

Military Resistance 14L1



So Much For The Populist Bullshit:

**“Financial-Services Executives
Are Making Fast Friends With
President-Elect Donald Trump”
“American Bankers Association
Responding To Trump Aides’ Calls
To Suggest Individuals Who Could
Serve In Top Financial Regulatory
Posts”**

“The Latest Sign That Wall Street Could Wind Up Being A Big Winner Under Mr. Trump”

Nov. 30, 2016 By BRODY MULLINS, EMILY GLAZER and ANUPREETA DAS; Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON—After largely opposing his 2016 presidential campaign, financial-services executives are making fast friends with President-elect Donald Trump.

Bank executives and lobbyists are helping raise the millions Mr. Trump needs to finance his transition and inaugural festivities. The Independent Community Bankers of America, a major trade group, is booking events at the Trump International Hotel here.

Several other financial-services trade groups, such as the American Bankers Association, are responding to Trump aides' calls to suggest individuals who could serve in top financial regulatory posts in his administration. And the Financial Services Roundtable is helping raise money for an event—that Mr. Trump will headline—in New York next week that aims to raise \$4 million for the transition effort.

The coordinated efforts are the latest sign that Wall Street could wind up being a big winner under Mr. Trump, despite his broadsides against big banks during the presidential campaign.

On Tuesday, Mr. Trump chose two Wall Street investors for key positions in his cabinet. Steven Mnuchin, a former executive at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. who was his campaign's chief fundraiser, was picked as Treasury secretary. Private-equity investor Wilbur Ross was tapped to be Commerce secretary.

The overlapping ties also show how difficult it will be for Mr. Trump to meet his campaign pledge to “drain the swamp” of special interests in Washington while also funding and staffing his transition and administration.

The good news for Wall Street comes after it invested heavily in the presidential campaign of Democrat Hillary Clinton. The securities and investment industry donated more than \$78 million to her campaign and allied super PAC—more than 100 times as much as it gave to support Mr. Trump's effort, according to the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics.

Despite that lopsided giving, Wall Street expected to spend the next few years defending itself from regulatory attacks from Mrs. Clinton and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D., Mass.).

Instead, the industry now expects the total Republican control of the White House and Congress to usher in a new era of financial deregulation. “It's kind of like putting regulatory relief on steroids,” said Cam Fine, the president of the Independent Community Bankers of America and an early backer of Mr. Trump.

The closer ties between Wall Street and Mr. Trump is the latest surprising chapter in Mr. Trump's long, fraught history with the financial industry. The relationship went from cozy in the 1980s and 1990s to edgy in the 2000s to openly hostile during the White House campaign.

Through the 1990s, some of the biggest Wall Street firms regularly loaned money to Mr. Trump's casino and hotel businesses. Deutsche Bank AG, UBS AG, Lehman Brothers and Credit Suisse First Boston were among the firms that vied for business with the New York businessman.

After several Trump business bankruptcies and other conflicts, the relationship deteriorated. In 2008, Mr. Trump sued Deutsche Bank after failing to repay part of a loan on a Chicago property. The bank countersued and they settled out of court.

By the time Mr. Trump began the 2016 presidential campaign, few Wall Street banks had business with him.

On the campaign trail, Mr. Trump blasted the industry. "I'm not going to let Wall Street get away with murder," Mr. Trump said during a January speech. "Wall Street has caused tremendous problems for us."

All that changed after Mr. Trump won the election.

Since then, the president-elect has met with a range of Wall Street executives—including those who supported him and those who didn't.

Among them was David McCormick, the president of Bridgewater Associates, the world's largest hedge fund, also met with Mr. Trump. Mr. McCormick backed former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush in last year's GOP primary and didn't donate to the president-elect even after he emerged as the GOP nominee, according to campaign-finance records.

Perhaps nothing shows the changed relationship between Mr. Trump and Wall Street better than his dealings with Goldman Sachs before and after the election.

As Mr. Trump geared up his campaign in September 2015, Goldman Sachs Chief Executive Lloyd Blankfein said the idea of Mr. Trump "with his finger on the button blows my mind."

During the campaign, Mr. Trump frequently attacked Mrs. Clinton's financial ties to Goldman Sachs.

And last month, in one of his closing campaign ads, Mr. Trump blasted "special interests" in an ad that featured a picture of Mr. Blankfein.

After Mr. Trump won, Mr. Blankfein called Mr. Trump's agenda "market friendly and asset friendly."

And on Tuesday, Mr. Trump met with more than a dozen individuals as he considers cabinet selections.

Among them: Gary Cohn, the president and chief operating officer of Goldman Sachs.

A spokesman for Goldman Sachs declined to comment.

Meanwhile, the transition team has contacted the American Bankers Association and The Clearing House, among other trade groups, for recommendations of people to serve in regulatory posts, according to people involved with the discussions.

