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Labor confronts police brutality

By Don McIntosh

Nationwide demonstrations against police brutality and mistreatment of African-Americans have now continued non-stop for three weeks, including 21 straight days in Portland. Protesters have turned out in Salem, Eugene, and small towns throughout Oregon and Washington: Washougal, La Grande, Hermiston, Pendleton, Happy Valley, Prineville, Tualatin, Monmouth, Burns, Ontario, and Klamath Falls. Disgusted by the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, crowds of up to 400 protesters gathered in Dallas, Oregon; 800 in St. Helens; and 1,000 in Medford. And every day, police are giving people new examples of misconduct to protest: Police in riot gear have frequently acted like armed counter protesters, using indis-



In Washington, D.C., national AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre marches June 8 with United Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts in a union Black Lives Matter march contingent organized by the Painters Union.

criminate force against peaceful demonstrators, while failing to prevent arson and looting or apprehend the perpetrators. Unions representing print and broadcast reporters have documented and denounced dozens of police assaults and arrests of clearly identified journalists

covering the protests, including one who was permanently blinded in one eye, and two crews confronted during live national television broadcasts.

What's been the labor movement's reaction to all this? Lo-

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Roadblock in the Broadway Corridor?

A deal on a community benefits agreement is held up over equity for construction workers.

By Don McIntosh

Broadway Corridor, the biggest central city redevelopment opportunity Portland has seen in three decades, has hit a snag. Negotiations appear to be breaking down between the City of Portland's development agency, a union-community coalition, and a Denver-based developer over how working Portlanders will benefit from the redevelopment of 16 city blocks that straddle the border between Portland's Old Town/Chinatown and Pearl District neighborhoods. Most of the real estate is publicly owned by Prosper Portland—the City's economic development and urban renewal agency—and the jewel of the project is the 12-block former U.S. Postal Service (USPS) mail processing plant. The City bought that property in 2016, and USPS moved out in June 2018, relocating to a new mail

processing plant near the airport.

City-brokered community discussions about what to do with the Broadway Corridor have been going on since at least 2015. From the beginning, City officials committed to an environmentally-sustainable neighborhood combining retail and working space with high-density affordable and market-rate housing, and they also committed to maximizing economic opportunities for minority Portlanders. To spell out in detail how the Broadway Corridor redevelopment will benefit the community, not just the developers, they also committed to negotiate a community benefits agreement (CBA).

Those are the negotiations that may have reached an impasse, according to multiple interviews with representatives of the Healthy Communities Coalition. The Healthy Communities Coalition formed in 2015 as an alliance of minority, environmental, business, and labor organizations. It includes Operat-

ing Engineers Local 701, IBEW Local 48, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, Portland Fire Fighters Local 43, Service Employees Local 49, Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters, Oregon AFSCME, ProTec Local 17, the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council, and the Metropolitan Alliance for Workforce Equity (MAWE).

"At the time, we were seeing gentrification, a massive buildup in neighborhoods that had never seen that kind of development before," says Vivian Satterfield, an environmental justice organizer with the group Verde who helped convene the coalition. "We were seeing low income and communities of color displaced. We heard from the Carpenters union that they couldn't afford to live in the buildings they were building. And we asked, 'How can we come together to ensure our sectors will not continue to be pitted against each other when it comes to the development of our city?'"

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Secret audio shows Columbia Sportswear plot to fire unionist

By Don McIntosh

Teamsters union organizers say they're not going to walk away from a group of union supporters at Columbia Sportswear's North Portland distribution warehouse — despite a company union-busting campaign that has dampened union support and demoralized some union supporters.

As the *Labor Press* reported in January, a group of workers there formed a union organizing committee last summer because they were fed up with low wages, last-minute schedule changes, extreme heat and cold, and having no say on major changes to their working conditions. They got busy talking to co-workers at the warehouse, where about 400 workers process Columbia's foreign-made apparel for shipping throughout the Western United States. But someone told management about the union activity, and on Oct. 1, 2019, managers

spoke against the union at a mandatory all-hands meeting. Union-busting consultants then arrived, paid \$400 an hour according to federal disclosures, and they led small-group anti-union meetings in the warehouse for much of October and November. On Dec. 4, a delegation of 13 workers marched into the warehouse manager's office to present a petition signed by 47 workers asking Columbia Sportswear to back off its anti-union campaign and respect its workers' right to make their own decision. That didn't happen. A few weeks later, Columbia Sportswear's CEO Tim Boyle addressed workers at a big meeting at the warehouse.

"I think personally you don't need a union here," the billionaire Boyle told workers who earn wages ranging from minimum wage to \$20 an hour. That's

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Trump NLRB sues Oregon

The court on July 14 will hear the challenge to a state ban on captive audience anti-union meetings.

By Noah Wass

Under the leadership of Trump appointees, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is suing to overturn an Oregon law that gives workers the right to skip anti-union captive audience meetings.

In a Feb. 7 lawsuit in U.S. District Court against the State of Oregon, the NLRB argues that the Oregon law is preempted by the National Labor Relations Act, which the NLRB says protects an employer's right to discipline employees for failing to attend anti-union meetings. According to the Board, the Oregon law also violates an employer's protected right to free speech.

The Worker Freedom Act—passed in 2009 with strong union backing—prohibits Oregon employers from disciplining or threatening to discipline workers

for not attending anti-union meetings or meetings where an employer's religious or political views are expressed. During union organizing campaigns, it's extremely common for employers to hold so-called "captive audience" meetings, mandatory-attendance meetings in the workplace at which outside union-busting consultants try to scare workers into voting against a union.

It's not the first time the Worker Freedom Act has faced a court challenge. In December 2009, Associated Oregon Industries and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce sued Laborers Local 296 and Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian to prevent the law from taking effect. The business groups argued that the law was pre-empted by federal labor law and violated employers' First Amendment rights. A judge dismissed the lawsuit, ruling that the business groups had

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