ever fight for freedom, but for profit and psychopathic dominance). The US imperialist ruling class is trying to bury the profound reasons to never stand during the bigoted song, or to salute the bloody flag of empire.

Let's Follow NFL Quarterback Kaepernick's Fine Example!

by RAY LIGHT

San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick sat and then knelt during the National Anthem opening the last few National Football League (NFL) pre-season games played by his team. As he explained: "Yes, I'll continue to sit. I'm going to continue to stand with the people that are being oppressed. ... When there's significant change and I feel like that flag represents what it's supposed to represent ... , I'll stand."



Big time athletics, especially professional sports, have consistently served to promote loyalty to the monopoly capitalist and imperialist system, to the U.S. Empire. None more so than the NFL. Kaepernick's courageous stand thus sparked tremendous criticism as well as substantial support.

This article is a complement to the powerful and compelling article by our courageous comrade, Cindy Sheehan. Here, I have three points to add:

1. For more than four decades now, the U.S. Empire has been able to largely coopt its domestic opposition. So for a sports figure today to take the deliberate stand to reject unquestioned reverence for the U.S. flag and the national anthem is to raise the question among the oppressed and exploited everywhere in the USA about the need to fundamentally change the system. Colin Kaepernick, with his symbolic action, has taken the culture of resistance far beyond Bernie Sanders or Jill Stein or most of the U.S. "left," with all its ideological and political rhetoric.
2. Already, at least a few other NFL players and other professional athletes have joined Kaepernick's protest. And the wise NBA superstar of old, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who is now a widely read columnist, has accurately defended Kaepernick as "a patriot." In this time of U.S. Empire, however, U.S. patriotism has a negative as well as a positive side. Not surprisingly, Kaepernick draws a false distinction between the U.S. Empire's war at home

and the war abroad. He is protesting the epidemic of police murders against Afro-Americans and other oppressed peoples within the USA. At the same time he leaves out of his protest the U.S. war machine used against oppressed and exploited peoples abroad.

Indeed, after fifteen years of an uninterrupted Bush/Cheney and Obama/Clinton led U.S. war of terror against the peoples of the Middle East, Latin America and many other parts of the globe, it is no wonder that violence in the USA is so rampant. It is no wonder that police departments around the country, many of them armed with weapons of war given to them by the U.S. military (remember Ferguson), and whose police are recruited from military veterans, are so systemically violent against Afro-Americans and other peoples of color. It is no wonder that, at a time of unprecedented economic inequality between the top 1% of the U.S. population and the rest of us, the 99%, police violence against the working class and poor people of all ethnicities, including whites, is at epidemic proportions.

3. Abdul-Jabbar is a living connection to the late 1960's, the last period that included powerful demonstrations by sports figures against U.S. imperialism, none more important than Muhammad Ali. Then a young budding basketball superstar Kareem, along with NBA basketball great Bill Russell, NFL great Jim Brown and several other sports superstars, stood with Ali, when he was viciously attacked by virtually the entire U.S. establishment. Those too young to remember how Ali was stripped of his world heavyweight boxing title and prevented from boxing for a living for having the audacity to refuse to serve the U.S. military in its criminal war against the people of Vietnam will be shocked since the powers that be at his recent death practically canonized him. In fact, Ali's act of defiance was far greater than Kaepernick's and it was a global not a national issue. But it was in a time when the Afro-American people were much more anti-imperialist minded than they or any other sector of the U.S. population has been since then.

The fact that such a stand by a well-known athlete like Colin Kaepernick is long overdue underscores its importance and the need for us to follow his example. This is the main point. Let me urge everyone who supports the Revolutionary Organization of Labor (USA) to *find the appropriate means in your situation to defend and replicate Colin Kaepernick's courageous stand.*

ILPS Condemns Recent Invasion of Northern Syria by Turkey

by Professor JOSE MARIA SISON, Chairperson International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS)
September 3, 2016

We in the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) condemn in the strongest terms the invasion by Turkish troops of the Northern City of Jerablus on August 24. We likewise condemn the US and European governments for their hypocritical stance and actual intentions in pursuit of their imperialist objectives in the Middle-East.

