

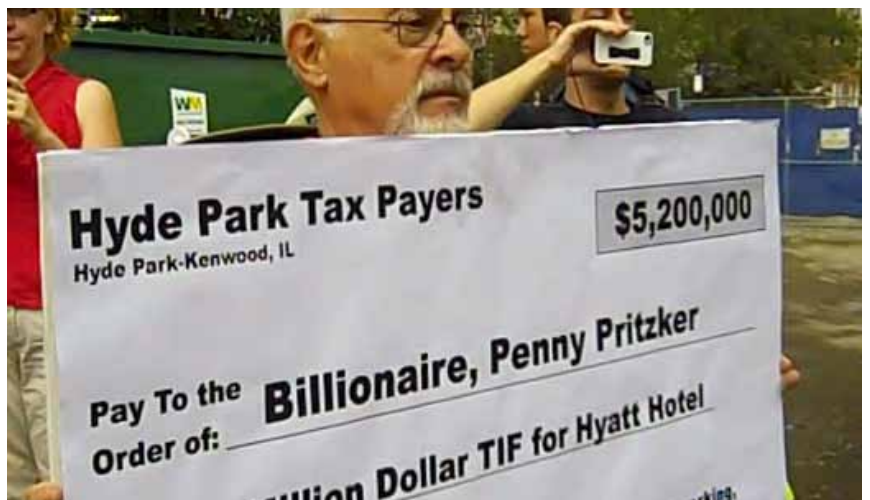
PEOPLE'S WORLD

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May 11, 2013

Obama's Commerce nominee assailed as anti-worker

By John Bachtell



In nominating Penny Pritzker as the new Commerce secretary, May 2, President Obama lavished praise on her.

Pritzker, a wealthy Chicago businesswoman, was national finance chair of the Obama campaign in 2008 and a national co-chair of the 2012 campaign.

“Penny is one of our country’s most distinguished business leaders,” said Obama, with Pritzker alongside him in the White House Rose Garden. “She knows that what we can do is to give every business and every worker the best possible chance to succeed by making America a magnet for good jobs.”

But you won’t hear praise like that for Pritzker from a Hyatt Hotel worker or Chicago Public Schools teacher. Or from the progressive website CREDO Action, which describes Pritzker as an “anti-worker business mogul.”

And for good reason.

Forbes Magazine lists Pritzker as the 263rd richest person in the U.S., with a net worth of \$1.85 billion. The Pritzker family boasts assets of over \$20 billion amassed mainly from ownership of the Hyatt Hotel chain.

Hyatt workers have been fighting the hotel for several years to win a fair contract over pay,

benefits and working conditions. In response, Hyatt has stalled negotiations and tried to break the union by firing career workers and replacing them with non-union temporary minimum wage workers. This happened in Boston and Baltimore.

Hyatt workers are being forced to accept dangerous workloads and speedup, resulting in the highest injury rate for major hotel chains, according to the American Journal of Industrial Medicine.

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Hyatt Hurts website says, “OSHA recently issued a companywide letter to Hyatt warning it of the hazards its housekeepers face on the job. This is a first for the hotel industry.”

This has earned Hyatt the reputation as the “worst hotel employer in the country.” In re-

Pritzker is one of the city's corporate elite who is looting the public school system she claims to be representing.

sponse, Hyatt workers along with their union, Unite Here, initiated a global boycott of the hotel chain, supported by over 5,000 individuals and organizations including the AFL-CIO, National Organization for Women, the NFL Players Association, National Council of La Raza, and others.

Pritzker earned the ire of CPS teachers and parents for her role on the unelected Board of Education, dominated by billionaires and corporate executives. She was named to the board by Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, former top White House adviser to Obama. The BOE has rubber-stamped Mayor Emanuel's pro-privatization and anti-union agenda that resulted in the seven-day teacher strike last September and widespread opposition to the announced closure of 54 schools.

Pritzker is one of the city's corporate elite who is looting the public school system she claims to be representing. Last year Hyatt received \$5.2 million in city Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds to build a new hotel in the Hyde Park neighborhood. Tax Increment Financing is a fancy way to describe a legal scheme that each year diverts \$500 million in property tax revenues geared for schools and parks into the pockets of the wealthy

for their own enrichment.

