

PEOPLE'S WORLD

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CPUSA condemns Arizona shootings

By CPUSA

Saturday, Jan 8, U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, Federal Judge John Roll and many others, including a nine-year-old girl were shot during the congresswoman's constituency meeting at a Tucson, Ariz. Safeway grocery store parking lot. As of Sunday morning six have been reported killed, including Judge Roll, and 12 wounded, including Rep. Giffords, who was shot in the head and is expected to survive.

In no uncertain terms, the Communist Party USA strongly and unequivocally condemns this outrageous act of violence. We extend our condolences to the family and friends of the victims. We hope for full recoveries for all the wounded, including Rep. Giffords.

It is reported that law enforcement has in custody a 22-year-old white man, Jared Lee Loughner, as the accused shooter. It is not clear whether the shooter acted alone or with accomplices.

Many are dubbing this a tragedy, which undoubtedly it is. But it doesn't end there.

While we do not yet know the motivation of the crime, many have surmised that the motivation is political because of the atmosphere of violent language and threats against Rep. Giffords and other Congressional Democrats. Political or not, the extreme right-wing tea party movement



and their anti-government rantings and ravings helped create an atmosphere that allowed or even encouraged this attack. For instance, until the day of the event when it was removed, Sarah Palin featured Giffords on her webpage with the congresswoman's district in the crosshairs of a gun, targeting her for her support of healthcare reform.

Political hate speech has consequences. Giffords herself said, "Palin has crosshairs on our district; people have to realize there are conse-

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quences to that." She said that in a TV interview after her Arizona office had been broken into and vandalized after her vote for the national health care reform bill. Giffords was a frequent target of the tea party movement. Judge Roll, a Republican, had also received threats from the right.

The link to rhetoric and violence doesn't end with the Palin and her tea party.

Yet, the link to rhetoric and violence doesn't end with the Palin and her tea party. It extends to the political leadership of Arizona and the Republican Party, who have fomented laws and policies that logically lead to violence. Starting with the anti-immigrant SB 1070 and banning ethnic studies, leaders like Governor Jan Brewer, and Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio have to take as much responsibility for this violence as Palin and her cohorts. All their condolences ring hollow because of their callous inflammatory rhetoric and romanticization of guns and "Second Amendment remedies".

Arizona is burning. It is Ground Zero for this extreme far-right, and their corporate, multi-billionaire sponsors. In the words of Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik in responding to political mood leading to the shooting shooting, "Arizona I think has become the capital. We have become the mecca for prejudice and bigotry."

In the hours after the shooting, some right

wing elements seem to have created fake social networking pages in order to associate Loughner with the Left. The full story about the mental state and political motivations for the shooter will hopefully come to light soon. The attempt to paint this suspect as a leftist continues the far-right's use of anti-communism and anti-democratic rhetoric to cover-up their own role in continuing the hate until its logical violent conclusion.

It was Giffords father, 75-year-old Spencer Giffords, who wept when asked if his 40-year-old daughter had any enemies, and answered, "Yeah," to The New York Post, "The whole tea party."

This shooting marks a dangerous and sad day for our country. It's up to the American people to say, "Enough" to the hate, the racism, incitement to violence and the fascist-like behavior of anti-government thugs. Political violence and assassination has no place in our democracy.



The People's World publishes the views of the CPUSA.

Public workers in the bull's-eye

By PW Editorial Board

The 2010 election results and the resurgence of the corporate ultra-right mean renewed attacks on labor. Taking advantage of the economic crisis, the Republicans have placed public workers in the bull's-eye of their attack. Forget that the Great Recession was brought on by Wall Street gambling and corruption. Forget that the banking giants, the hedge funds, the insurance giants, the oil and energy companies, and the rest of big business are back to making out like bandits.

Of course, the Republican right launches these kinds of attacks on labor every time they have majorities. But this is much more than your run-of-the-mill, knee-jerk, anti-unionism. This time the attack is more like the McCarthyite anti-communism of the 1950s. Like McCarthyism, today's attack is a broad, sweeping ideological and legal attack on the democratic rights of labor and the working class. And while its current bull's-eye is public workers, its real target is organized labor and the working class as a whole. (And let's be clear, workers and the working class ARE the taxpayers.)

On the ideological side, deficits are caused by lazy, overpaid public workers, they argue. War budgets and tax breaks for the rich and corporations are not factors. Public employee pension funds and health care costs are bleeding federal and state governments dry. Ignore that pensions and health care are often negotiated in the place of pay raises, and are not gifts, but earned income.

In this mythical world, the public workers unions have way too much clout.

On the legal side is a barrage of anti-labor legislation at the state level. This includes right-to-work-for-less laws, laws to outlaw strikes by public workers including teachers, laws to strip public workers of collective bargaining rights, and efforts to weaken workers compensation laws and prevailing wage laws. The offensive against public workers has shifted to the state and local government arena. Now is the time for all good progressives to come to the aid of their local public workers. Just as it took a broad democratic coalition to break the back of McCarthyism, so too will it take all who believe in democracy and basic labor rights to beat back this attack on public workers.

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Cuomo likely to propose austerity budget

By Gabe Falsetta & Bill Davis

We need radical reform, we need a new approach, we need a new perspective, Democrat Andrew Cuomo, said in his inaugural speech. This statements offer some perspective as to what his budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year will look like: “austerity, corruption and competition” are on his agenda.

