

PEOPLE'S WORLD

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Opponents of outsourcing arrested at Bain plant

By John Wojcik

Three supporters of outsourced workers were arrested this morning for blocking equipment removal at the Bain-owned Sensata Technologies plant in Freeport, Ill. With election day just around the corner, the Bain-owned company is pushing ahead with its outsourcing plans as it shuts down operations in the U.S. to ship more than 170 jobs overseas.

Community members blocked the loading dock today for a second time to prevent equipment from the plant from being moved. Three community members - including Karri Penniston, the daughter of a Sensata worker, were arrested when they refused to move after the company called the police.

Penniston, a student off from school today for Columbus Day, has a mother, Joanne, who is losing her job in the outsourcing. Penniston, along with two other town residents supporting the workers, Debbi Kemple and Jerry Ontjes, refused to move when police gave them an order and were subsequently arrested.

The arrests took place on Day 25 for "Bainport," a protest tent-city that has sprung up across the road from the Sensata plant. The arrests, like the tent city itself, have become the focus of attention in this long-time Republican stronghold that has now become the epicenter of a struggle against economic policies associated with Mitt Romney, the GOP presidential candidate.

The global flow of capital and jobs from once-industrialized areas in this country to cheap labor places around the world is much more than a dis-



cussion point here: It is a reality that has shaken this "all-American town" to its very foundations and a reality that has pushed its people to do things they never dreamed they would ever do.

Thirty-five-year-old Joanne Penniston, the mother of the young woman arrested this morning, does hand-soldering at the plant. She said, as she stirred a 16-quart electric pot full of broccoli soup in the main tent on Oct. 7, "You figure you have good skills, you have a good job, you work hard, you do your best so everything should be OK, right? Then they take you and toss you aside.

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That's I'm out here and that's why a lot of people in town are rethinking where they stand on a lot of things," she said.

The arrests took place on Day 25 for “Bainport,” a protest tent-city that has sprung up across the road from the Sensata plant.

The Sensata plant, which makes brake and transmission line sensory equipment for automobiles, used to be owned by Honeywell.

The tents now seem like permanent structures across the road from the plant. Not only the workers, but town residents, take turns sleeping in them, so the protest city, which sprung up 25 days ago, is alive 24 hours per day.

The workers can cook, turn on lights, use computers and even make phone calls from the main tent and from some of the others because of the help from county workers at the Stephenson County Fairgrounds who have hooked them up with electrical connections and other “conveniences.” The City Council has passed a resolution in support of the encampment.

“I am amazed at the political sophistication, the bravery, and the courage of these workers,” said George Gaulrapp, the town’s mayor. “From the outset, they saw that Bain’s ownership of the plant gave them leverage to put pressure on Romney and they have worked to gain the support of everyone in the community.”

At Login’s Bar and Grill, one of the waitresses

said, “Everyone here supports them. If the jobs go, the whole town suffers,” she said, as she placed four freshly-baked pizzas down on the counter.

Last week when they heard trucks were arriving for the first time to dismantle machinery that had been part of the employees’ lives for years, the residents of Bainport marched across the road and onto the plant’s grounds where they, with supporters from the town, blocked the gates. That first standoff lasted all afternoon but, unlike the standoff today, resulted in no arrests.

Tom Gaulrapp (no relation to the mayor) has slept at the encampment every night since it has been open. He beams with pride when he talks about all the people now behind the workers. “But we still haven’t convinced the person who can stop this, we still haven’t convinced Romney,” he said. “It may be too late for us here at this plant,” said Gaulrapp, “but it’s not too late for what you see here to grow into a movement that catches fire all over this country.”



John Wojcik is PW labor editor.

Pundits premature in crowning Romney

PW Editorial Board

The airwaves were flooded for at least 48 hours this week with declarations telling us who won the first of the three big presidential debates. It was a confident, bullish Romney, they declared!

But Wednesday’s presidential debate had no winner because there were no judges armed with point systems as Romney and Obama squared off. The audience, the people of the United States, doesn’t vote until Nov. 6. So all the talk by the punditry regarding who won and who lost is either guesswork is just plain b.s.

History teaches us that people make their voting decisions based on how they perceive the choice of a candidate will meet their needs, not on the prognostications or interpretations of the punditry. Often the people make their decisions based on something quite outside of what the media has determined is important.

This Thursday, the day after the debate, I was in “Bainport,” a protest encampment set up by Mitt Romney’s victims, workers outsourced by Bain Capital, in Freeport, Ill. The workers, many of them long-time Republicans in a Midwest Republican stronghold, have turned their town into an epicenter of the fight against Romney-nomics.

When asked about the debate, they and their neighbors focused like laser beams on what they

called Romney’s “lies.” A town of tens of thousands in the heart of GOP country is abuzz with anger about Romney and has thrust itself to the front lines of the struggle against what Romney stands for.