Turkey claims the invasion is part of its anti-ISIS operations. But there are strong indications that there had been a previous agreement between ISIS and Turkey for ISIS to turn over Jerablus to Turkish forces so that Jerablus will remain as a base for Salafi forces in making trouble in Syria and serve as a corridor for anti-Assad foreign fighters to cross the border to and from Syria.

Turkey's aim is to kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand, the operation in Northern Syria is part of its campaign to crush the forces led by the PKK [Kurdish Workers Party] who are among the most effective armed forces against ISIS and other Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups. On the other hand, they want to keep the area under their control so that it can continue assisting ISIS and the other terrorist groups in overthrowing Assad and keeping alive Turkey's hegemonic ambitions in the Middle-East.

Turkish forces have launched airstrikes and bombardments of civilian areas killing and wounding hundreds of people and destroying homes and infrastructure.

There are also reports of Turkish forces and their Al Qaeda collaborators using chemical weapons. These attacks result in more destruction in the region, creating more refugees and massive humanitarian crisis.

The US and EU have not only turned a blind eye to these atrocities but some EU states have even expressed their support for such operations.

The ILPS supports the struggle of the Kurdish people for national and social liberation. The ILPS supports the initiative of the Kurdish

people and other ethnic groups to establish an autonomous democratic administration in Rojava.

The ILPS condemns all illegal foreign intervention in the Syrian conflict that has wrought havoc on the lives, homes and livelihood of the people and supports the principle that the peoples in the region have the right to settle their internal problems and decide their own fate without foreign interference.



Kurdish Resistance Fighters

The Flint Water Crisis and the Class Struggle

by PEARL HAINES

The seeds that led to the contamination of Flint's water were planted on April 25, 2014, when the city's water source was switched from pre-treated Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) water to the Flint River, after the city's contract with DWSD expired. This was supposed to be a temporary measure, as Flint's water supply would change to Lake Huron after construction on the Karegnondi Water Authority's pipelines (KWA) are completed later this year (2016). Governor Rick Snyder stated publicly that making the city's water source the Flint River, instead of using treated sources from DWSD, was also intended to save \$5,000,000 by the time the KWA project was completed. However, documentation obtained by the online newspaper *Motor City Muckraker* shows that DWSD was willing to cut a deal that would have saved the financially struggling Flint \$800 million over a thirty year period, and was 20% more inexpensive than the city's eventual use of the KWA.

Now why would Snyder, a government official who has claimed over and over to have his constituents' best interests in mind, lie about wanting to save money? Without wild speculation, the argument could be made that Snyder, a member of the U.S. ruling class Republican Party, intended to use the pipeline from Lake Huron to provide water for fracking, as speculated by many political insiders in Michigan. (<http://markmaynard.com/2016/01/could-the-flint-water-crisis-have-its-origins-in-a-desire-to-increase-fracking-in-michigan/>) It would not be the first time a member of the ruling class would prioritize the desires of wealthy donors over the working-class people he/she controls.

Residents started to complain about the color, taste, and smell of the city water not long after the source was switched to the river. Eighteen months after the change, a Flint doctor, Dr. Hanna, found extremely elevated blood lead levels in local children, all while the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality claimed that the water was safe for daily use. Testing carried out by Virginia Tech students (who were contacted by a Flint citizen) determined the cause of the lead exposure and malodorous, discolored water. Due to the Flint River having a higher chloride concentration than pre-treated DWSD water, the inside of the pipes (installed in the early twentieth century) that supplied homes, schools, and businesses in the city were corroded, causing lead to leach into the water used by residents.

In October 2015, after an online petition with more than 26,000 signatures was delivered to Flint Mayor Dayne Walling, the city started receiving Detroit water again. Unfortunately, irreparable damage has been caused to the children who drank and bathed in the water. It's been

determined that between 6,000 and 12,000 children in Flint were exposed to high levels of lead. Lead exposure in children under the age of six causes any number of conditions: anemia, renal failure, developmental disabilities, and behavioral problems. Thousands of children are permanently damaged because of the machinations of a profit-driven government.



