

## **No Faith in Traitorous Union Hacks or Democratic Party Politicians! Walker and Pulaski Join Forces with Brown to Shaft State Workers!**

Labor helped put Brown in office, and many state workers thought we had the right, in return, to expect some immediate relief from the vicious attacks imposed by the previous governor. But Brown has turned a cold shoulder to those expectations, and promises nothing but pay cuts, furloughs, and layoffs for state workers, and reduced services for the public.

Today the working class, students, seniors, the poor, and the oppressed are bracing for the impact of the austerity program that labor leaders and Brown are joining together to impose. Their unholy alliance is a calamity for the working class. California labor tops threw our unions' resources into the Brown campaign, sidetracking the workers in an ineffectual electoral strategy instead of direct action in the work place. And now they are stepping forward to sell the austerity to California's working class, and will no doubt put the unions' resources behind Brown's proposal for a spring special election to pass the taxes required to make his deal work.

Meanwhile, 65,000 state workers still suffer three furlough days (unpaid days off) a month as they have for two years – in effect a 15% pay cut. CAPS president Patty Valdez asked Brown to lift these furloughs, but Brown has not responded. Rather, he wants to settle with the out-of-contract unions by imposing a 10% cut in pay, the same concessionary contract already forced on six state unions under Schwarzenegger's threat of minimum wage and continuation of furloughs last summer. This proposal amounts to workers coming back to work instead of being on furloughs, and not getting paid for 24 days worked per year, just like those whose unions signed the rotten deal last summer. This week, SEIU 1000 president Yvonne Walker, speaking on KQED, said she supports Brown's proposed pay cut. This is no surprise, as it would subject workers in other state unions to the same rotten deal she forced down her members' throats. [1]

On January 11, Joe Garofoli reported on SF Gate, the San Francisco Chronicle website, about the compliant attitude of other labor leaders toward Brown's plan. As Garofoli put it: "While we support the governor's approach," said David Kieffer, executive director of the Service Employees International Union California, 'it's far from perfect.' Art Pulaski, secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, used almost the same wording, saying 'while Gov. Brown's proposal isn't perfect, it at least strikes a much-needed balance between cuts and revenues.'" [2]

Jon Ortiz reported in the Sacramento Bee on the same date that labor leaders welcome the appointment of "one of their own," Ronald Yank, to direct the Department of Personnel Administration (DPA). Yank, on the other hand, has turned coat against labor's interests. "Look, I know there isn't any money. I and the men and women I work with will be saying, 'no, no and no' a lot," he said. "But you can say 'no' in a way that treats the unions and employees they represent with dignity and honor." Dave Gilb, a former director of DPA under Schwarzenegger, comments astutely that Yank "can effectively deliver a tough love message precisely because of his connections, history and reputation." [3]

Big capital has settled on Jerry Brown to impose austerity on the working class while protecting big capital from the anger and frustration of the masses. Brown can be counted on to enlist the AFL-CIO, Change to Win, and the independent unions to keep the workers from breaking out of the confines of Democratic party politics.

Consider the draconian nature of Brown's proposed cuts: \$1.7 billion from the state Medicaid program, which 7.7 million people use; \$1.5 billion from the welfare to work program; \$135 million from the Healthy Families program, which serves new mothers, children, and youth; \$486 million from in-home support to the elderly and disabled, which keeps them out of even more expensive institutional care; \$800 million from mental health programs; and \$500 million from universities and community colleges. The threat is that if the new taxes are not approved for the \$12 billion not covered in cuts, education at the K-12 level will be cut further. These proposed cuts are on top of the increased fees for UC education imposed by the Regents in 2010, the cuts in education imposed in 2009, and the furloughs and stolen holidays for state workers.

Selling out private and public sector workers alike is the task taken on by the CA AFL-CIO leaders. They all ran down to the NUMMI plant in Hayward during the firing ceremony for 5,000 workers to assure Democratic politicians, also in attendance, that capital could abandon labor without fear of labor abandoning the Democratic Party. Today these same labor leaders are joining with the Democrats again, this time to misdirect our union members into a feckless campaign to advance so-called tax reform instead of mobilizing for what we really need to do to fight back: organize widespread, prolonged strikes and build for long overdue independent political action.