My brother lives in Brooklyn where he grew up to become a court officer. After the debate he said he didn’t agree for a minute that Romney had won anything. He told me how for years he has listened to high-priced lawyers wow the courtroom with clever lines and a big show. Later, he said, came the jury’s decision, very often arrived upon after they viewed or heard evidence not even mentioned in the slick summation.

So don’t get swayed by the opinions of a punditry that covers debates not as how they relate to the Bainport encampment, but as if they were nothing more than sports contests. Don’t be swayed by the reportage in a paper like the Denver Post, which saw the debate as a bullfight!

The Denver Post noted how, “over and over” again Romney was the “bull,” charging at Obama. It noted how Obama, like a matador, got out of the way and didn’t charge back.

Lawrence O’Donnell of MSNBC’s “Last Word” mentioned that article in his show Thursday night and probably said it best: “In the end, we know what happens to the bull.”

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Romney's wrong on deficits

By Sam Webb

According to Mitt Romney, the top economic priority is to put our fiscal house in order. If we don't do something almost immediately, he says, we will walk off a fiscal cliff beyond which is nothing but economic disaster. Our future will resemble Greece's present and worse.

So how does he propose to do this?

On the spending side, he would either ruthlessly cut or eliminate or privatize social programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, while Obamacare, whose benefits are increasingly enjoyed by tens of millions of American people, would be overturned.

A chunk of the spending cuts would also come directly from programs that make life much easier for low and middle income Americans. Spending for infrastructure, education and research that are necessary for economic growth and restructuring would be slashed too. Romney's fiscal plan would place the responsibility of rising health care costs squarely on the shoulders of those least able to afford them.

The food stamp program that is essential for tens of millions in a stagnant economy would be drastically scaled back by a Romney presidency. Housing assistance and Pell Grants would meet a similar fate.

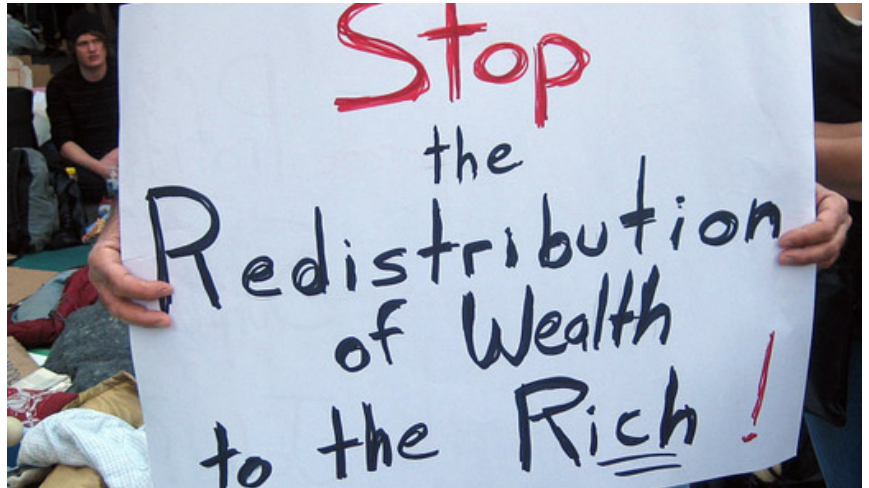
On the revenue side, the main element of his fiscal plan is not what you would logically think, that is, to increase taxes in order to enhance government revenues. Rather Romney would cut taxes of the 1 percent by a whopping \$5 trillion (that's on top of the Bush era tax cuts), while increasing taxes on you know who - the 99 percent.

What is the upshot of all this? Do the numbers add up? Would it bring order to our fiscal books and jump-start the economy? Would it put people back to work?

By no means! Instead of reducing the deficit, most analysts say the Romney plan would result in bigger deficits as far into the future as the eye can see.

And instead of stimulating economic activity and creating jobs, his plan would further depress an already depressed economy.

All of which makes me (and many other peo-



ple) conclude that the Romney plan has other objectives in mind than balancing the federal budget and rebooting the economy.

What interests him and his backers, in fact, is turning the current fiscal and economic crisis into an opportunity (never pass up a crisis) to roll back the social safety net, slash living standards, and radically redistribute income to the very top tiers of our society. Yes, he's a redistributionist!

Luckily, more and more people are seeing through the demagogic fog of Romney, Ryan, and right-wing extremism. The jig may not be quite up, but his defeat on November 6 will be not only send Romney back to Bain Capital - it will also give the people's movement leverage to battle austerity and reactionary redistributive politics in the post-election period.

Fiscal deficits at some point have to be addressed to be sure, but now is not the time. The main focus of public policy now should be on creating good paying jobs and stimulating an economy that remains in the doldrums.

Once people get back to work and once the economy recovers, then we can turn our attention to reeling in deficits, but along very different lines than proposed by Romney (and too many politicians on both sides of the aisle for that matter).

