

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, **organized** citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

<https://leandroherrero.com/the-missing-word-in-the-famous-margaret-mead-quote/>

DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

- I ACCESS to THE THREE WEEKLY CALLS via the Internet
- II ACCESS to OTHER CALLS SUPPORTED BY 2013 Rainbow Roundtable
- III OPENING MEDITATION; HOUSEKEEPING; LINK TO PODCAST
- IV SATURDAY HISTORY CALL – NOTES, REFERENCE MATERIALS

I B B S RADIO - ACCESS TO THE THREE WEEKLY CALLS <https://bbsradio.com/>

DAY	B B S Station	TIME	PROGRAM	CONFERENCE CALL	HOSTS
Thursday	#1	6 pm Pacific 9 pm Eastern	A Night at the Round Table	None	Panel Members Guests Callers welcome.
Friday	#1	6 pm Pacific 9 pm Eastern	Friday Night Hard News	720-716-7301 Pin Code: 353 863#	Rama, Tara Callers welcome.
Saturday	#2	1:30 pm PT/ 4:30 Eastern	History of our Galactic World & NESARA aka The True History	720-716-7301 Pin Code: 353 863#	Rama, Tara callers welcome.

NOTE: 2nd CONFERENCE CALL # for both Friday, Saturday

605-313-5166

Pin Code: 353 863#

ADDITIONAL HELP FOR LISTENERS

B B S LISTENER TOOLS

B B S RADIO STATION 1

A Night at the Roundtable
Friday Night Hard News

B B S RADIO STATION 2

Saturday History Call

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CLICK ON **AUDIO ICON**



CLICK ON **AUDIO ICON**



LISTEN BY PHONE

1-631-359-9353
[NO code needed]

1-804-220-6484
[No code needed]

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during live
calls

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B B S ARCHIVES

- go to www.bbsradio.com
- In **Search** box, enter the name of the required program;
- scroll down to the heading **TALK SHOW PROGRAM ARCHIVES FOR PODCASTING.**
- Find the table listing the dates. Click on required date.

II ACCESS TO OTHER CALLS SUPPORTED BY Rainbow Roundtable

NAME OF CALL / HOST	WEEKDAY / TIME	ACCESS POINT	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Aboriginal Moabite Nation Call Grand Goddess Lillie	Wednesday 6:00 – 7:30 MST	Telephone Only	1-605-472-5406 PIN 402-493#
Abundance Call Caroline Oceana Ryan	Every 2 nd Wednesday 5:45 PM PT/ 8:45 PM ET	Telephone ZOOM	

To be notified: email <https://www.ascensiontimes.com/the-abundance-group>
Scroll down to the sign-up sheet and enter the requested info.

Ascension Call Cheryl Croci	Every Sunday, Monday 9 – 10:30 EST	Telephone Only	1-425-436-6260 PIN 9467 441# Call Cheryl for # in your area
Ashtar Legacy Calls Fran Pearre	Every 2 nd , 4 th Tuesday 5 th Tuesday – no call 9:00 – 10:00 pm EST	Telephone VOIP/ H D via Skype	1-717-908-1834 PIN 980 339# Call is free; LD charges are not 1-717-908-1834 PIN #980 339# https://www.freeconferencecallhd.com/hd-conferencing/ Click on VOIP button and enter info as requested

To access past ALC calls, go to [Ashtar Legacy Teleconferences \(ashtarontheroad.com\)](http://ashtarontheroad.com)

III ARCHIVES: provided by B B S RADIO RAINBOW ROUNDTABLE

ARCHIVES: B B S

- Go to www.bbsradio.com
- In **Search** box, enter the name of the desired program;
- scroll down to the heading
TALK SHOW PROGRAM ARCHIVES FOR PODCASTING
- Find the table listing the dates. Click on desired date.

ARCHIVES: Rainbow Roundtable

- Go to <https://www.rainbowroundtable.net/>
- **WRITTEN**
 - Go to "Archives" tab: See NOTES on RHS
- **AUDIO**
 - Go to "Archives" tab: See AUDIO on LHS:
Included are both BBS podcast + Conference Call Links

III OPENING MEDITATION; HOUSEKEEPING; ACCESS TO PODCAST; MAYAN CALENDAR

A. Opening Meditation: Rainbird

B. Mayan Calendar / Record of Days: Rainbird

- Go to <https://www.spacestationplaza.com> – to locate specific days & lots more information: on the home page, you can find out what your Mayan signature is; while there, look and see where the wave – the birth wave - began

- to learn about the Mayan Calendar, Go to <https://www.spacestationplaza.com> which will link you further to www.lawoftime.org website for further information.

PLEASE LISTEN TO THE PODCAST TO HEAR THE ENTIRE DISCUSSION OF EACH DATE
Also note: This is not a 3rd dimensional calendar!

www.Spacestationplaza.co Click on the tzolkein – it's on page 2 of the link.

3rd Friday	3 MULUC	Red Electric Moon	Artist
About the co-creation of Heaven on earth; one of our gifts is unity with Spirit – let go of judgment of others. Wise use of mind, activate our telepathy and trust it!			
4th Saturday	4 OC	White Self-existing Dog	Artist
We get structure from the 4; working with unconditional love, healing the pain of the past gift of our loyalty to human kind; let go of fears, unwise use of anger.			
5th Sunday	5 CHUEN	Blue Overtone Monkey	Artist
Working balance of work and play; paying attention to clarity of mind. Gift ability to play, laugh, spontaneity let go of jadedness, resistance to compassion			
6th Monday	6 EB	Yellow Rhythmic Human	Healing
Enlightenment of human kind – attune to spirit – human servant warrior; gift of abundance and of contact with other dimensions			
7th Tuesday	7 Ben	Red Resonant Skywalker	Warrior
Full moon in Virgo. 7 is the magical point in the middle of the 13 days. Work with focus, striving towards illumination and clarity; strength is the gift, ability to bend dimensions. 7:40 am – very powerful			
8th Wednesday	8 IX	White Galactic Wizard	Visionary
Also I'national Womens Day – illumination for others, clarity of mind and purpose. Gift of being the shaman, working with our jaquare medicine – let go of control issues, personal control issues			
9th Thursday	9 MEN	Blue Solar Eagle	Visionary
Working with commitment to service; looking at big picture as well as details; moving consciousness to Source. Gift in belief in self and independence			
10th Friday	10 CIB	Yellow Planetary Warrior	Warrior
10 is manifestation – we are manifesting a warrior energy; trusting in our journey, aware of right action we let go of limitation, restriction - a powerful week ahead.			

C. Housekeeping:

- We are asking to **have more people contribute**, as some of the regular, long-term donors are stressed and stretched: **any and all small amounts are helpful and very welcome.**

Re **T & R**: Their full-time, life-time commitment is to be tuned in to what is really going on behind the scenes of the artificial world we see around us. They don't ask for anything but they do require food, a home, gas for the car, and access to BBS Radio in order to compile and distribute this information to the world.

- Donations via Paypal button on the **homepage** www.rainbowroundtable.net

B B S RADIO:

- The radio programs are supported by us, the listeners.
- The THREE radio programs cost \$300 each week.
- The mailing address for those who do not like paying electronically:

B B S RADIO

B B S RADIO
58 N Marshside Place
Spring, TX 77389

Please put "**Attention Don**" on the envelope
And note inside: "for Thursday,
Friday AND Saturday calls"

- **All BBS archives can be accessed FOR FREE by everyone.**
- **NB: TO BE FOUND AT** www.rainbowroundtable.net/archives
 - **AUDIO ARCHIVES** (BBS Radio Podcasts plus Conference Calls) **and**
 - **PROGRAM NOTES** (downloadable and printable **PDFs**)

OTHER FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

FOOD MONEY: VIA PAYPAL OR See the PAGE ON www.rainbowroundtable.net

Rama has a pride of Paschats + 2 inside kitties + 2 HUMANS = up to 13 in total

Financial Requirements

WEEKLY	
B B S RADIO/week	\$1,040.00 PLEASE BE GENEROUS SO WE CAN GET CAUGHT UP !!!
PERSONAL	
Gas, food, etc	\$200.00
Bills	\$ 530.00
Miscellaneous/Other	\$250.00 To finish the car!
MONTHLY	
Rent - \$1,150 / mo	\$1,150.00 Paid - thank you.
Total	

CONTACT INFO

- **Please notify Rama when sending something** koran999@comcast.net
- **Mailing address for checks, money orders, etc**
Ram D Berkowitz
PO Box 280
Santa Cruz, NM 87567

EVERY \$5 HELPS - **ALL GRATEFULLY RECEIVED**

PLEASE MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO DONATE THIS MONTH

- **Remember you can book a session with Mother, as well!**

**** [www.rainbowroundtable.net /page/donate](http://www.rainbowroundtable.net/page/donate) ****

- Your donation supports an account set up for Tara & Rama with **Beneficial Farms Community Supported Agriculture in Santa Fe, NM**
- They continue to appreciate each & every donation received for food.

- Please continue to go to www.rainbowroundtable.net and link to their Paypal account: choose **family and friends option so Paypal takes off no fees.**

FREEMART: SUPPLEMENTS. This account helps Rama & Tara; it's the source of their supplements

The returns also help www.rainbowroundtable.net

<https://www.shopfreemart.com/tarram> a/c # 7000

- Freemart is a private shoppers club; it's **FREE TO JOIN.**
- all the products have much to offer, so take a look!
- check out the heading called **READ MORE: lots of** good information

FREEMART: NUGEN COIN: <https://www.nugencoin.com/tarram>

To help Marshall and support him by signing up under his name:

<https://www.nugencoin.com/marnor>

TO GET HELP, Call Carolyn [Rainbird] or Micah

Carolyn's E-mail: lightenergync@gmail.com

Micah's E-mail: thegreenalchemist@gmail.com

CALL THEM FOR HELP WITH REGISTRATION/ISSUES RELATED TO NUGEN COINS

Access to this week's Podcast

<https://bbsradio.com/podcast/hard-news-friday-march-3-2023>

NOTE AGAIN: dial 1-631-359-9353 to listen to BBS Radio TV Station 1.

TO LISTEN TO CALLS ON THE PHONE: 1-631-359-9353

RAMA, TARA R,T

Greetings to all . . .

R tells her several times a day: "I'm over whelmed!"