As a result of Hyatt's corporate looting, \$3.3 million was cut from seven schools in the Hyde Park area and 27 teachers were fired.

Pritzker is a major contributor to Stand for Children, an influential pro-charter-school and anti-union group. One of her relatives chairs the governing board of the charter school at the University of Chicago.

Following Pritzker's resignation from the Board of Education in March to be appointed Commerce secretary, Chicago Teachers Union President Karen Lewis said, "We cannot imagine that someone who has a long history of bludgeoning Chicago's working families and destroying public schools would be given a platform to continue these sorts of business practices on a national level."

The teachers union accused her of working to "close schools, destabilize neighborhoods and disrupt the economic lives of thousands of public school employees."



John Bachtell writes for Peoplesworld.org

May Day 2013: Workers march all over the world

By PW Editorial

May Day, which began at the historic Haymarket Square site in 19th century Chicago with workers demanding an eight-hour day, is now the most-celebrated holiday on the planet.

May 1 dawned first in Asia this morning with hundreds of thousands of protesting workers literally shutting down the Indonesian capital of Jakarta. They condemned the government for hiking fuel prices and eroding recent meager increases in the minimum wage.

In Manilla, the capital of the Philippines, meanwhile, thousands of exploited contract workers marched through the streets demanding the right to unionize.

In Istanbul, Turkey, police locked down the center of the city to keep out thousands of May Day protesters. The history of police violence against workers did nothing to deter the demonstrators, still mindful of the 1977 protests when police shot dozens of Istanbul workers to death during May Day demonstrations. "There are scuf-

fles everywhere in the streets leading up to central Istanbul," said Hashim Jahelbarra, in his post on the Al Jazeera website.

The Iraqi Communist Party marched in huge May Day protests in Baghdad.

Meanwhile millions in Europe began to join the global actions.

More than 1.5 million turned out at 16 demonstrations and rallies in Moscow.

In Greece, the country ground to a halt as almost everyone joined in a 24-hour general strike against austerity. Trains and ferries were stalled at their moorings as seamen walked off the job.

"Our message today is very clear. Enough with these policies which hurt people and make the poor poorer," said Ilios Iliopoulos, general secretary of Greece's public sector unions.

In the U.S., the AFL-CIO, which is leading demonstrations in many cities, is calling on people to turn out. May Day is coming home! And it's about time!!

May Day is coming home.

6,000 miners rally for pensions

By Tony Pecinovsky

We are going to stand up, fight back and go to jail for our members - and that is something Peabody can't buy," United Mine Workers' of America (UMWA) international president, Cecil Roberts, told 6,000 mineworkers, supporters, and community activists, as they rallied in St. Louis's downtown Kiener Plaza on April 29.

The rally was held just across the street from Peabody Energy's national headquarters. Peabody is the nation's largest and most profitable coal company.

According to the Mineworkers, Peabody Energy and Arch Coal created the spinoff company, Patriot Coal, in a scheme to deny pension and health care benefits to over 20,000 union members and their dependents.

Patriot Coal filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy in July, 2012 and shortly thereafter asked to be released from its promises to UMWA members in West Virginia, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Ohio.

Peabody Energy and Arch Coal are both headquartered in St. Louis, Mo and the bankruptcy case was moved to St. Louis last November.

Dozens of mineworkers have been arrested over the past few months for peacefully sitting down in the street just outside Peabody's headquarters.

President Roberts emphasized that the ongoing rallies, marches and civil disobedience are "about saving lives."



to black lung disease or cancer, and all they expect in return is what was "promised to them, what they already paid for."

Roberts called Peabody Energy "a Judas" and reminded the assembled union members that Judas kissed Jesus' hand to mark him for death. He then added, pointing to the Peabody headquarters just across the street, "and they are counting the money upstairs."

"People are coming from around the nation and around the world to be with us in this fight. They recognize that our fight is their fight. If Peabody Energy and Patriot can get away with their scheme to get out of their obligations to their retirees, then any company anywhere can do the same thing."