On the table must be cutting military spending, ending corporate subsidies, and increasing corporate taxes. This is a working-class as opposed to a corporate-class approach to our fiscal problems.

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Firing of unionists sparks TV protest

By Mark Gruenberg

Proving that managers at public TV stations can act just like their private-sector counterparts, a mass firing at WHUT, the station at Washington's Howard University, sparked a mass protest at the school's opening convocation.

The Sept. 28 demonstration backed the "Howard 4," four workers who stood up for their colleagues and their union, NABET, a Communications Workers sector.

As attendees arrived - including U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice - demonstrators walked an informational picket line for several hours, bellowing, 'Union busting is disgusting!' and 'Howard University - We expect better!' while leafletting passersby, the Metro D.C. Central Labor Council reported.

"When it comes down to business, these people are cold," said fired worker Olise Nwachukwu, a NABET-CWA 31 member, referring to the public broadcast station's new manager, Jefferi Lee. "That's why you need union representation: To protect our rights and ensure we are treated with respect and dignity," added Nwachukwu.

NABET-CWA's Carrie Biggs-Adams told the CLC that Lee summarily fired four of WHUT's six full-time workers, who together have worked more than 58 years at WHUT Channel 32, after their contract expired on June 30.

"The letters of discharge say the workers violated policies and procedures," Biggs-Adams told the CLC, "but provided no dates, no specifics and no details.

"Unfortunately nothing has moved the station off their insistence on subcontracting expansion, and restoring three lower paid classifications to the contract with no progression or credit for prior experience. They say: 'Let Market Forces take care of wages!'" NABET-CWA Local 31 said in a statement.

Obama viaja a California para homenajear a líder agrario hispano

By Prensa Latina

El presidente de Estados Unidos, Barack Obama, viajará hoy a la ciudad de Keene, California, para anunciar el establecimiento de un Monumento Nacional a la memoria del líder sindical hispano César E. Chávez.

Recientemente Obama reconoció que Chávez dio voz a los trabajadores pobres y marginados en todas partes, y que la finca La Paz se encontraba en el centro de algunos de los momentos más significativos de los derechos civiles en la historia del país.

"Mediante la designación de un monumento nacional, el legado de Chávez será preservado y compartido para inspirar a las generaciones venideras", subrayó el mandatario.

En los predios donde se perpetuará la memoria de Chávez y reposarán sus restos radicó además la sede nacional del Sindicato de Trabajadores Agrícolas Unidos (UFW).

El memorial ocupará los terrenos ubicados en la propiedad La Paz, en el condado de Keene, donde el líder agrario vivió y trabajó desde la década deL 70 hasta su muerte en 1993, destaca una nota publicada en el sitio oficial de La Casa Blanca en Internet.

El monumento será gestionado por el Servicio de Parques Nacionales, en consulta con el Centro Nacional y la Fundación César Chávez, y será el cuarto Monumento Nacional designado por Obama, amparado en la Ley de Antigüedades.

En otras noticias, Estados Unidos comenzó a renovar las licencias a algunas agencias que organizan viajes hacia Cuba, pero aun mantiene las trabas burocráticas a otros turoperadores que aguardan por el trámite desde hace varios meses.

La Oficina de Control de Activos Extranjeros (OFAC) -adsrita al

Departamento del Tesoro- otorgó los permisos a unas 20 firmas, entre ellas Insight Cuba, Friendly Planet, Grand Circle Foundation, Geographic Expeditions y MotoDiscovery, reportaron hoy varios medios de prensa.

Pero todavía mantiene en el limbo a instituciones como Smithsonian Journeys, National Geographic Expeditions, National Trust for Historic Preservation, el Museo Metropolitano de Arte y Austin-Lehman, las cuales pidieron el permiso desde mediados de este año.

La OFAC aprobó esas solicitudes semanas después que numerosas agencias denunciaron que los obstáculos en la tramitación de los documentos provocaron la cancelación de vuelos, despido de empleados y pérdidas financieras.

Según esas compañías, dichas trabas responden al acuerdo de la Casa Blanca con el senador republicano Marco Rubio -conocido por sus posiciones extremistas contra La Habana- para imponerles controles más estrictos, mayor revisión de sus itinerarios y el programa en general.

En mayo pasado, el Departamento del Tesoro redobló la supervisión detallada de las visitas a la isla y anunció que la violación de las restricciones será castigada con multas de 65 mil dólares y hasta la suspensión de licencias.

Esas disposiciones prohíben los paseos por lugares recreativos y las transacciones financieras relacionadas con actividades turísticas.

Además, se aplican a ciudadanos estadounidenses sin vínculos familiares con cubanos y los solicitantes de licencias deben explicar para qué necesitan reunirse con altos funcionarios de la nación antillana.