- Howard Dean back in news – about sexually abusing a young girl

A **White Knight report** – R: created a Jedi council at 11:45 am this morning, up the mountain

- Tom, Sweet Angelique, Larry, Curly and Mo showed up,said "The sun is getting ready to send out an M or an X class flare that could initiate the solar flash – this is a big deal:

- the time is REALLLY CLOSE – this is a good thing – we are meeting ourselves:
- the dark side is racing to the bottom with their false flag agenda - their own evil behaviour is taking them out of the process. As we focus on love, compas, we are fulfilling our Bodishatva vows – about really comprehending how it feels to be in the one beingness of all that is

- This is the main reason we are here: we are all family; time to get over the idiosyncrasies and welcome each other

- and just a few hours ago – another flare came in

R: describes how he creates a Jedi Council: starts with a circle of crystals and calls in higher energy – and holographic forms of White Knights show up; they are hooked up with the Ashtar Command and the Quantum field and navigate star ships

T: a brief review of what Dr Greer said last Saturday
there has been 74 years of creating & carrying out the process of readying ships to come in

- an overview of the Alex Murdaugh case – a picture of his grandfather hung in the court roo; was taken down for the duration of the trial – the grandfather, a lawyer & judge - put many people through trials in this same courtroom: many got sent to death row!
 - This one got 2 consecutive sentences -
 - July '21 he committed the murder and in 22 was sentenced
 - What tipped the case was the video shown – taken by the son who was killed; was on his phone!

CONFERENCE CALL

#744 <https://fccdl.in/on2N8seu7a>

Talking about what the Solar flash feels like: almost orgasmic – a positive feeling of joy, release, ecstasy

SH: about the conf call on Feb 10th - to put everyone's concerns to rest: she's doing fine !

Background:

- she got a text from Padme asking her if she was OK – the conf call suggested that she was having trouble making ends meet – all prompted by Carlton's asking where S was and how she was
 - Tara may have said too much or not enough or something
1. she had surgery on her eye – 2 cataracts removed; the director of the clinic had designed technology that they send to other countries – they use light and frequencies to assist the ego mind to get out of the way –
 2. mentioned about the bill for the surgery – everything is cleared – and she is not in dire straits as far as money is concerned
 3. about medicare is federal and over 65 years; Medical is medicaid for limited income folks in California
 4. reference to putting her link on the website – started last year to discuss this idea

PLEASE LISTEN TO THIS CONFERENCE CALL FOR THE **REST OF THE DISCUSSION**

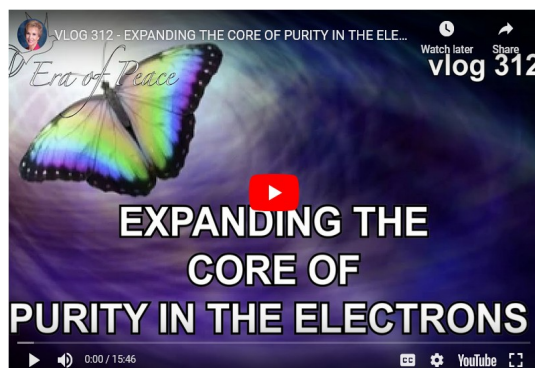
B B S RADIO

AUDIO: AVE SACHE

AUDIO:

ERA OF PEACE

PATRICIA COTA ROBLES



VLOG 312 - EXPANDING THE CORE OF PURITY IN THE ELECTRONS 0:01 / 15:46

AUDIO: KRYON February 2023 | The Breakthrough 🔊 [THIS WILL CHANGE ALL HUMAN]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6F-OAKm4dk&ab_channel=TheOriginalKRYON



21:41

MOTHER / ALCYONE [M/A]

Greetings in the Light of the Most Radiant One; in the Office of the Christ and only in the Office of the Christ, we invoke the loving energies of St Germain and the Violet Flame.

Greetings, Children of Ra!

Indeed, the energies are high! It is this sacred hour: We can say all of it is being lifted higher, right in this moment. The sun is doing its cosmic dance; ascension is assured.

- How we do this: it is all unfolding most magnificently! Plasma . . it is all unfolding: positive news is what's unfolding!
- As things progress towards that which called the Solar flash, the frequencies continue to climb each moment here, as we are pulling, moving into Aquarius - this age - magnetics - water - Doctor Emoto - remember the snowflakes in the water. It's what's in here (the heart) as we work with these energies pouring in, the plasma dust that's coming in, changing our blood, changing all the fluids in us . . . as we imagine seeing the snowflakes throughout this temple, it is a way to make the ascension easier.

The snowflakes will talk to us; they always do. It's just a matter of getting still, listening. (Yes Tegan - to the cat) It is the energies that are pouring in: all the beings feel it. It is the lifting up at this time of such magnificent light pouring in.

- Everything is stirred up in this moment, as we move from those old energies to this Aquarian Age. It's quite awesome to behold. The children know . . . all of life is pouring forth into this moment of - as we go from that which is called winter into spring, things are moving very rapidly.
- War is cancelled. Right now, we can say the biggest events unfolding are us taking in so much more Light, reflecting it back to each other, to the planets -
- As we want to ascend, it begins here, not anywhere else.

For every particle that's pouring in, it knows its mission! This is the greatest time ever to be here, to be in these temples of the Living Light, Living Love; this is the greatest gift we could speak about, right now.

- As we can see ourselves like a green tourmaline colour - deep green - nurturing, healing, it raises us up. The Light that's pouring in from the solar flares, aurora borealis - so much green healing light - the gamma rays coming from Great Central Sun.
- This is the medicine that is being showered forth across this realm, other 9 realms surrounding earth. It's a glorious time to be here! Most intense, precarious, as well. Life is so precious. Each day what's unfolding is the germination of the seeds that all life forms are equal with each other in the magnificence of All That is.

- As we recall the kind lady master that spoke yesterday (Thursday – A Night at the Roundtable): the I AM – I AM THAT I AM. As we work with that energy, everything else unfolds most magnificently.
 - Very simple: I AM and so it is!
 - As Kryon has been talking about for quite a while: as we take in this light, we begin to glow as well, like the sun: as within, so without: it's that symbiotic relationship - this cosmic dance of Shiva, Shakti
- Even in the midst of the issues of the day, we are all here and like the gifted Commander Aurora Ray says: we are family. It's all unfolding in a very good way.
 - As we take in this light, allow it to change these temples. It is quite simple. When we stay in the Oneness, that's the key to not lose our center right now cos there are so many magnificent things unfolding. It can be easy to get distracted with the ascension symptoms, and we are all being lifted higher – it's very good to see this: we are on track to merge with the incoming Light!
- All the events that are currently unfolding, are about how this old paradigm changes: free energy. We have the ability right now to travel across universes: all it takes is thought form energy!
 - Just remember who we are in this current moment! It's quite a challenge for each moment and we know the time is short - life is so precious. We are mortal beings with our magnificence and yet things move so quickly right now: can get lost in the shuffle of trying to stay in balance.
 - Focus on this light coming in; it is our salvation, as we keep being told.

• We must be on our way: big meeting in Shamballa the Greater. Greetings in the Light of the Most Radiant One
T: NESARA NOW!

M/A: NESARA NOW!

Both: Kodoish Kodoish, Kodoish . . .

Kodoish, Kodoish, Kodoish Adonai 'Tsebayoth
 iliahu iliahu iliahu
 Yod Hey Vod Hey
 YHWH

Holy holy holy is the Lord God of Hosts
 Illumine Illumine Illumine
 Yod Hey Vod Hey of the Living Everlasting Light
 The Revealed Name to our Father universe of the Living
 God behind all Creator Gods

Rama Returns: He was sitting with some peach trees; on one of the garden ships in orbit – a giant ship. There are groves and groves of peach trees and other kinds of trees and forests. These arboretums are floating gardens that have. . . as things settle down after our family from the stars land, we can re-introduce these plants back to the planet. They have been maintaining these gardens and when/until the time comes to restore the planet - and that's now! - all this will come

- Just sit and listen to the trees and feel the energies

T: they are bringing back a lot of programming from 2004 – 2009 in FSTV

R: Time for a change . . . big shift! ! !

DEMOCRACY NOW!

2023-03-03 Headlines <https://www.democracynow.org/2023/3/3/headlines>

2023-03-03 Meet the Bronx Activists Who Won a Historic Settlement for NYPD's Violent Attack at 2020 BLM Protest

https://www.democracynow.org/2023/3/3/mott_haven_nypd_settlement

2023-03-03 Opposition Disputes Nigeria's Election Results After Ruling Party's Bola Tinubu Declares Victory

https://www.democracynow.org/2023/3/3/nigeria_presidential_election

2023-03-03 Meet Thelma Cabrera, the Indigenous Leader Barred from Running in Guatemala's Presidential Election -

https://www.democracynow.org/2023/3/3/guatemala_thelma_cabrera

AUDIO: THE LATE SHOW

2023-03-03 "I Don't Look Back That Often" - Steven Spielberg's Career-Spanning Interview with Stephen Colbert

Mar 3, 2023 [#Colbert](#) [#TheFabelmans](#)
[#StevenSpielberg](#)

Steven Spielberg invited Stephen Colbert to visit Amblin Entertainment's headquarters for a rare, wide-ranging interview covering his more than 50 year career, beginning with the true story of Spielberg's first visit to a film studio, and why he essentially never left the lot. Stick around for more of this incredible interview and check out Spielberg's latest Oscar-nominated masterpiece, "The Fabelmans," in theaters and streaming now.

0:00 / 7:21



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pd8r_KM0BbA&ab_channel=TheLateShowwithStephenColbert

2023-03-03 A Young Steven Spielberg's Camera Lens Revealed a Hard Truth He Couldn't See with His Own Eyes

0:04 / 9:15 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1LNjxZ6iHM&ab_channel=TheLateShowwithStephenColbert

[#Colbert](#) [#TheFabelmans](#) [#StevenSpielberg](#)

Steven Spielberg describes the "affair of the heart" that he observed through a camera lens as a young man, and how he mined that family drama for the plot of his semi-autobiographical film, "The Fabelmans." Stick around for more with Steven Spielberg and check out his latest Oscar-nominated masterpiece in theaters and streaming now.

2023-03-03 John Williams & Steven Spielberg: We've Never Had An Argument In 29 Films Together

0:03 / 5:16

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFIBD829-HU&ab_channel=TheLateShowwithStephenColbert

Mar 3, 2023 [#TheFabelmans](#) [#JohnWilliams](#) [#Colbert](#)

Legendary composer John Williams joins Steven Spielberg for a chat with Stephen Colbert about the pair's long professional relationship, which began over a lunch date and has continued across 29 films and counting. The pair's latest Oscar-nominated masterpiece, "The Fabelmans," is in theaters and streaming now. Stick around for more of Stephen Colbert's interview with Steven Spielberg!

2023-03-03 "There's Something Out There" - Steven Spielberg on Alien Visitors, and an "E.T." Sequel

8.08

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgUed2YirEk&ab_channel=TheLateShowwithStephenColbert

Mar 3, 2023 [#Colbert](#) [#TheFabelmans](#) [#StevenSpielberg](#)

Steven Spielberg shares an interesting theory about UFOs, and gives careful consideration to Stephen Colbert's pitch for a sequel to his landmark 1982 film, "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial." Watch Spielberg's latest Oscar-nominated masterpiece, "The Fabelmans," in theaters and streaming now.

