

PEOPLE'S WORLD

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November 1, 2014

Honey Butter Fried Chicken and redistribution of wealth

By Tim Libretti



So how exactly can we address income inequality by simply asking everyone to learn new skills and find a better job, avoiding the reality of the need for a redistribution of social resources? We can't.

Analyzing the evolution of class and income inequality under capitalism, Marx and Engels famously asserted, "What the bourgeoisie . . . produces, above all, is its own gravediggers." They meant that the capitalist class would through relentless exploitation create conditions for its own death by unifying the working class into an engine of historical change, spurring the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism itself. Marx and Engels, of course, delighted in this prospect, envisioning an egalitarian socialist society.

These days, the prospects do not seem quite as gleeful. While the capitalist class, including but not limited to the infamous-and infamously greedy-one percent, might no doubt be engaged in digging their own graves, the rest of us might really need to worry that they will be digging our graves too—at least one can infer as much from a recent Harvard Business School study.

The study, entitled "An Economy Doing Half Its Job," points out that while large and midsize businesses have been performing strongly coming out of the Great Recession, "middle-class and

working-class citizens are struggling." This "divergence," the study argues, is "unsustainable." The study underscores corporate America's self-interest in improving the overall standard of living in the United States, warning, "Businesses cannot thrive for long while their communities languish."

Even former President Bill Clinton recognizes the need for a change in economic behavior and values suggestive of redistribution. At the recent Clinton Global Initiative, he offered the prediction

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that corporations will someday care more about their employees and overall social well-being than maximizing profits, suggesting they will do so "because of proof that markets work better that way." While a hopeful prediction, we can find examples of thriving enterprises that already have

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these values built into their plans; and they aren't necessarily doing so "because of proof that markets work better that way" but because they value people and the work they do, promoting a broader social vision.

Take Honey Butter Fried Chicken, a small, independently-owned restaurant on the Northwest side of Chicago. Josh Kulp explains that he and his co-chef and co-managing partner Christine Cikowski, along with their business partners and designers Jen Mayer and Chris Jennings, opened the restaurant "in a conscious attempt to provide a space where employees could thrive." They wanted to be "known and respected not only for offering responsible and delicious food . . . but also for being an amazing place to work."

Kulp stresses that "from the outset, we have emphasized paying a fair wage, offering paid sick time, paid vacation time, and health benefits," which they have been able to offer through Affordable Care Act. They share all financial information with their employees and hope to offer profit-

sharing to their employees in the future.

They do not ask the busboys or dishwashers to increase their value or improve their skills to earn a higher wage. There is a recognition that for the restaurant to be successful, this work is necessary. They don't try to de-value the work to maximize value. They have in fact re-valued the work by focusing on the vital role the worker fulfills in the enterprise.

This is not a redistribution of wealth but simply a sensible distribution of it. In my one visit to the restaurant, Kulp introduced me to several of his employees, including younger ones whom he was encouraging to attend college. It was clear Kulp viewed his business as part of a larger social project that will lead to the kind of humane world he envisions and from which he will benefit.



Tim Libretti writes for PoliticusUSA.

People's World wins three labor media awards

By PeoplesWorld.org

Both Albano and Wojcik said it takes a team effort to write and publish stories.

International Labor Communications Association announced the winners of its 2014 labor media awards, Oct. 10, and People's World won three for news and analysis. Responding to the announcement, co-editors John Wojcik and Teresa Albano expressed their excitement and thanks.

"Our newsroom/editorial office erupted with cheers. It felt like winning a Pulitzer," Albano said, "but without the champagne."

Wojcik, who is a member of ILCA's executive board, said, "It feels good to be recognized by our peers."

Both Albano and Wojcik said it takes a team effort to write and publish - and the awards for the three stories - are a result of that effort. They also credited the subjects of the stories. "It is the people taking action, like the fast food workers, whistleblowers and labor, who make the stories," Wojcik said.

People's World won 1st Place: Best News,

"Unity was their cry: fast food workers go global" by Teresa Albano and two articles by John Wojcik: 2nd Place for Best Analysis, "2013: Year of the bold new labor movement"; 3rd Place for Best Analysis, "Documents expose new ALEC scheme to kill clean energy."

ILCA's top prize, the Steinbock Award for journalistic excellence, went to International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1245 for "Brother's Keeper" by Eric Wolfe, who gives a unique view at how union stewards are rethinking new and more effective approaches to "keeping work safe" and saving lives.

ILCA was founded in 1955 and is "the professional organization of labor communicators in North America." Media professionals working or volunteering at hundreds of local and international unions affiliated with AFL-CIO, Change to Win and state and local central labor councils make up the bulk of ILCA's membership.

Ebola and the challenge to humanity

By Raul Castro



Cuba was the first country in the world to answer the urgent call for medical personnel to help stop the spread of Ebola in West Africa by sending 165 doctors, nurses and health care professionals to Sierra Leone.

A dreadful epidemic is advancing today on our fraternal peoples of Africa, and threatening us all.

As part of the melting pot of Latin American and Caribbean cultures, African blood flows through the veins of “Our America,” contributed by those who fought for independence and helped in the creation of wealth in many of our countries and others, the United States included.