In March 2015, the Flint City Council voted to have the city's water supply switched back to DWSD, but this decision was overridden by the state-appointed emergency manager, who was in charge of the municipality's finances and still claimed that the river water was safe to use. And when the state of Michigan loaned Flint \$7 million so that the city could cover its deficit and get out from under emergency management the following month, one of the conditions was not going back to Detroit water without approval from Governor Snyder. This was a form of extortion perpetrated on Flint city residents; since the municipality was deemed unfit to be run without a state official, the elected City Council's independent decision and concerns (confirmed by tests) about the water supply were disregarded.

As of January 2016, nearly 41% of Flint residents lived below the U.S. poverty line. Although state government officials would never publically say it, the water crisis that happened in Flint would have never occurred in one of the municipalities of Oakland County, one of the richest counties in Michigan (or at the very least, the problem would have been resolved quickly once the residents complained about the taste and color of the water coming out of their taps). But Flint was once a proud city of auto manufacturing workers. At the peak of its strength in the 1960s and 1970s, the city's General Motors plants employed more than 80,000 people. As of now, that number has dropped to about 5,000 thanks to the mass layoffs that happened at the company in the

1980s. The exodus of good General Motor union jobs (along with the supplier and subcontractor positions utilized by the company) led to the exodus of residents who had been employed. Former employees unable to relocate were trapped in debt with underwater mortgages and eventual poverty. GM's presence in the city was a double-edged sword. In its heyday, the company brought vibrancy and dollars to Flint. When the job market declined, the loss of morale and economic health among the city's residents led to widespread crime and decaying neighborhoods. And the loss of Flint's independent economic viability led to the municipality's takeover by the state's emergency manager and made the city's children vulnerable to being exposed to the lead-tainted water.

Filmmaker Michael Moore summed up the loss of Flint's self-determination in his 1989 documentary "Roger and Me":

"First, close 11 factories in the U.S., then open 11 in Mexico where you pay workers 70 cents an hour. Then, use the money you've saved by building cars in Mexico to take over other companies, preferably high-tech firms and weapons manufacturers. Next, tell the union you're broke and they happily agree to give back a couple billion dollars in wage cuts. You then take that money from the workers, and eliminate their jobs by building more foreign factories."



The lead poisoning of Flint's citizens (and the deaths and permanent disabilities of the city's young children) strongly makes the case for an active working class-based political party. While the Republican-led Michigan state government was mostly responsible for the switch to the Flint River and the loss of potable water to city residents, state Democrats, the self-declared progressive party, did not push to have the incident resolved sooner. If the people of Flint, an economically-depressed, black majority city, had had the political clout of a socialist party, the municipal water would have been taken from a non-contaminated source much sooner. The events in Flint, while a tragedy, should serve as the impetus we revolutionaries need to help awaken the people to dismantle the current government system.

**Still stumped?! See answer below
to front page mystery quotation.**



Ralph Nader, the Green Party presidential candidate in 2000, has been widely blamed by Democratic Party faithful for the election of George W. Bush. Nader exposes this "conventional wisdom" now being resurrected in the monopolist-controlled mass media in the 2016 election. Their aim is to suppress the vote for the

Green Party's Jill Stein and to promote Hillary Clinton on behalf of Wall Street finance capital.

In a 9/2/16 letter to the Washington Post, Mr. Nader reminds the reader that it was not the Greens but "the absurd electoral college that threw an election," that "Mr. Gore won the popular vote handily," that "then-Florida Gov. Jeb Bush's administration unlawfully purged thousands of Democratic voters from the state's rolls, and Palm Beach County used deceptive butterfly ballots. The Florida Supreme Court's mandated

recount was blocked by a narrow conservative majority on the Supreme Court that then selected Mr. Bush as president." In reality, the scapegoating of the Green Party in 2000 took the heat off of the criminal conduct of the Republican Party, the U.S. Supreme Court and the rigged electoral process in the USA.