2023-02-13 Economic Update: Unionization, Marxism and Education

https://www.democracyatwork.info/eu_unionization_marxism_and_education

d@w Contributor: Richard Wolff

AUDIO: https://content.libsyn.com/p/8/f/2/8f219fd7f7618da5/Econ_Update_2023.02.09.s13.e07.mp3?c_id=145933290&cs_id=145933290&response-content-type=audio

In this week's show, Prof. Wolff shares updates on Starbucks union growth; Texas journalists and Yale graduate students/employees unionize, strike, win; Western Mass Labor Federation denounces Biden's denial of railway workers' right to strike; two major kinds of US tax injustice: (1) exempting bonds and stocks from property tax when 10% richest own 80% of stocks and bonds, and (2) failing to levy excess profits tax on war profiteers as UK and Portugal have already done. In the second half of the show, Wolff interviews Notre Dame Professor Emeritus **David F. Ruccio** on Marxian economics, its absence from US universities, and its social insights.

Timestamps:

- 00:00 - 00:48 - Introduction
- 00:59 - 01:48 - Starbucks
- 01:49 - 02:57 - Texas journalists unionize
- 02:58 - 05:26 - Yale grad students
- 05:16 - 09:25 - Western Mass Labor Federation denounces Biden's denial of railway workers
- 09:09 - 12:57 - tax injustices: property tax
- 12:58 - 14:40 - UK and Portugal excess profit tax
- 14:41 - 15:54 - Announcements
- 15:55 - 31:29 - Interview with Dr. David F. Ruccio

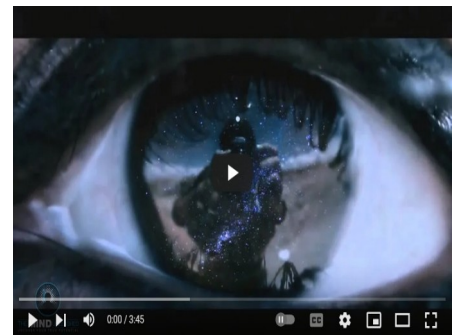
SEE TRANSCRIPT AT THE END OF THE NOTES

Closing: Rainbird

Rama's Closing:

(1) Alan Watts: Wake up and discover you're god
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fy8Pk6UHqXc&ab_channel=SHIBBYiPANDA

Music:



(2) Om Namah Shivaya | 108 Times Chanting | Shiva Mantra

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05c7SkvFY_o&ab_channel=GurumaaAshram

INFORMATION RELATED TO THE NOTES

2023-03-03

Headlines

<https://www.democracynow.org/2023/3/3/headlines>

German Chancellor to Hold Confidential Talks with Biden Amid Tensions over Arming Ukraine

Mar 03, 2023



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has begun a two-day visit to Washington, D.C., for confidential talks with President Biden that are believed to be focused on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. German opposition leaders have accused Scholz of secrecy, after he scheduled no public appearances, no press conferences, and traveled without his usual contingent of journalists. The talks follow tensions over U.S. demands that Germany ship Leopard 2 battle tanks to Ukraine, which Germany agreed to in January. The U.S. is also pressuring Germany to speed up production of ammunition. Meanwhile, the head of Russia's Wagner Group said today mercenaries have almost completely surrounded the besieged city of Bakhmut in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region.

Blinken Presses Russia's Lavrov to Return to New START Nuclear Treaty

Mar 03, 2023



Secretary of State Antony Blinken says he pressed Russian

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to reestablish the New START nuclear arms reduction treaty, during their brief encounter Thursday on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi. It was the first face-to-face meeting of high-level U.S. and Russian officials since Russia's invasion over one year ago.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken: "I urged Russia to reverse its irresponsible decision and return to implementing the New START treaty, which places verifiable limits on the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Russian Federation. Mutual compliance is in the interest of both our countries. It's also what people around the world expect from us as nuclear powers."

Neither the U.S. nor Russia has joined 92 other nations that have signed the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Belarus Jails Dissidents Including Nobel Laureate Ales Bialiatski

Mar 03, 2023



Image Credit: BELTA-Belarusian Telegraph Agency

In Belarus, a court has sentenced pro-democracy activist Ales Bialiatski, a 2022 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and 2020 Right Livelihood laureate, to 10 years in prison. Bialiatski and three other people from the Viasna Human Rights Centre were convicted of financing anti-government protests and smuggling money, Belarus's government said. He has been in jail since 2020, when wide-scale protests erupted against the reelection of President Alexander Lukashenko.

Cambodian Opposition Leader Kem Sokha Found Guilty of Treason, Sentenced to 27 Years

Mar 03, 2023



In Cambodia, opposition leader Kem Sokha has been sentenced to 27 years of house arrest. The former leader of the now-banned Cambodia National Rescue Party was accused of "conspiracy with a foreign power," treason and encouraging a revolution. This comes amid a heightened crackdown in Cambodia on opposition and the media.

Israeli Troops Fatally Shoot 15-Year-Old Palestinian

Mar 03, 2023



Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank shot and killed a 15-year-old Palestinian boy Thursday during a raid near the city of Qalqilya. The Palestinian Ministry of Health reports the teen, Muhammad Nidal Salim, was shot in the back while two other Palestinians were

wounded, including one person who was struck in the chest by gunfire. Israel's army said soldiers were responding to suspects who hurled Molotov cocktails at them. Israeli soldiers and police have killed at least 65 Palestinians so far this year, a rate of more than one death per day. Thirteen Israelis and one police officer have been killed by Palestinians over the same period.

Emmanuel Macron Embarks on African Tour Amid Tensions over French Presence in Ex-Colonies

Mar 03, 2023



French President Emmanuel Macron declared Thursday the era of French interference in Africa is over, as he embarked on a four-nation tour of the continent. Last week, Macron pledged to reduce France's military role in Africa, after recent withdrawals from Mali and Burkina Faso. France's efforts to stem attacks from Islamist insurgents in the Sahel have largely failed. But Macron said France intends to maintain a presence in its former colonies "with a reduced footprint," amid Western concerns of growing ties with Russia and China. In the Democratic Republic of Congo — a former Belgian colony — protesters gathered outside the French Embassy in Kinshasa this week. They condemned Macron's visit and demanded France pressure Rwandan President Paul Kagame to stop supporting M23 rebels in the DRC.

Protester: "France finances terrorist groups here in Africa, in several African states, in the Congo. So, recently, Mr. Macron came to placate us, the Congolese, but the Congolese people are not duped. Never did he point a finger at Mr. Kagame. At no point did he condemn Mr. Kagame."

Walgreens Won't Dispense Abortion Pills in States Where Abortion Is Still Legal After GOP Threats

Mar 03, 2023



Walgreens says it will not dispense abortion pills in some states where the procedure remains legal, after receiving pressure and threats from Republican lawmakers and anti-abortion groups. The Biden administration approved the sale of the abortion pill mifepristone directly from pharmacies in January, both by mail and in person. Medical abortions are now the most popular method of terminating a pregnancy and can be a lifeline for many people following the overturning of Roe v. Wade. This comes as a Texas judge is poised to deliver a ruling that could halt distribution of abortion pills nationwide.

On Thursday, a group of top human rights organizations and experts asked the U.N. to intervene to stop the destruction of abortion rights in the U.S., saying that with the SCOTUS decision in Dobbs, “the U.S. is in violation of its obligations under international human rights law.”

Meanwhile, reproductive rights groups in Ohio submitted a petition to create a ballot initiative that would let Ohioans vote to enshrine abortion rights in the state Constitution.

Eli Lilly Lowers Price of Insulin After Intense Public Pressure

Mar 03, 2023



Eli Lilly has announced it is lowering the price of insulin by

70%, capping its out-of-pocket cost at \$35, and offering its generic insulin at \$25. The move follows years of organizing and pressure from activists, lawmakers, and people with diabetes. In response, Senator Bernie Sanders wrote to the drug companies Sanofi and Novo Nordisk demanding they follow suit. Sanders wrote, “Insulin is not a new drug. It was discovered 100 years ago by Canadian scientists who sold the patent rights of insulin for just \$1 because they wanted to save lives, not make pharmaceutical executives extremely wealthy. And yet, as a result of unacceptable corporate greed, the price of insulin has gone up by over 1,000 percent since 1996 causing 1.3 million people with diabetes to ration insulin last year while your companies made billions of dollars in profits.”

East Palestine Residents Confront Norfolk Southern as EPA Orders Rail Co. to Test for Dioxins

Mar 03, 2023



The Environmental Protection Agency has ordered Norfolk Southern to test for dioxins in East Palestine, Ohio, the site of a February 3 train wreck that caused a massive release of chemicals. Dioxins are a class of highly toxic contaminants that could have formed in the chemical burnoff of the wreckage. They’re found in Agent Orange and have been linked to some of the worst environmental disasters in U.S. history, including the poisoning of the Love Canal neighborhood of Niagara Falls, New York, in the 1970s. The EPA’s order came as residents confronted a representative for Norfolk Southern at a town hall meeting in East Palestine Thursday evening.

East Palestine resident: “This has touched me on every level. This has touched my family. This has touched my friends. This has touched my farm. This has touched my animals. This has touched my finances. This has touched my home. And it will touch me to the cellular level if I get diagnosed with cancer, ALS or whatever is going to come down the road if I stay in this contaminated, toxic town. And you all know it.”

On Wednesday, union leaders representing rail workers wrote to Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and other officials, blasting Norfolk Southern for risking the health of workers at the crash site and not providing personal protective equipment as they clean up. The letter states that workers “continue to experience migraines and nausea, days after the derailment, and they all suspect that they were willingly exposed to these chemicals at the direction of Norfolk Southern.”

House Ethics Committee Launches Probe into Rep. George Santos’s Litany of Lies

Mar 03, 2023



Image Credit: Reuters

On Capitol Hill, the House Ethics Committee has opened an investigation into Republican Congressman George Santos, who’s admitted to lying about his background during his successful 2022 campaign to represent New York’s 3rd Congressional District. The committee will probe whether Santos engaged in unlawful activity including failure to properly disclose financial information, whether he violated conflict of interest laws, and allegations of sexual misconduct. Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy has so far refused to call on Santos to step down.

DOJ Says Trump Is Not Immune from Jan. 6 Lawsuits

Mar 03, 2023



The Justice Department has argued former President Donald Trump does not have absolute immunity from civil lawsuits stemming from the January 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol. Top Justice Department lawyers made the assertion as part of an amicus brief filed on behalf of Capitol Police officers and House Democrats who are suing Trump for physical and psychological harm brought by the insurrection.