[1] <http://www.kqed.org/a/forum/R201101110900>

[2] <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=c/a/2011/01/11/MNFM1H701B.DTL>

[3] <http://www.sacbee.com/2011/01/06/3302809/the-state-worker-three-views-of.html>

### **HUMANIST WORKERS FOR REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM**

## Which road ahead for the working class?

Labor leaders and fake socialists like Alan Benjamin and Connie Ford of the SF Labor council have joined forces with the Democrats to demobilize the working class by directing them into useless plans to solve the capitalist crisis on Wall Street's behalf by campaigning for so-called "progressive taxation." What this amounts to is the working class telling the capitalist politicians how to administer the collapsing system that is victimizing us all, instead of working to replace it.

Calls for "tax the rich" foster the illusion that the social problems of our country (not to mention the global economic crisis) can be solved by just getting wealthy people to pump more tax dollars into government coffers. This begs the question, whose government, and whose interests does it serve? Do the "tax the rich" proponents really expect us to believe that governments controlled by the plutocracy will really spend increased tax dollars on meeting the needs of workers, the poor, and the oppressed? If that were what they wanted to do, they could do it *without* increasing their own taxes, by calling a halt to their ruinously expensive military adventures in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan; ending aid to Israel and other repressive foreign governments; and ending the billions of dollars spent annually on various forms of corporate welfare.

Of course "tax the rich" reform is not going to be enough. This worldwide economic collapse is much deeper than even the most liberal Keynesians will admit. If the capitalist class could dig themselves out of this hole by simply spending public funds to put people to work, they would. But today it is so hard for the capitalists to make a buck in the market, they have replaced productive activity with what they call "financial services," which basically means gambling on speculative bubbles for profit. Equities, real estate, and commodities all have gone through their bubbles as capital chases from one popped balloon to the next super inflated sector.

The capitalist class has abandoned the social contract, which read something like this: "Allow us (the capitalists) to own the capital and invest it productively, according to the dictates of the market, and (Adam Smith willing) there will be work for everyone, profit will abound, bankers and bakers will all be happy, and the invisible hand of the 'free market' will keep the boat of the economy afloat." Well, that was fine for a short period during the rise of capitalism, but today there is too

much paper capital seeking a diminishing volume of profit, leading to the cannibalism of the speculators. Seeking paper profits based on inflated values of a non-productive economy, western capital has no choice but to collapse the historic gains of the working class, because workers cannot eat, wear, or live on paper profits.

To meet the needs of workers and ordinary people, and maintain a healthy economy, the resources of our society must be put to work producing real goods and services, not paper profits from gambling. But capitalism is no longer willing to invest in industrial production in developed countries, because workers' relatively high standard of living in those countries means more profit can be made elsewhere. Thus, the only way to direct our resources back into providing real goods and services is to take capital out of the hands of the speculators. This is the historic task of labor – one which the leaders of the labor in general, and the sell outs of the SF Labor Council in particular, have abandoned. Instead, they convene a conference with the likes of Lenny Goldberg, executive director of the California Tax Reform Association, who favors increasing the collection of the sales tax from online retailers – a *regressive* measure, as sales taxes are charged at a flat rate to all purchasers regardless of their income. [4]

Abandoning the class struggle, the SF Labor Council instead joins with the other labor tops to misdirect workers into putting their efforts behind Brown's tax and cut plan.

- **Where are the labor leaders who embrace the fight for an indefinite general strike, instead of carrying water for the Democrats?**
- **Where are the leaders willing to fight to nationalize the banks and major industries under workers' control?**
- **Where are the leaders who will mobilize the masses for full employment under the demand "30 hours work for 40 hours pay"?**
- **Where are the leaders who remind the workers of their historic task?**

Obviously, they are not in the top ranks of the SF Labor Council, the California AFL-CIO, or the Change to Win leadership. Those folks are too busy celebrating their unholy alliance with Jerry the Butcher to get down to the barricades and wage a real struggle.

[4] <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/01/06/BUH51H4FC9.DTL>

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