Finally, Mr. Nader gives real encouragement to the 2016 Green Party candidate: "Ms. Stein will not abandon the Green Party's resistance to Wall Street's disastrous attack on our economy, the bipartisan expansion of the war-making empire and the bipartisan backing for bloated military and corporate welfare budgets that starve monies for public works and services. She opposes both parties, indentured to the craven demands of monied interests."



—the Editor

STOP THE DAKOTA ACCESS OIL PIPELINE!

by ROSE BROWN

An on-line petition to President Obama reads: **“The Dakota Access pipeline would fuel climate change, cause untold damage to the environment, and significantly disturb sacred lands and the way of life for Native Americans in the upper Midwest. Direct the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to revoke the permits under ‘Nationwide Permit 12’ and stop the Dakota Access pipeline once and for all.”** This petition is being circulated by CREDO Action and DAILY KOS, among others, and has already garnered hundreds of thousands of signatures. *We urge our readers to sign and circulate this petition.*

The projected Dakota Access Pipeline is a \$3.7 billion project starting in the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota and extending over 1,100 miles through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and ending in Illinois. It is projected to carry 450,000 barrels of fracked crude (dirty) oil daily. According to CREDO Action, the pipeline would “cut through fragile wildlife habitat, environmentally sensitive areas, and sovereign tribal property.... cross under the Missouri River, threatening drinking water downstream if a catastrophic oil spill occurs.”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers granted permits for the project to a Texas-based company, Energy Transfer Partners, under a fast-track process with little environmental review and no significant public input. The pressure to build the pipeline is driven by BIG OIL’s insatiable drive for corporate profits. The company is bankrolled by two dozen major Wall Street banks and financial institutions, including the Bank of America, Goldman Sachs, Wells Fargo and JP Morgan Chase. An Energy Transfer Partner subsidiary began bulldozing indigenous burial sites over the Labor Day weekend.



The Standing Rock Sioux have been protesting in North Dakota since April of 2016 through lawsuits and peaceful prayer camps, while farmers and landowners in Iowa have been fighting to stop the pipeline there for more than two years. Recently, thousands of indigenous people and environmental activists have joined in solidarity. Some have physically blocked the pipeline’s construction. These protests are reported to have included over 1,000 indigenous representatives of more than 100 tribes from the U.S. and Canada, reportedly the largest U.S. indigenous protest in decades. Protesters were attacked with dogs and pepper spray. Dozens have been arrested, including Green Party Presidential candidate Jill Stein and Vice-Presidential candidate Ajamu Baraka. Phyllis Young of the Standing Rock Sioux proclaimed to the press: “This is our homeland. We are Dakota. Dakota means friend or ally. Dakota Access has taken our name.”



The Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA applauds these protests. We are happy that Cindy Sheehan, such a formidable comrade, plans to join the forces there at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. For the indigenous people are leading a fight to defend the land and the future of our country!

There are two important points in our Basic Principles of Unity directly related to this struggle that I would like to share: “The United States is a multi-national state including the imprisoned nations of Afro-America, Aztlan (U.S. Southwest), Puerto Rico, the Appalachian people, the indigenous peoples and other oppressed nations and peoples.” AND “Capitalism degenerates the environment and threatens the survival of human life. The true path for environmental justice and salvation is through the struggle for national liberation, socialism and communism.”

* * * * *

*"The great appear great to us
Only because we are on our knees:
Let us rise."*

— Camille Desmoulins

Revolutionary Organization of Labor (ROL), USA is a revolutionary working class organization that fights for working class power and the elimination of all human exploitation. ***Ray O'Light Newsletter*** is the regular publication of ROL, USA. We believe, with comrade Lenin, that the working class "... needs the truth and there is nothing so harmful to its cause as plausible, respectable petty bourgeois lies." In the spirit of Karl Marx who taught that "our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action," we welcome your comments.

Comradely the Newsletter Staff,

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