2023-03-03 Meet the Bronx Activists Who Won a Historic Settlement for NYPD's Violent Attack at 2020 BLM Protest

https://www.democracynow.org/2023/3/3/mott_haven_nypd_settlement



New York City has reached a multimillion-dollar settlement with peaceful protesters who were violently “boxed in” or “kettled” by NYPD officers during a Black Lives Matter demonstration in response to the police murder of George Floyd in 2020. As part of the settlement, over 300 people who were trapped by police and assaulted with batons and pepper spray, then detained or arrested at a June 4, 2020, protest in the neighborhood of Mott Haven, will each receive \$21,500 — believed to be the largest class-action settlement in a case of mass arrest. We are joined by three people who were at the Mott Haven protest: Samira and Amali Sierra, sisters who are two of the five listed plaintiffs, and *Democracy Now!* video news fellow Sonyi Lopez, whose footage of the protest was used in a Human Rights Watch report that condemned the NYPD’s actions as “serious violations of international human rights law.” In addition, we speak to Joshua Moskovitz, one of the lawyers representing the plaintiffs.

Guests

- [Samira Sierra](#)
one of five listed plaintiffs in a class-action lawsuit against the NYPD.
- [Amali Sierra](#)
one of five listed plaintiffs in a class-action lawsuit against the NYPD.
- [Sonyi Lopez](#)
Democracy Now! video news fellow.
- [Joshua Moskovitz](#)
lawyer representing the plaintiffs in a class-action lawsuit against the NYPD

Transcript

This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

AMY GOODMAN: This is *Democracy Now!*, [democracynow.org](https://www.democracynow.org), *The War and Peace Report*. I’m Amy Goodman.

We begin today’s show here in New York, where the city has agreed to a multimillion-dollar settlement with peaceful protesters who were violently “boxed in” or “kettled” by New York police officers during a Black Lives Matter demonstration two weeks after the police murder of George Floyd in 2020. As part of the settlement,

over 300 people who were trapped by police and assaulted with batons and pepper spray, then detained or arrested at a June 4th, 2020, protest, will each receive \$21,500 — believed to be the largest class-action settlement in a case of mass arrest. The arrests took place in the South Bronx. A Human Rights Watch [investigation](#) said the NYPD's conduct that day amounted to "serious violations of international human rights law."

PROTESTER 1: We are currently trapped at 136th and Brook Avenue, since 7:45. They are pushing us!

PROTESTER 2: Oh my god! Oh!

PROTESTER 1: They are pushing us!

PROTESTER 2: They're pushing us!

PROTESTER 1: They are pushing us!

PROTESTER 2: They're pushing us!

PROTESTER 1: They are pushing us! They are pushing us! Stay calm! Stay calm! Stay calm! What are you doing?

POLICE OFFICER: Move! Move! Move! Move!

AMY GOODMAN: That's part of a video report produced by Human Rights Watch that raised awareness about the kettling that took place that day. This is another clip.

IDA SAWYER: As the marchers headed down Willis Avenue, more than 50 police officers blocked the street.

PROTESTER 1: Yo, we gonna go around. We gonna go around.

IDA SAWYER: The march redirected down 136th Street. And in the final minutes just before the 8:00 curfew, instead of allowing or even directing the marchers to disperse, the NYPD diverted its bicycle officers to block the marchers just as they reached the intersection of 136th and Brook Avenue.

PROTESTER 2: What did I do?

PROTESTER 3: Why are you pushing, bro?

POLICE OFFICER: Mobile fence line one! Move the crowd!

POLICE OFFICERS: Move back! Move back!

PROTESTER 4: Go that way! Go that way! Go that way!

PROTESTERS: Let us through! Let us through! Let us through! Let us through!

IDA SAWYER: And from behind the march, a line of officers blocked the protesters from turning back. It's a tactic called kettling.

AMY GOODMAN: That's from a Human Rights Watch investigation of the NYPD kettling in the South Bronx June 4th, 2020, that was the focus of the historic settlement announced this week. In response to concerns

raised at the time, the police said their crackdown was preplanned. This is New York City Police Commissioner, at the time, Dermot Shea.

COMMISSIONER DERMOT SHEA: And we had a plan which was executed nearly flawlessly in the Bronx. This wasn't, again, about protest; this was about tearing down society.

AMY GOODMAN: Meanwhile, NYPD's Strategic Response Group has continued to target nonviolent protesters, and this week dozens of people testified at the New York City Council about their abusive tactics. The NYPD refused to show up.

For more, we're joined by three people who were at the protest in the Bronx in June 2020. Sonyi Lopez was filming the protest. She's currently a video news fellow here at *Democracy Now!* Her footage was used in the Human Rights Watch report. Also with us, Samira Sierra and Amali Sierra. They're sisters. They're among the five listed plaintiffs. And joining us, Joshua Moskovitz, one of the lawyers representing the plaintiffs.

We welcome you all to *Democracy Now!* Let's begin with the plaintiffs, with Samira and Amali. Samira, why don't you start off by talking about what this protest was about, two weeks after George Floyd's murder, where you marched and what happened?

SAMIRA SIERRA: Good morning.

The protest was during the uprisings right after George Floyd's murder. And simply, we were exercising our human rights, our civil rights, and we were demonstrating and standing up against all of the racial injustice that happens day in and day out in this country.

AMY GOODMAN: And, Amali, that's your older sister Samira. Talk about your decision. I mean, it was brave to go out. We're talking about June of 2020. This is at the height of the COVID pandemic, at the time of the killing, the police killing of George Floyd. Did you expect what happened to happen? And then explain what happened in just one block of the South Bronx, when you were stopped by police.

AMALI SIERRA: Yes, so, to your point, this was in the midst of a global health crisis. We had been in the pandemic for a few months at this point. This was not the first of the protests that we attended that summer. It was the first that we had attended in our home, in the South Bronx. And the energy that day, from the beginning of the protest, was very tense. And so, the very short protest that we partook in on June 4th reflected just that. It was very tense. It was met very violently. However, we were very peaceful in our demeanor, while also making sure to exercise our right, that we are entitled to, and express the anger and the frustration that we felt because of the violence that Black and Brown people are constantly met with in the United States of America. And so, although our message was very clear and we were very intentional in expressing our frustration and our anger, we were — at any time, we were not violent. We were very peaceful. And so, it was met very violently, and we were not expecting at any point to be met with all the aggression that we were by the NYPD and by the SRG specifically.

AMY GOODMAN: I mean, the terrifying image, Samira, of the police blocking you in, kettling you, and telling you to move where there's no place to go. And then explain what the police did.

SAMIRA SIERRA: Sure. So, we were very strategically guided down 136th Street. And when we — as we were walking down towards Brook Avenue, we were blocked off by a line of officers on both ends of the street, so off of Willis Avenue and on Brook Avenue. And there was a commander in a white shirt who continued to direct the officers to move in at the same time. We were boxed in. We were kettled. And we were also, like, squished. Our bodies were squished, like squished up against each other. There were people that — I mean, you just passed that footage where, you know, it was terror. We were terrified for our lives. People couldn't breathe. People were fainting. I have never in my life felt the amount of fear that I felt that day.

AMY GOODMAN: Sonyi Lopez, it's great to have you on screen, as you're usually behind the scenes and filming — and that's what you were doing that day — a *Democracy Now!* video news fellow now. But at the

time, you were filming this protest. Explain what you saw. And, I mean, when you see the police, the first arrests are of the legal and the medics? And they're very clear about what they're doing. "Move ahead and arrest them," they said.

SONYI LOPEZ: Right, Amy. I was there. I'm actually a South Bronx resident. I live in Mott Haven. And this was the second peaceful protest that I participated in in my neighborhood. And it was absolutely peaceful. What I saw when the police came down this hill on 137th Street and kettled folks, I saw police coming down the hill on bikes at rapid speed. And as soon as that happened, literally like a second later, they started blocking people off with their bikes and pushing people with these bikes, attacking medics, like you said, Amy, attacking lawyers, people that were there, legal aids, to help community members and protesters alike in case things like this happen, right? But we were not expecting that.

Luckily, I managed to run away, but before I could run away, I was able to document and film. As you said, HRW and SITU — Human Rights Watch — were able to use the video that I recorded that day. But it was frightening. I had never been so scared in my — and fearful in my own neighborhood. And I'll never forget that. I wasn't able to leave my home for months after that, like other protesters, and felt unsafe. And it was just so traumatizing that day.

AMY GOODMAN: I want to bring the lawyer into this conversation, Joshua Moskovitz, the lawyer for the plaintiffs. Joshua, talk about the unit of police. I mean, we just played Dermot Shea, the police chief at the time in New York, saying this was all preplanned by the police. And in this Human Rights Watch reporting, which uses a lot of Sonyi's footage, you see they deliberately go after the legal and the medical teams first. And they're very clear. One of the police officers said, "It's fine" — it said something — I think he had "police legal" on his shirt, and he said, "It's fine to arrest the legal observers," who were considered essential workers at the time, right? They were allowed to be out. Explain who this team of police are.

JOSHUA MOSKOVITZ: Right. So, the NYPD's Strategic Response Group, or SRG, are a paramilitary organization within the NYPD that are used to police protest events, nonviolent protest events like we saw in Mott Haven. They've come under appropriate scrutiny for their violent tactics that are primarily used to suppress nonviolent free speech activity like we saw in Mott Haven.

This was no accident. This was a planned operation. And what's unique about the Mott Haven operation is that it was planned by the highest-level officials within the police department. Terence Monahan, the chief of department, which is the highest-ranked — highest uniformed ranking officer within the police department, was personally present at Mott Haven. So were the executive officer, the commanding officer and the bureau chief that oversee the SRG unit. They had a plan that day, and, as the commissioner said the next day, it was executed, in their view, flawlessly.

AMY GOODMAN: I mean, it's just astounding. And you see them separate out one of the leaders of the protest with a bullhorn. They push her aside. In fact, she was one of the first to be arrested.

JOSHUA MOSKOVITZ: That's right. I mean, there is no question in the world that the plan that day was to instill fear in people so that they would stop protesting. This was not a violent uprising. This was a peaceful protest. In fact, there were people attending the protest who lived in the South Bronx who were members of the mayor's Cabinet. The commissioner of the community affairs for Mayor de Blasio was there personally, because he lived in the South Bronx, Marco Carrión. He talked about what happened that day and described the sentiment at the protest as closer to a candlelight vigil. The purpose of this operation was to instill fear in people.

AMY GOODMAN: You know, it's very interesting that on Wednesday the City Council held a long-planned, repeatedly delayed oversight hearing on the Strategic Response Group, that was involved with this. No one from the NYPD showed up, citing ongoing litigation. Your response to this? And talk about this historic settlement, in the country, for what took place in the South Bronx.

JOSHUA MOSKOVITZ: Well, as you said, this is a historic settlement. As far as we can tell, this is the largest per person class-action mass arrest settlement in the country. And we think that that is appropriate,

given the extreme violence that we saw carried out by the NYPD during the operation. And the size of the award that the city agreed to, we think, reflects an acknowledgment or understanding that what happened that day was unconstitutional, it was immoral, and it should never happen again. We hope that the NYPD has taken this to heart and will reform the operations and, frankly, never use the SRG for policing protest events in the future.