UMWA secretary treasurer, Daniel Kane, echoed Roberts' sentiment and added with enthusiastic cheer, "The labor movement is the greatest instrument for social and economic justice in the world."

The ongoing rallies, marches and civil disobedience are about saving lives.

City Council funds jobs center

By Marilyn Bechtel

A major milestone was passed recently in the long struggle to win jobs for local workers in redevelopment of the Oakland Army Base, as the City Council voted funds to support a West Oakland Job Resource Center and a commission to monitor fulfillment of broad community benefits requirements approved last year.

Redevelopment of the base, and its future function as a site of logistical and warehouse operations for the neighboring Port of Oakland - the country's fourth busiest container port - is expected to bring thousands of new jobs to the city.

The jobs center is seen as essential to the success of provisions won by community, labor and faith organizations, including requirements that at least half the workers on the city's portion of the former base must be from Oakland, and all new union apprenticeships during construction must go to Oakland residents. Chants of "More jobs, less violence!" focused on Oakland residents' concerns about the city's high rates of both joblessness and violence, as participants in the 30-organization Revive Oakland! coalition rallied outside City Hall before the council meeting.

While high in the city overall, unemployment soars far higher in economically challenged areas of West and East Oakland, which have large populations of people of color. "I'm tired of seeing our young people who want to work, without jobs," Pastor Phil Lewis of the Israelite Missionary Baptist Church told the crowd.

Biblioteca de Bush: Descarado intento reescribir la historia

Por Editorial de Peoplesworld.org traducido por Jacques LaPere

Con su costo de \$250 millones, la biblioteca de George W. Bush es la más grande y la más costosa de las 13 bibliotecas presidenciales que se han abierto a fin de reconocer a los ex-presidentes.

Resulta que forma parte de una campaña sumamente coordinada desde hace meses para lavar la imagen de una presidencia que, con toda probabilidad fue la peor en toda la historia de los EE.UU. Dudamos, sin embargo, que dicha campaña vaya a tener éxito, ya que la memoria del pueblo estadounidense no es tan deleznable para dejar que pase al olvido todo lo sucedido durante esos años.

El tema de la nueva "biblioteca" no es George Bush, el presidente fracasado, sino George Bush el "estadista" a quien le tocaba tomar muchas "decisiones". Ayer, Laura Bush les enseñó a los periodistas cómo los que visitan la biblioteca podrán entrar en una "sala interactiva para la toma de decisiones" en la cual ellos mismos pueden participar con el ex-presidente en el proceso de la toma de las muchas decisiones que con tanto valor tuvo que tomar.

"Bush tomó muchas decisiones presidenciales," opinó ayer en Fox el portavoz derechista Charles Krauthammer. A todo lo cual replicamos, "Y eso, ¿qué?" ¿Qué otra clase de decisiones pueda un presidente tener que tomar sino las presidenciales?"

La cuestión palpitante no es si Bush tomó o no decisiones importantes, sino la naturaleza y la calidad de las decisiones que él tomó.

Bueno, sólo para empezar, Bush bien pudiera haber tomado la decisión de no disputar los resultados del segundo conteo de votos en la Florida en el año 2000, llevando el asunto hasta el Tribunal Supremo - y así dejar que el hombre que realmente recibió la mayor parte de los votos asumiera la presidencia de los EE.UU - o pudiera haber tomado la decisión de insistir hasta que dicho Tribunal se pusiera a su lado para colocarlo en la Oficina Oval. Decidió obstinar y acabamos con un presidente no elegido por el pueblo. He aquí su primera decisión equivocada, caracterizadora de su proceso de la toma de decisiones.

Para seguir, después de los ataques del 9/11, Bush pudiera haber tomado la decisión de invadir Iraq - o pudiera haber tomado la decisión de no invadir Iraq. La decisión que tomó nos costó miles de vidas de estadounidenses, un millón de vidas de iraquíes y tal vez hasta más de mil billones de dólares. Otra decisión equivocada.

Bush bien pudiera haber tomado la decisión de decir la verdad sobre las armas de destrucción masiva - o pudiera haber tomado de decisión de mentirnos. Optó por mentir. Otra decisión equivocada.

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