Africa and Cuba are bound together by deep affection. Over 76,000 Cuban collaborators have rendered health services in 39 countries, while 45 nations have had 3,392 physicians trained in Cuba absolutely free of charge.

At the moment, more than 4,000 Cuban health care collaborators are working in 32 African countries; they are all joining in the preventive effort against Ebola.

I stand convinced that if this threat is not held back and resolved in West Africa, through an immediate and effective international response, with sufficient resources and coordinated by the World

Health Organization and the United Nations, it may evolve into one of the gravest pandemics in the history of mankind.

We are of the view that this grave problem should not be politicized to avoid the risk of losing track of the main objective, which is helping to confront the epidemic in Africa and to prevent its expansion to other regions.

Following my conversation with the UN secretary general, instructions were given to our representatives in events called by the World Health Organization and the United Nations, to reaffirm that Cuba is willing work side by side with every country, including the United States.

If the respective governments would agree, our health care collaborators currently working in Latin America and the Caribbean, could support, to the extent of their capabilities, the preventive actions and the training of local personnel, as well as offer advisory.

In summary, we have 45,952 Cuban health care collaborators working in 25 countries of Our America, 23,158 of them, that is, 50.4 percent are doctors, who along with their colleagues from the continent make up a powerful force.

This poses a huge challenge to humanity, one that should be met with utmost urgency.

Letter Carriers supports pro-post office candidates

By Mark Gruenberg

With the key mid-term election two weeks away, the Letter Carriers took the unusual step of singling out for support only lawmakers who are strong supporters of postal union members and of efforts to increase USPS revenues, cut its onerous health-care cost mandate, and protect workers, rather than fire them. The group is bipartisan.

"When you cast your ballot on November 4, it will be important for you to know who in Congress supports a strong USPS and who understands the value Letter Carriers bring to the communities we serve," the union said. Endorsed candidates, all posted on its website, also support six-day delivery and door-to-door delivery. Several endorsed candidates oppose anti-postal incumbents.

The union endorsed approximately 50 candidates nationwide, including about a dozen Republicans. Most of those represent New Jersey or New York U.S. House districts, but the most-prominent - and one of the few senators - is Susan Collins of Maine. If she wins, and her seat is rated "safe," and if Republicans take over the Senate, Collins is expected to chair the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, which handles USPS-related legislation.

NALC also endorsed Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska, the House's most-senior Republican, who represents a union-heavy state and has voted with workers more frequently than the average Republican.

La Normal de Ayotzinapa

Por Margarita Santana de Ley

Fui estudiante de la UNAM en 1968 y tuve la desdicha de marchar cuando la matanza de Tlatelolco. Mi hermano mayor abría la marcha formando una cadena humana cuando llegaron los granaderos y explotó el caos. A el se lo llevaron junto con muchos otros en calidad de "preso político". Yo escape escondiéndome en el departamento de alguien. Fue horrible... rafagueadas, vidrios rotos, gases lacrimógenos...una barbarie.

Con referencia a Ayotzinapa, esta no es una escuela normalista común y corriente no! "La Normal de Ayotzinapa fue fundada en 1926 a iniciativa de Moisés Sáenz, y materializada bajo las ideas educativas de José Vasconcelos y en la época de Cárdenas se incorporó la idea de la educación socialista que aún conservan las Normales Rurales." Con el fin de ayudar a alumnos de escasos recursos en su preparación profesional para un futuro mejor. Ahí se ofrecía hospedaje, comidas y material Didáctico no solo a los alumnos sino también a los profesores y personal administrativo.

A un costo de tan solo 39 pesos por persona que resulta inconveniente al Gobierno de Mexico por diferentes circunstancias. En si la dictadura del PRI en su deterioro y avaricia que comienza desde fines de los 50's resulta en perdida de calidad Educativa para solo egresar "Obreros calificados" en vez de "Profesionales". A esto le añadimos el "Salinato" sinónimo de "Narco" y todo pasa de mal a peor!

Recordemos que EPN y Salinas de Gortari están inmensamente vinculados, y también que Fox con el Pan fue igual o peor, y de Calderon ni se

diga miles y miles de secuestrados, decapitados, y todo lo que termine con "ado". Calderon le robo la presidencia a AMLO, apoyado por los Estados Unidos; pero EPN es hoy por hoy lo peor que le pudo haber pasado a México.

Existen en la actualidad 16 Normales Rurales. Pero porque la represión a los Normalistas de Ayotzinapa? Esta Normal Rural esta ubicada en la municipalidad de Iguala y el gobierno corrupto representado por Jose Luis Abarca Velazques, y en un afán de acallar las voces disidentes, conscientes de la realidad, el gobierno actúa arteramente y con saña en contra de los jóvenes Normalistas.

Después de esta masacre Abarca Velázquez consigue un amparo y huye. El gobernador del estado de Guerrero, Aguirre, coludido con el cartel "Guerreros Unidos" son cómplices de este crimen pues fotos de ambos con EPN lo evidencian...casualidad? No creo.

Ayotzinapa ha sido el acabose, al grado que la Senadora Laura Rojas en Ginebra, Europa comento a la reportera Carmen Aristegui como alrededor de mas de 30 paises condonan a Mexico y exigen respuesta por tanta violación a los derechos humanos.