But the other aspect of this case that I think often gets overlooked is that this happened in the South Bronx. This happened in New York Congressional District 15, which is 97% people of color. It's also one of the poorest congressional districts in the entire country. This operation wasn't carried out in Manhattan, where there were protests. It wasn't carried out in Brooklyn, where there were protests that summer. There was a choice made at the highest levels of the NYPD to carry out this operation in the South Bronx. And that fact is part of what has led to the Human Rights Watch finding this to be a human rights violation. And we're proud of our clients in pursuing this litigation and pursuing the result that they achieved here for people who weren't able to get lawyers but were there that day and who were injured.

AMY GOODMAN: Amali and Samira — Amali, you're 25. Samira is 30 now. This was three years ago. What does this settlement mean for each of you? Amali, let's begin with you.

AMALI SIERRA: This settlement is larger than myself. I believe that the settlement allows for individuals who were there that day, the hundreds of individuals that were there that day, the opportunity to come forward, the opportunity to be recognized and acknowledged, based off of the abuse that they endured that day, and hopefully an opportunity to also heal. It was very traumatic, and trauma looks very different for every individual. And so, I hope that this encourages all of the individuals that were unable to represent themselves to come forward. And that is why it is extremely crucial and very important to be a representative of a class action of this magnitude, not just for myself but for the greater good and for all of the people that were unable to represent themselves.

AMY GOODMAN: And, Samira, your response? And also the fact that no police officer was charged that day, and also there wasn't an official apology, but you did have this financial settlement.

SAMIRA SIERRA: Right. The settlement, to me, means that the City of New York is being held accountable for organizing the highest level of the NYPD, which is the Strategic Response Group, and holding them accountable for flawlessly executing excessive force in the South Bronx, which is my home.

AMY GOODMAN: Josh, very quickly —

SAMIRA SIERRA: It also means to —

AMY GOODMAN: Oh, go ahead.

SAMIRA SIERRA: It also means to me that, you know, they're being held accountable for the violation of human rights of Black and Brown folks in this country, one of many. We have a long way to go, but it feels really good, for the lack of a better word, to know that there is some accountability.

AMY GOODMAN: Joshua, very quickly, there are other lawsuits, right? This is not the only one, this class action.

JOSHUA MOSKOVITZ: That's right. There are other lawsuits that are still proceeding, one, in fact, interestingly, brought by New York State Attorney General's Office against the City of New York seeking injunctive relief to reform the police department's policing of protest events.

AMY GOODMAN: And finally, Sonyi Lopez, you were not kettled in. You escaped that. But can you talk about the effect on you, as a journalist who was filming, seeing these people kettled in, being beaten by the police?

SONYI LOPEZ: Absolutely, Amy. Me, beyond being a journalist, I'm a community member. I grew up in this area, so it hurt to see my community being beat like this. And, you know, in response to the class-action lawsuit, it's great that people are getting monetary — you know, being compensated monetarily, but we also

need some trauma — some healing, maybe therapy offered to folks like myself who ran away, who were able to get away from this.

I also wanted to add, really quickly, Amy, that Mott Haven Families, a community group with children and adults, protested in front of the 40th Precinct demanding accountability and asking the question, “What happened on June 4th?” for months on end, and had no response, no answer from the NYPD or accountability from the city. And meanwhile, a small jail — a jail was being built in Mott Haven across the street from my former middle school while all of this was happening. So, this is just a traumatic event, and I think that we need to remember that people are still healing from this to this day.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, Sonyi Lopez, I want to thank you for joining us on screen today, *Democracy Now!* video news fellow, filmed the protest in 2020; Samira and Amali Sierra, named plaintiffs in this historic class-action lawsuit; and Joshua Moskovitz, lawyer for the plaintiffs.

2023-03-03 Opposition Disputes Nigeria’s Election Results After Ruling Party’s Bola Tinubu Declares Victory

https://www.democracynow.org/2023/3/3/nigeria_presidential_election



Opposition parties are disputing the results of Saturday’s presidential election in Nigeria, where the country’s Independent National Electoral Commission has declared the winner to be Bola Tinubu of the ruling All Progressives Congress party. The former governor of Lagos played a key role in helping outgoing Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari win two terms in office and campaigned using the slogan “It’s my turn.” Tinubu received about 36% of the vote, and turnout was under 30%. Several of Tinubu’s challengers have disputed the results, alleging fraud, while election observers and voters have cited delays, closures and violence at voting sites. For more on how the election could play out in Africa’s most populous nation, we speak with Aderonke Ige in Lagos. She is a human rights activist and lawyer who works with Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa, or CAPP.

Guests Q [Aderonke Ige](#)

human rights activist and lawyer who works with Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa, or CAPP.

AMY GOODMAN: This is *Democracy Now!*, democracynow.org, *The War and Peace Report*. I'm Amy Goodman, as we turn now to Africa's most populous country, to Nigeria, where opposition parties are disputing the results of this weekend's presidential election. Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission has declared the winner to be Bola Tinubu of the ruling All Progressives Congress party. Tinubu is the former governor of Lagos, played a key role in helping outgoing Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari win two terms in office. He campaigned using the slogan "It's my turn." Tinubu received 36% of the vote. Turnout was under 30%.

Several of Tinubu's challengers have disputed the results, alleging fraud, while election observers and voters have cited delays, closures and violence at voting sites. On Thursday, Peter Obi, who placed third despite winning in Lagos, announced he would contest the election results in court.

PETER OBI: Let me reiterate, and I assure you that, good people of Nigeria, that we will explore all legal and peaceful action to reclaim our mandate. We won the election. I will prove it to Nigerians.

AMY GOODMAN: We go now to Lagos, Nigeria, where we're joined by Aderonke Ige. She is a human rights activist, lawyer, who works with Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa.

I mean, you have this election being challenged by civic groups, by international groups, from the EU monitoring group to the U.S. International Republican Institute to the National Democratic Institute, across the board. Describe what happened.

ADERONKE IGE: Thank you, Amy. Thank you for the opportunity to be on your platform again. I've been here before.

In a nutshell, what happened on Saturday, which was, of course, the Nigeria's general election, which was supposed to be also the election that helped the people to bring into office the president and then the legislature at the national level — so, there were three elections on that day: for the presidency, for the Senate and the House of Representatives, which are the legislative arms of government at the national level. I think that it's not gainsaying that, like you said also in your introduction, a lot of disappointment, a lot of complaints have also riddled or have been the aftermath of that election.

I had the privilege of observing the election, and I also voted as a citizen. One of the first things I would say I immediately noticed was the fact that there was not deployment of even the INEC officers in certain polling units, some of the places where I observed. I had to personally play the role of — because I had observed that for a long time people were just waiting, and then the wait became panic, and it became tension and agitation. So, in that sense, you would have to play the role of a mediator, someone who is comforting, but someone also who wants the process to be as credible as possible.

So, by the time the INEC officers arrived, I was the first person to ask them, "But why this delay?" In fact, I was really imagining that it was because they didn't have security, maybe. And then, the officer had to say, "Oh no, it was not even security. They just had logistical challenges." That was what they cited. So, it was not shocking that after the — even as the elections were going on, there were real-time videos, messaging, and so on, of people just complaining about very similar things.

And then, another thing that was really obvious in Saturday's elections was the fact there were so many irregularities, or at least alleged irregularities, given pieces of evidence that came forward in certain places. Meanwhile, in other parts of the country, of course, people said they voted peacefully. There were no issues for them. But then, so I'm trying to balance it here, so it doesn't look like hasty generalization. But from what we saw, there were also cases of violence, pockets of violence here and there of people being brutalized, or even open intimidation, threats to certain voters, because probably of a tribe and, you know, just locations, and then they were really harassed. And some people could also not vote, at the end of the day. So, that's the summary of the elections.

AMY GOODMAN: And talk about the significance of the ruling party, well, so-called winning, Tinubu continuing on.

ADERONKE IGE: Hello, Amy. Please, can you take that again?

AMY GOODMAN: Oh, I was just asking if you can talk about the significance of Bola Tinubu saying that he won, the ruling party continuing to rule, from Buhari.

ADERONKE IGE: Oh, I mean, OK, so, I think this will take us back a little bit, because I remember the last time I was here, you know, we were talking about the #EndSARS movement, protests that eventually became a movement. And if you remember, Amy, it was also — that movement itself or the series of protests were unceremoniously truncated by what was alleged to have been involvement of the state. And that movement also, that was essentially led and activated by young people, was what, in my opinion and the opinion of so many people, metamorphosed into a certain kind of people power, led by young people who felt that because their voices were not validated or even heard, back then, in 2020, they were going to deploy all of that energy and that anger, raw frustration, into the 2023 elections, meaning that a lot of people also, in that sense, wanted the ruling power, the current ruling power, APC, out of power, most of them young people. So, for those young people, which class I also belong to, it was a time to speak loudly and clearly, probably not on the streets anymore at this point, but through the ballot.

So, for them, because of all these irregularities, which I would also say, categorically, that our election monitoring body or management body — INEC, in this case — played a role in also giving validation to — for them, it was an unfair process. For a lot of young people, also it's a process that did not allow their voices to be heard. What we saw was, immediately after the truncation of the #EndSARS protest, a lot of the energy that was channeled was not just about waiting to vote in 2023, but also the fact that a lot of young people got involved in the process, even by putting themselves forward for political offices, engaging the system, engaging the politics, and also deciding to be candidates. So, that was a great thing that was really applauded. But with this whole gamut of what happened, it's also like a dash of hope. It's a truncation, another form of truncation of the kind of trust that the young people also still reposed a little bit in the system, because this time around it's meant to be conducted by an Independent National Electoral Commission, not necessarily the ruling party.

And you might find it interesting to also know that between then and now, a lot has happened, including the review or the amendment of the electoral law, which is essentially the Electoral Act of Nigeria, which a lot of people also applauded, because we saw some innovations coming into the act, beginning with even funding, what is now supposed to be a level of financial autonomy for the election management body, also introduction of, or at least legitimization of, technology in the electoral process itself. But all of that has — I think hopes have been dashed. A lot of trust has also been crushed. So, any claim that is being held by any political aspirant or even candidate right now can be subjected to tests.

AMY GOODMAN: Aderonke Ige, we want to thank you so much for being with us, human rights activist and lawyer, joining us from Lagos, Nigeria. On Monday, we'll continue to look at this election in Africa's most populous country.

Next up, as Guatemala bans Thelma Cabrera, the Maya Mam environmental and human rights activist, from running for president, in a rare U.S. interview, we'll speak with Thelma Cabrera and her running mate. Stay with us.

2023-03-03 Meet Thelma Cabrera, the Indigenous Leader Barred from Running in Guatemala's Presidential Election

https://www.democracynow.org/2023/3/3/guatemala_thelma_cabrera



Guests

- [Thelma Cabrera](#)
Indigenous human rights defender and presidential candidate for the Movement for the Liberation of the Peoples in Guatemala.
- [Jordán Rodas](#)
former human rights ombudsman in Guatemala and vice-presidential candidate for the Movement for the Liberation of the Peoples.