Freezing the wages of state workers is his given. Discussion about the pension cuts is on his agenda, but since the state’s constitution must be amended to do this, details are few. Public employee unions are already fighting previously announced state and local cuts and contracting out. They have shown they will not accept attempts to make them scapegoats for a fiscal crisis that Wall Street and the banking industry caused.

Ideologically, public workers’ pensions have been the major target of the corporations. This attack has been made easier by the fact that many private industry workers lost, or never had, “defined benefit” pensions. Many workers have never had any pension. Cuomo also plans to cut Medicaid, the cost of which is growing every year. He announced the formation of a Medicaid Redesign Team charged with finding ways to save money within the Medicaid program.

Advocates for the homeless and poor working families argue that there is a need for more funding, not less. The gap between the rich and everyone else has widened nationally, and New York has the largest gap.

Cuomo also wants property taxes capped, apparently for all real estate. If he gets his way on that, it may bring some initial relief, but many believe that capping property taxes, while not raising taxes on the wealthy or closing tax loopholes on corporations, will bring much hardship to working families in the long run.



In addition to capping property taxes, the governor outlined a working group to begin the process of identifying and eliminating “state mandates” and to provide fiscal incentives for local municipalities to consider consolidation of services, which could provide Long Island schools, in particular, with much needed relief.

The incarceration of young people a did, however, bring enthusiastic responses. “An incarceration program is not an employment program,” said Cuomo. Labor and other progressives are bracing for the actual budget proposal, but vow to fight any attempt to balance the budget at the expense of the state’s working people.

Labor has never been happy with Cuomo, who, even during his campaign, vowed a battle with unions when elected. However, most progressives voted for Cuomo in order to defeat Carl Paladino. Tens of thousands of people voted for Cuomo on the Working Families Party line, in order to both cast a vote against Paladino and, at the same time, deliver a message that Cuomo’s anti-labor, anti-working people stances were unwelcome.

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Maryland faces \$1.2 billion in new cuts

By Vivian Weinstein

With the federal stimulus money that propped up the state's budget over the past couple of years no longer available, Maryland is facing a \$1.2 billion budget gap, and cuts to previously untouchable programs like education loom on the horizon.

Democratic Governor Martin O'Malley will convene lawmakers on Jan. 12 to deal with the deficit, essentially through a steady diet of cuts. O'Malley has ruled out raising taxes on the rich or even making permanent a small tax increase on people making over \$1 million yearly, enacted in 2008.

Now labor and progressives, as well as a number of Democratic lawmakers, are fighting to make that tax permanent. The governor refused to include such a step in the budget he will submit, saying that he will rely only on spending cuts and transfers.

While taxes on the rich are set to expire, increased taxes on gas and alcohol, which would disproportionately affect working people, are under consideration.

The largely Democratic state legislature wants to shift teacher pensions to Maryland's counties. That would save the state mightily but create crises for local governments.

Education cuts seem likely. Further cuts in developmental and mental disability programs are not reasonable because of sustained deep cuts in recent years.

In a recent poll, nearly 82 percent of people said that the wealthy should pay more taxes.

¿Qué camino a seguir para la izquierda?

Por Jarvis Tyner

Existe una ardua discusión en círculos progresistas de izquierda acerca de la concesión con respecto a la extensión del recorte de impuestos (y el seguro de desempleo), y acerca de cómo avanzar después del retraso sufrido en las elecciones de 2010. Activistas y votantes progresistas de izquierda han jugado un papel muy importante en la lucha contra la ultraderecha. Pienso que la mayoría de la izquierda entiende que el mayor peligro a la democracia y al progreso proviene de la extrema derecha, del partido republicano, del "Tea Party" y de sus patrocinadores corporativos tan pudientes.

El Partido Comunista no siempre se encuentra de acuerdo con nuestros aliados liberales, pero seguimos abogando por la unidad, seguimos buscando tácticas que mantengan una coalición laboral para la gente, que sigan avanzando el movimiento por el cambio.

Desde mi punto de vista, ya hay demasiada gente alegando que la concesión con la propuesta de ley de impuestos es "la gota que derramó el vaso" y "estamos hartos de Obama". Este punto de vista subraya las extensiones de los recortes de impuestos para los ricos pero ignora las concesiones que tuvieron que hacer los Republicanos a la clase trabajadora. El hecho es que si la propuesta de ley se hubiera rechazado, el resultado hubiera sido él que varios millones de trabajadores de bajos recursos hubi-

eran perdido todos sus ingresos. Y de colmo, los impuestos habrían ido a la alza para la clase trabajadora.

Y los republicanos aún seguirían haciendo de las suyas en el próximo Congreso, solo que con nuevos poderes.

Estoy completamente de acuerdo con que está mal seguirles dando recortes de impuestos a los multimillonarios. Es como recompensar a los malhechores por sus crímenes. Pero esta no es la historia completa.

=En mi opinión, para poder ganar hace falta una estrategia basada en el mundo real; en los hechos y no en sentimientos subjetivos que todos compartimos en este momento. Los que pueden hacer cambios reales no deben dejar que estos sentimientos sean la guía de cómo seguir adelante. Si queremos ganar más derechos económicos y democráticos para la clase trabajadora, para las minorías, las mujeres, los jóvenes, etc., es contraproducente utilizar esta extensión del recorte de impuestos como excusa para "romper" con Obama. (Tengo que agregar que hay algunas voces que buscan esta ruptura que no estuvieron nunca con la coalición para elegir a Obama).

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