Guatemala's presidential election this year is taking place against a backdrop of worsening repression against journalists, human rights activists and Indigenous environmental defenders. The Guatemalan Constitutional Court on Thursday upheld a decision by the country's electoral tribunal to bar Indigenous human rights defender Thelma Cabrera from running. Cabrera and her running mate, former human rights ombudsman Jordán Rodas, are members of the leftist political party the Movement for the Liberation of the Peoples. They visited the United States in February to meet with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights following their ban and spoke with *Democracy Now!* about the election, their platform and how political elites in the country have consolidated power. "Guatemala is a corrupt state that's been coopted by criminals. This is now reflected in violating our right to participate in this presidential election," said Cabrera.

AMY GOODMAN: This is *Democracy Now!*, [democracynow.org](https://www.democracynow.org), *The War and Peace Report*.

From the Nigerian election to the election in this hemisphere, to Guatemala, we end today's show looking at this year's presidential election there, happening at a time of worsening repression in Guatemala against journalists, human rights activists and Indigenous environmental defenders in the Central American country.

The Guatemalan Constitutional Court Thursday ruled against presidential candidate Thelma Cabrera and her running mate, exiled human rights ombudsman Jordán Rodas, upholding a February decision by Guatemala's Supreme Electoral Tribunal to block them from the ballot. Cabrera and Rodas are members of the leftist political party, the Movement for the Liberation of the Peoples, which grew out of the Indigenous-led farmers' rights organization CODECA. Across Guatemala, thousands have taken to the streets in protest, demanding that Cabrera and Rodas be allowed to participate in June's election.

Thelma Cabrera is a Maya Mam environmental and human rights defender, who also ran for president in 2019, receiving an unprecedented wave of support. She got about 10% of the vote. Rodas served as human rights prosecutor in Guatemala from 2017 until last year, when he was forced to flee for allying himself with anti-corruption efforts.

While they are being banned from participating in the election, the Guatemalan Constitutional Court has confirmed the presidential candidacy of the conservative Zury Ríos. She's the daughter of the dead former U.S.-backed military dictator Efraín Ríos Montt, who rose to power after a coup in 1982. Ríos Montt was convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity 10 years ago. Zury Ríos had been prohibited from running in 2019 due to a constitutional measure that doesn't allow figures who came to power by coup, or their blood relatives, to run for president.

Cabrera and Rodas took their fight to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Washington, D.C., last month. They also traveled to New York, where *Democracy Now!* spoke with them. I began by asking Thelma Cabrera for her response to being blocked from the election.

THELMA CABRERA: [translated] The response as Indigenous people is that this ratifies what we've always denounced, that Guatemala is a corrupt state that's been coopted by criminals. This is now reflected in violating our right to participate in this presidential election. They fear not Thelma, but the people, the people who organized and are putting forward their proposals for structural change in Guatemala.

AMY GOODMAN: I mean, the significance of your candidacy. In 2019, you got 10% of the vote, more than any Indigenous person in Guatemalan history. I think, before that, Rigoberta Menchú got 3%. Ultimately, the president, Giammattei, got 14 . You got 10. Talk about what you represent to the *pactos de corruptos*, which people should understand around the world, what's called the "pact of the corrupt," that is taking you off the ballot.

THELMA CABRERA: [translated] Through the election fraud that took place, supposedly we came in fourth place. But we, the peoples, understand that we did better — first or second place. But in the face of this electoral fraud, that's the place that they said we came in. Indigenous peoples, we are a menace to the corrupt pact, because what we propose is a project for the nation: a popular plurinational assembly in the face of the whole context that we're experiencing, a context marked by assassinations, imprisonment and the looting of our wealth in Guatemala. So what we are proposing is a constitutional assembly, and that they are fearful of us, the peoples governing ourselves.

I'd like to add something. This shows that they're punishing us as a people, prohibiting our rights to political participation. Persecution is not new. It's been happening since 2018. From 2018 to date, there have been 26 assassinations of human rights defenders, of those of us who defend our territories and the Mother Earth. So the best way to punish us is to forbid our participation. But we're not after candidacies. We are promoting a whole project for the nation. Our struggle will continue even after the elections. And that is why we're continuing along the path that we've chosen thus far.

AMY GOODMAN: Jordán Rodas, can you respond to both of you — you're the vice-presidential candidate, and Thelma Cabrera is the presidential candidate — being banned from the Guatemalan presidential elections this year?

JORDÁN RODAS: [translated] Well, we are causing panic to the pact of the corrupt ones, which is an alliance between the political sector and the economic sector. They've looted the country for decades, indeed for centuries, perhaps. It's in their interest to maintain the status quo, the situation as is, with three structural problems: inequality, discrimination/racism, and corruption.

So, the strength of the MLP, headed up by Thelma Cabrera, supplemented with what Jordán Rodas can contribute, with an experience based on defending human rights — and I aspired to be the director of the University of San Carlos, but this has caused them panic. They know that

we're the only real option for change. Everything else is just continuing with the same thing, just changing the face of a puppet. It might be a woman, it might be a man, but not like us. We know what the real problems are, and we are going to propose real solutions.

AMY GOODMAN: Why did you go into exile? You joined so many advocates, judges, lawyers, who have left Guatemala. Why did you leave?

JORDÁN RODAS: [translated] Many of us who played a role in favor of the struggle against impunity and corruption have had to leave. In my case, as human rights ombudsman, the week after I assumed my office in August 2017, former President Jimmy Morales declared Iván Velásquez *persona non grata* and ordered his expulsion. He was then the commissioner of CICIG. Today he's defense minister of the Petro administration in Colombia. And I brought an *amparo* action that stopped that arbitrary action by the president.

Then he wanted to end the commission before its time. It was touching — getting into sensitive matters. Its investigations were reaching high-level political and economic figures in the Guatemalan state. And so it was an obstacle for the continuation of impunity. And that is why many judges and other judicial officers had to leave. This was not just backsliding. This was revenge against those who had impacted their interests.

AMY GOODMAN: Thelma Cabrera, the leading candidate for president right now is Zury Ríos. Zury Ríos is the daughter of president, former general, Ríos Montt, who was found guilty of genocide against the Mayan people, your people, in the northwest highlands of Guatemala. She insists there was no genocide. Can you talk about this? And talk about this history.

THELMA CABRERA: [translated] That also ratifies the attitude of a failed state. It shows that the electoral tribunal is corrupted. It's been coopted by criminals, because this background, being the daughter of one who carried out a genocide, tells the people very much and this shows that the system itself, through its laws, is violating the rights that we have as a people. That is an expression of racism and discrimination against us, the peoples. And that tells us that gives the people a lesson that the power of the powerful resides in the different institutions of the state. It's not that they enjoy support, but rather it is power that has been structured in, and operates in, the institutions. So, we, as a people, tell our brothers and sisters that that is the result of the failed and corrupted state.

And the same ones are violating rights and bringing an end to the little bit of democracy that exists in Guatemala, for here we see the same ones who are excluding the people who are the ones who are bringing into democracy in Guatemala. So, the attitude of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal is clear. And we are following the rules of the system in terms of registering our candidacy. But they exclude us. So it's quite clear in whose hands power, and who it is who is serving these interests.

AMY GOODMAN: Can you talk about the role of the United States then in supporting the military dictator, for example, General Ríos Montt, the deaths of some 200,000 Guatemalans, and what that has wrought today, decades later? I'd like to ask both of you that question, beginning with Thelma.

THELMA CABRERA: [translated] Well, in this case, for example, when there are foreign companies that are also operating in Guatemala, for example, I Squared. I'm not sure how to pronounce it in English. But this is a company, a business for electricity distribution, that ended up in the hands of a U.S. company. And this also led communities to demand nationalization of the electricity utilities in Guatemala. They also suffered sabotages and repression, where there was complicity of the government of Guatemala, and transnational companies are central in the U.S.

JORDÁN RODAS: [translated] I think it's important to have historical memory. The government of the United States has played a very unfortunate role at certain times. For example, it backed

the counterrevolution in 1954 that put an end to a decade of a democratic spring. Subsequently, they trained members of the military who were carrying out genocide and scorched-earth policies in Guatemala and other countries of Latin America. And now we see certain nuances. The United States was also important for supporting the CICIG, the Commission Against Impunity and Corruption. But then the Guatemalan government was very skillful. They sought to ingratiate themselves with Trump. They changed the location of the Guatemalan Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem — one of the few governments to do so. And it signed an agreement to be a third country, a third safe country, which is not safe for us.

The United States has given a lot of political oxygen over the years to the governments of Guatemala. And today, they have finally understood that corruption causes migration. They have begun to impose some sanctions — the Magnitsky list, the Engel list. But I think that they should act more quickly to sanction corrupt actors linked to the central government and the economic powers. Otherwise, the same problems are going to continue, for corruption is also a cause of migration.

AMY GOODMAN: Thelma Cabrera, talk about your presidential platform, what you are calling for in Guatemala.

THELMA CABRERA: [translated] Our presidential platform demands are the demands of the people. It's not a personal thing. It's a collective struggle that has been designed from our communities from being dispossessed of all of our wealth ever since the 1954 coup d'état, ending the 10 years of democratic spring in Guatemala. Well, as result of that, we have suffered eviction of Indigenous communities from places where the communities have historically lived. And now the communities, well, we don't even have anywhere to live. Single-crop agriculture has expanded and ended up causing diseases, for example, as a result of a single-crop agriculture.

So, within the government plan that we put forward, which is the proposal to have a constitutional assembly, fighting for our rights as human beings, and at the same time respecting the rights of Mother Earth — in other words, life in balance with Mother Earth and nature. We are also proposing that we build a plurinational state in which the different Indigenous peoples are present with our delegates. And that will not just be used as a political banner. We need to have representation of the peoples with self-government. We need to have a political constitution drafted by the peoples. The idea is to defend life.

And let me round out my answer. In the face of the situation of evictions, there's greater migration. And greater migration leads to greater disintegration of families. And for those who are in Guatemala, as well, it represents attack on our health. There is major malnutrition, even though Guatemala is a territory, a country filled with wealth. But that wealth is poorly distributed. It's in just a few hands. And that is why we, the peoples, are the ones who suffer the consequences. And that is why we were right to propose a project for the nation, a constitutional assembly to address all of the needs that we have as a country. So, when we stood up to say we are human rights defenders, then they label us as terrorists, criminals, thieves. And that is why we had to propose this project of a nation, saying we are not just rowdy ones, we're not criminals. We love life. We know how to make proposals. It's just that they're afraid of us.

AMY GOODMAN: So, what happens when you go back to Guatemala now? They have ruled you are not a presidential candidate. Do you accept this?

THELMA CABRERA: [translated] Well, the thing is that we are getting stronger every day. They might be shutting the doors to us in these elections, but our aim is not just elections. Our struggle is getting stronger. We have showed that we have followed all the legal procedures. We are peace-loving peoples. And we respect the laws and procedures for participation. But despite that, they prohibit our participation. But we get stronger and stronger, because our aim is not just to participate in elections. We want to go beyond that, proposing a project for the nation

with structural changes, fighting corruption. Corruption is there because there are structural problems. It's a sign of the structural problems. And so we say we have identified the illness, but we have the medicine, which is our proposal. And we're going to be strengthening our proposal, showing that we, too, know how to denounce the situation internationally and that we are able to follow the procedures. This is the path that we're following now.

AMY GOODMAN: Guatemalan presidential candidate Thelma Cabrera and her running mate, Jordán Rodas. They have been banned from running for president in Guatemala's June election. Special thanks to María Taracena, Charina Nadura, Sam Alcott, Mike Burke, Robby Karran and Charlie Roberts.

Oh, and congratulations to my beloved niece Anna and Scott on the birth of their son Hugo Solomon! Welcome to the world, Hugo! And congratulations to his big brother Miles, from his kvelling tía! I'm Amy Goodman.

2023-02-13 Economic Update: Unionization, Marxism and Education

https://www.democracyatwork.info/eu_unionization_marxism_and_education

d@w Contributor: Richard Wolff

AUDIO: https://content.libsyn.com/p/8/f/2/8f219fd7f7618da5/Econ_Update_2023.02.09.s13.e07.mp3?c_id=145933290&cs_id=145933290&response-content-type=audio

In this week's show, Prof. Wolff shares updates on Starbucks union growth; Texas journalists and Yale graduate students/employees unionize, strike, win; Western Mass Labor Federation denounces Biden's denial of railway workers' right to strike; two major kinds of US tax injustice: (1) exempting bonds and stocks from property tax when 10% richest own 80% of stocks and bonds, and (2) failing to levy excess profits tax on war profiteers as UK and Portugal have already done. In the second half of the show, Wolff interviews Notre Dame Professor Emeritus **David F. Ruccio** on Marxian economics, its absence from US universities, and its social insights.

Timestamps:

- 00:00 - 00:48 - Introduction
- 00:59 - 01:48 - Starbucks
- 01:49 - 02:57 - Texas journalists unionize
- 02:58 - 05:26 - Yale grad students
- 05:16 - 09:25 - Western Mass Labor Federation denounces Biden's denial of railway workers
- 09:09 - 12:57 - tax injustices: property tax
- 12:58 - 14:40 - UK and Portugal excess profit tax
- 14:41 - 15:54 - Announcements
- 15:55 - 31:29 - Interview with Dr. David F. Ruccio

Transcript has been edited for clarity

Welcome, friends, to another edition of Economic Update, a weekly program devoted to the economic dimensions of our lives—jobs, debts, incomes—our own and those of our children. I'm your host, Richard Wolff.

In today's program, we're going to be talking about unionization, unions, labor actions across the country because they are heating up and changing the face of how we live our lives. I'm also going to be talking about tax injustice—two different kinds. Then, we're going to have an interview with a very important writer, Professor David Ruccio.

So, let's jump right in...the first little factoid to set the tone is what has happened to Starbucks workers across the United States. At the beginning of 2022, roughly a year ago, no Starbucks workers were unionized. As I'm speaking to you, the number has crossed 7,000. Across hundreds of Starbucks stores, workers who had needed and wanted a union for a long time but were unable to overcome the opposition of the company or their own anxieties and worries made the change. They became leaders of a unionization movement and a strike movement sweeping that corporation as indeed it is sweeping the whole country.

Let me give you another example. For the first time in the history of the state of Texas, a newspaper in Texas had its journalists—its workers—form a union. They did that two years ago. They struggled to get a contract with their employer. He didn't come across. They had a strike over recent weeks and guess what...that did it. The employer signed the contract and gave the workers an enormous wage increase. For those of you that are interested, I'm talking about the 117-year-old Fort Worth Star-Telegram which is now a unionized

newspaper for the first time in the state of Texas. Right on its heels there are two more efforts pretty much going through the same experience—one in Dallas and one in Austin. So pretty soon the unionized workers in Fort Worth will have their fellow unionized journalists elsewhere in the state.

The third one I wanted to mention—choosing different parts of the country and different kinds of workers—is one I have a personal history with....Yale University's graduate students, roughly 2,000 of them, have been working for many, many decades. Why do I know that...because I was one. I was a graduate student some years ago and I worked at Yale and I worked for a ridiculously low amount of money for my professor who wanted me to do it and you don't say no to the professor who holds your future in his hands. I say his because there were very few hers at that time.

Well, those workers have been trying for decades to have a union so they get paid better...so that there's a little more care taken in providing them with the support they need to get their master's degree or their Ph.D. degree. Yale is a vicious—and long-standingly vicious—anti-union, anti-worker institution. It took a long time for the building and grounds workers to get a union which they have at Yale. It took an even longer time for the clerical and technical workers at Yale to struggle for and win and get a union and now it's the turn of the graduate students. Not only did the 2,000 vote for a union but I want to tell you what the vote was—1,860 in favor of the union...179 against it. A 91% landslide vote. The workers at Yale have come a long way and I know personally because I remember how hard the university worked to convince us we were graduate students...we were going to become professors...we weren't like truck drivers. We want nothing to do with a union and all of that and it persuaded a large number of students. It doesn't work anymore. The students understand when it comes time to pay your bills...tell people how much education you have...they still want the bill paid. You still have to earn a living. So there's remarkable things going on across the working class of the United States. We haven't seen anything like this for almost a century but I want to pick yet one more to close out this section of my talk this morning.

I want to make clear that there are other things going on in the labor movement and so I found something that struck me as very important. Thanks to some listeners and watchers of this program who sent this material to me. I'm talking about the Western Massachusetts Area Labor Federation (WMALF) that's a part of the AFL-CIO. It's the area of Western Massachusetts which has a federation of all the local unions across all industries...manufacturing services...all of it.

They get together on a regular basis and they voted on January 9th of this year to condemn—I'm going to quote now because I want to get it right—"to condemn in the strongest possible terms, the Biden Administration's conduct of December 2nd, 2022." Here the resolution was real clear and to make it clear to all of you—that's when Mr. Biden enforced the return of railway workers, thousands of them, that were on strike or threatening to go on strike—to deny them the right to strike. They'd been negotiating with the company. They'd been doing what those Fort Worth journalists have done...what the Starbucks workers have done...what the Yale grad students have done. They were doing the same thing—exercising the right to strike to improve their working conditions and their pay. The Biden Administration came in—didn't have to—came in and threatened them with being arrested and put in jail if they exercised the right to strike—which used to be thought of as a basic part of anything calling itself a democracy.

So, let me read to you the resolution that was passed, by the way unanimously, by the Western Mass Area Federation of Labor. "The right to strike is a fundamental human right. Any legislation that denies workers the right to strike, whether the bill that Biden signed on December 2nd, 2022, the Railway Labor Act of 1926 or section 9A of the Massachusetts Public Employee Collective Bargaining Law. Any abridgment of that right to strike, they go on to say, "serves the interests of the bosses over the interests of the working class and should be deemed illegitimate."

They then ask their fellow workers to support the following four-point program: "One, the union should stand in solidarity via our voices and our union resources with the railway workers' demand for the right to paid sick time." That was a big issue for them and reasonable work schedules. "Two, we should organize our members to resolve problems by taking collective action in our workplaces. Number three, we should build a democratic union where workers' desires and needs are immediately taken seriously and acted upon...and

fourth and final, we should deepen labor's commitment to hold elected officials accountable, to represent the interests of working people, and if and when they don't we should withhold our labor and our donations." Take heed, Democratic Party...your reliance on the labor movement with giving so little back is coming to an end and that's led by the folks in Western Massachusetts.

I want to talk to you also, as tax season approaches, about the tax system here in the United States which is so fundamentally unfair and unjust. The way to deal with that is to identify the unfairness and fix it. The way not to deal with it is to cut the number of Internal Revenue Service agents trying to find people who are cheating the government out of the taxes they owe. What do I mean by injustice?

Let's remember what taxes do. We have basically three kinds of taxes in the United States. Number one—we tax income. When you earn money (your wage, your salary, your rent, whatever you have that brings you in money) you are asked to pay a tax on the income. That's the first kind.

The second kind—you are also taxed when you spend the money you've earned. For example, you pay a sales tax when you go to the department store and buy a shirt for your friends or yourself. You're also required to pay a tax when you spend money on alcohol—that's a federal tax. Cigarettes—that's a federal tax and motor fuel, gasoline, and so on. So those are taxes when you spend money. Then there's a third kind of tax—not on the money you earn, not on the money you spend, but on the wealth you own. It's a property tax.

Most of us pay more than one of them. Some of us pay all three of them. So, if you hear someone say, "I'm double taxed," you should grin or sneer—most of us are. There's nothing special about being doubly taxed. That's how tax systems work but here's the injustice...when I said to you that there's a property tax, now I can explain to you the injustice. It's a tax on property in the form of land. If you own land, you pay a tax on the value of the land, on a building, if there is one on the land, a home, a store. You pay a tax on the value of that property. If you have an automobile, you pay a tax for that. So do you pay a tax on all property? No. There's one enormous category of property that pays no property tax at all. Let me be real clear. Stocks and bonds is what I'm talking about—if you're really rich, most of your wealth is in the form of stocks and bonds. Most Americans have no wealth at all. If they have something, they have a home, they have land, they have a house and they pay property tax on that but if you're rich enough to have not only a car and a home but stocks and bonds that make you really rich those stocks and bonds pay no property tax at all. The 10% richest people in this country own 80% of the stocks and bonds. You get the picture. They are tax-exempt. That's why the rich get richer and you and I don't.

We have a tax system that grotesquely favors those who need the favor least while continuing to tax your average person barely able to afford a home and a car. The injustice of it is screaming and here's the second injustice—in Europe today, in England, and in Portugal, particularly, the government has what are called excess profits taxes sometimes called windfall profits tax. If you have extra profit not because of anything you've done, but because of catastrophes facing society, the idea is you should not be able to benefit from catastrophes that hurt other people. So your excess profit (not the ones you get anyway but the excess because of the catastrophe) should be taxed by the government to help the people that are suffering from the catastrophe. So, England taxes energy prices—oil and gas because they went up due to the Ukraine war and the policies of governments to punish Russia for that war. That has nothing to do with the company that's making a billion out of charging high prices. Same thing is happening to food companies because of the difficulties of fertilizer coming out of Russia and Ukraine. Food prices have gone up as everybody knows and this is making huge profits for the food companies but hurting all the people who have to pay the higher prices.

So you tax excess profits of the food companies to help the people that are suffering the high prices. Portugal just did it...Britain has done it. I want you to understand—not only has the United States not done it—nobody proposes it. Nobody discusses it. We're all supposed to pretend that we don't know that that's happening which is why I have mentioned it to you now.

We've come to the end of the first part of today's show. Please stay with us—we will be right back with professor and author David Ruccio. Before we move on I want to remind everyone that Economic Update is produced by Democracy at Work, a small donor-funded non-profit media organization celebrating 10 years of producing critical system analysis and visions of a more equitable and democratic world through a variety of media—like the podcast Capitalism Hits Home with Dr. Harriet Fraud that explores what's happening in the economic realm and its impact on our individual and social psychology. You can find her show and more on our website democracyatwork.info You can also learn there more about everything we produce, sign up for our mailing list, follow us on social media—specifically our fastest-growing platform Instagram where you can get involved and help us explain why we need democracy in the workplace.

Please stay with us. We will be right back.

Welcome back friends to the second half of today's Economic Update. It is with great pleasure and happiness that we have him with us today...that I want to introduce my guest, he is David Ruccio. He's a professor of Economics Emeritus—sort of like me but in his case, it's from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. He's the author of over 90 journal articles and book chapters. He helped start the journal, *Rethinking Marxism*, and was its chief editor for 12 years. His latest book, **Marxian Economics: An Introduction**, was published last year by Polity Press. His blog, quite well known, is called *Occasional Links and Commentary on Economics, Culture, and Society* and his posts frequently appear on other blogs including the Real World Economics Review blog.

RDW: So first of all David since I'm going to call you that since we've known each other so so many years... thank you very much for taking the time and trouble to join us.

DR: Thanks, Rick...thanks for having me on.

RDW: Let's jump right in and talk about your new book, really, literally, just off the press. you know I've been around long enough as you have to know that Marxism in its long history over the second half of the 19th century...the 20th century and into this century...has been pronounced over with, dead, gone...retired...disappeared, countless times...only to surprise everybody within 10 or 20 years to have a sudden resurgence.

Is your book part of a resurgence now? and if it is—is that part of why you wrote about it? So, how do you relate to this history of the interest in Marxism in general and Marxian economics in particular?

DR: Good question. In all honesty, yes and no. The no is...I didn't sit down to write it because things are going badly with capitalism and people are interested in alternatives. You and I have been doing this for many, many years through good times and bad, as I once told a group of students when they asked me to talk about the crises of 2007-2008. I walked in and I said, "I hate capitalism. I hate it when it's going poorly, as it is now and I hate it when it's going well as it has in other times." So, this is what we do and we've been doing it for a long time. I think, however, it was part of the Polity Press invitation. I mean they're the ones who invited me—they wanted a book on Marxian economics and I put aside another project and decided to work on it so I would have done it at any time.

Now, I think, is a particularly interesting time. I think you know, I mean, we go back a long way...we can make the argument, I think, effectively, that capitalism has always had its critics and mainstream economics has always had its critics ever since they began. The way I do it in the book is capitalism brings forth its critical other and always has, but this time is a little bit different. After 2007-2008, right—what some people call the Great Recession, I call the Second Great Depression—after the pandemic, after the Black Lives Matter movement, after the concern about not only the environment but now climate crisis, I think people—and especially young people—are now, on one hand, more critical of capitalism and more interested in alternatives...what we call socialism...than at any other time in recent memory. I think there's a kind of new opening here.

RDW: I saw a poll just the other day that made me think about this again in agreement with your point. This is a Gallup poll and it showed that 28% of Americans identify politically with the Republicans and about 28% identify with the Democrats. Forty-one percent say they are opposed to both of them—they call themselves independent. My guess is, if you looked at the ages—the older you got they'd be in the first two groups and the younger you got they'd be in the third group which ought to make critics of the system sit up and take notice.

All right let me put the same question to you slightly differently. Who do you want to read this book...who are you trying to reach...what is it you hope this book will do or be for the potential reader?

DR: Listen, like every author in the world I want to reach everybody. I want everyone to read the book but you know, you've written many many books. You have an audience in mind and the particular audience I had in mind were my students. I'm retired now and I'm not in the classroom but I saw them as I wrote and partly based upon my lecture notes plus lots of new stuff and it's for all of those students who are forced in one way or another to take their Introduction to Economics. You taught Introduction to Economics...I did it for many decades...students never learn about alternatives so when they get Introduction to Economics they get a celebration of capitalism and they get a very narrowly defined mainstream economics. They don't get anything else.

This book, hopefully, is one of those other things. In fact, you know, I was contacted literally a week ago by a student at the University of Notre Dame, where I used to teach, who's interested in Marxian economics and said he went to the department and no one could help him...not only are they not Marxists, they're not even read, they're not even... they're not even literate in the tradition, so he's got nowhere to turn. So, what does he do? He heard from some of my former colleagues in philosophy and literature and there's this retired guy who might be able to help you out. So they keep contacting me and being who I am, I said okay, so we're literally this coming Sunday doing a zoom session on this book.

RDW: Wonderful, wonderful. I want to pick up on your mentioning your place of teaching for all those years—Notre Dame and I have kind of two connected questions. What was it like? How were you treated? This is one of the major Catholic universities in the United States... probably the best known. It's a place that is trying to be taken seriously as a university and I want you at the same time to answer the question that so many conservative politicians in this country like to say that somehow American universities are "full of Marxists." I want you, because you actually worked in one, to tell me whether there's any sense to what they're saying and also—beyond what you've already told us in the story of that student—What was it like to be a professor in an American university like Notre Dame with the interests and the scholarship that you've devoted to being a critic of capitalism?

DR: You know it's a tale of two periods for me at Notre Dame. In terms of your second question—would but that it were the case—that American colleges and universities were full of Marxists—they are not—they weren't at Notre Dame—they are not at all the colleges and universities that I know of in the United States and in many places around the world. Liberals of a kind of...I mean, American traditional liberal thinking—they are in many ways critical of what exists out there right now. Maybe that's, you know, certainly more liberal than the general population but they're not Marxist in any way shape, or form. They are not and they have not read Marx and when I would raise questions they would look at me like...what, what are you talking about?...they hadn't gotten it in their own education. Notre Dame hired me as a Marxist—got my Ph.D. at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, right, where you taught. They knew exactly what my background was and what my research was on which was at the time on socialist planning, various forms of socialism around the world and that's why they hired me. It was interesting because this was one of the few economics departments in the country—still majority mainstream economists—that prided itself on being an eclectic department. They wanted a little bit of everything. They wanted neoclassical economists and Keynesian economists but they also wanted post-Keynesian and structuralist pro-labor and in my case, a Marxist economist. They thought that I kind of identified with the Catholic Social Tradition and so we did for a couple of decades have a thriving economics department in which faculty could conduct their research and teach their courses and students would get all kinds of different stories or narratives about what capitalism was

about, different criticisms of capitalism...different criticisms of mainstream economics and some of the alternatives and then things changed—and what changed was not just at Notre Dame...what things changed was American universities—what I call the new corporate university and Notre Dame was certainly part of that. It is interesting for us in economics because economics is taken to be one of those key disciplines. They don't really care about literature. They don't really care about any anthropology...they really care about economics and the administration—not the faculty and not the students—at Notre Dame decided they wanted a mainstream department. They wanted to get rid of all that eclecticism. They wanted to get rid of all that variety. They wanted just neoclassical and they stated this openly—neoclassical economists. As you know that makes them like lots...most economics departments around the country where students don't learn economic history. They don't learn the history of economic thought. They certainly don't learn Marxian economics or many of the other alternatives. They learn just one way of doing and thinking about economics. It's a shame and it means that we end up with—in terms of economics—a kind of illiterate population.

RDW: You know, the double irony—the same period of time in which they got rid of all of the Marxists, among others—is the time when the conservatives began their rhythmic repetition that the university is full of what it had just gotten rid of—the contrast between reality and what the politicians say. Why it's so extreme it kind of suggests the Ukraine war but I won't go there because that's going to be a problem.

Let me ask you a different, although obviously related question.

DR: Sure sure.

RDW: Some people, typically those who don't know much about Marxian economics imagine that it is some sort of rationale for the government taking everything over that the government should own and operate and regulate industries...that the government should plan the distribution of resources and products—not the market. In other words, that Marxian economics is a kind of gloss on the state becoming the replacement for the private. How do you respond to that?...and we're running out of time, so this is a very difficult question and I'm giving you no time...no time at all to answer.

DR: Listen, I mean, historically I think we have to own the idea that's what socialism was defined as—the state taking over. There's nothing in the Marxian tradition...there's certainly nothing in the texts of Marx and Engels that said that's the way it should go...so that there have been some cases in the Soviet Union, China, and elsewhere where that has been the case...absolutely...but we live in 2023 and we live in the United States and there's not a lot of interest in the state taking over everything. So, when people are critical of capitalism and want an alternative, they're the ones who are going to invent it. You're not going to invent it. I'm not going to invent it. People wanting concrete changes in their lives...people who are critical of—and say there's something wrong with this narrative—this silly little choice we have between conservatives and liberals. There's got to be an alternative to that and one of those alternatives springs from the Marxian tradition. Here's a way of saying, "You want to redistribute goods and services well, Marx has come in and said that doesn't work so well." We still got a lot of poverty. We still have a lot of inequality. What about the initial distribution? What may be wrong with the fact that the employers get to take home all the profits and do what they will and workers are still forced to have the freedom to go to work something may be wrong with that and that's I mean, just as a start, a kind of basic question that the Marxist could oppose.

RDW: David because we're running out of time I want you quickly to tell us what's on your agenda. What's happening, what's going to be your work in the immediate future?

DR: More of the same...continue to work on the blog, continue to work in this area. As I mentioned before, I was working on a book and put it on hold when Polity's invitation came along. I said all right now's the time to write this book, so I'm working on another book called Utopia and Critique, that builds on some of the themes of the book. So the idea is: so what is Marxian economics? It's a critique of the existing common sense. It was a critique of the common sense in Marx's day and it is a critique of the common sense today. I'm interested in what does that mean in terms of utopia? How do we think about utopia as a form of critique? So that's the next writing project on my table.

RDW: David, it's wonderful reconnecting with you. It's wonderful to hear your comments. I hope the rest of my audience is as intrigued as I am. I would urge you all to take a look at David Ruccio's blog—it's an ongoing commentary on what's going on. First rate in the insights you will not find elsewhere. To all of you, I will conclude today, as I always do, that I look forward to speaking with you again next week.

Transcript by Barbara Bartlett

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About our guest: **Dr. David F. Ruccio** is [Professor of Economics Emeritus at the University of Notre Dame](#). He is the author of over 90 journal articles and book chapters. His latest book is *Marxian Economics: An Introduction*, published last year by Polity Press.

Dr. Ruccio was a founding member of the journal *Rethinking Marxism*, and he served as its chief editor for twelve years. A frequent speaker in interdisciplinary programs and conferences around the world, Dr. Ruccio has appeared on the BBC World News Service and has been interviewed by a wide range of national and international media. His blog is [Occasional Links & Commentary on Economics, Culture, and Society](#), and his posts frequently appear on other blogs, including the [Real-World Economics Review blog](#).

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