Mr. Trump's aides have also been in touch with Mr. Fine for ideas about who could serve on the Federal Reserve Board. At least one community banker must serve on the Fed board, so presidents typically consult with trade groups to solicit their input.

Mr. Trump must appoint dozens of individuals to run agencies that regulate the financial-services sector, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

Mr. Fine and community bankers were among the few financial-services interests who backed Mr. Trump early. The association polled its members earlier this year and found that more than 80% supported Mr. Trump. In September, Mr. Fine decided to move several of the association's meetings to the Trump International Hotel in Washington from other hotels, including a dinner for community bankers in April 2017 and a policy conference in 2018.

In an interview, Mr. Fine said the group wanted to try a new hotel for its 2018 conference after meeting in the same hotel for several previous years. "Like everyone else, we had no idea that Trump would be elected president," Mr. Fine said.

The move "had nothing to do with his being elected president," he said, adding that the group just thought "we would try it out."

Wall Street is also lining up to raise money for Mr. Trump's transition committee and the presidential inauguration.

Thomas Barrack, a private-equity investor, has been named chairman of the presidential inaugural committee. Among others on that committee are Gail Icahn, the wife of activist investor Carl Icahn.

The Financial Services Roundtable, which represents chief executives of Citigroup Inc., Bank of America Corp., Wells Fargo & Co., and other large U.S. financial firms, is helping to defray Mr. Trump's transition costs.

On Monday, the executive director of the trade group sent an invitation to financial-services firms saying the transition team hopes to raise \$4 million for the effort at the New York event.

Mr. Trump will attend the event along with several executives who are helping to plan it, including Joseph Canizaro of First Trust Corp, investor Tommy Hicks Jr. and investor Anthony Scaramucci, according to the invitation for the Dec. 7 event.

MORE:

Another Link In Goldman's D.C. Chain:

“Former Goldman Sachs Group Inc. Partner, Hollywood Financier And Hedge-Fund Manager Now Is President-Elect Donald Trump’s Choice For Treasury Secretary”

“Like Other Trump Cabinet Picks, Mr. Mnuchin Has A Résumé That Is At Odds With Much Of The President-Elect’s Populist Rhetoric On The Campaign Trail”

“Mnuchin Has A ‘History Of Profiting Off The Victims Of Predatory Lending’”



Steven Mnuchin. Bloomberg



Distressed homeowner Rose Gudiel outside Mnuchin's home October 2011.
Photograph by Walt Mancin/Pasadena Star-News March 22, 2012

Nov. 30, 2016 By RACHEL LOUISE ENSIGN, ANUPREETA DAS and REBECCA BALLHAUS; Wall Street Journal. Nick Timiraos and Damian Paletta contributed to this article.

On a muggy morning in July 2008, hundreds of customers stood outside IndyMac Bank branches in Southern California, trying to pull their savings from the lender, which was doomed by losses on risky mortgages.

Steven Mnuchin didn't know much about IndyMac as he watched the scenes on CNBC from his Midtown Manhattan office. But he immediately saw an opportunity and began figuring out how to buy the bank.

Regulators seized IndyMac, foreshadowing a vicious banking crisis. Six months later, Mr. Mnuchin and his investment partners acquired IndyMac with a helping hand from the U.S. government. The deal eventually earned him hundreds of millions of dollars in personal profits.

The former Goldman Sachs Group Inc. partner, Hollywood financier and hedge-fund manager now is President-elect Donald Trump's choice for Treasury secretary.

Like other Trump cabinet picks, Mr. Mnuchin has a résumé that is at odds with much of the president-elect's populist rhetoric on the campaign trail.

Mr. Trump is building a cabinet that combines traditional Republican Party leanings with unconventional elements, including people who made their fortunes by taking big

investment risks. IndyMac was the defining deal of Mr. Mnuchin's career. He knew that the government needed to sell the failed bank—and he played hardball.

In an interview Tuesday before word leaked he was Mr. Trump's choice, Mr. Mnuchin said he is proud of the transformation at IndyMac, based in Pasadena, Calif. "We turned around a huge economic disaster," he said.

Mr. Mnuchin, 53 years old, has no experience in government or running a large organization, though he was a campaign loyalist and fundraiser for Mr. Trump.

Mr. Mnuchin's political views are a secret even to some of his associates. If confirmed by the Senate, the defining traits he will bring as the 77th Treasury secretary include a Wall Street pedigree, long relationship with Mr. Trump, and a history of moving fast to seize opportunities that might terrify others.

In the interview, Mr. Mnuchin said the new administration's goal would be to achieve annual economic growth of 3% to 4%. He said his top policy priorities would be to overhaul the federal tax code, roll back certain financial regulations, review trade agreements and invest in infrastructure.

Mr. Mnuchin is regarded within the Trump transition team's inner circle as a skilled team player. Mr. Trump's advisers say Mr. Mnuchin will fuse traditional Republican Party support for lower taxes and less regulation with the president-elect's populist stances on trade and infrastructure.

"Trump, like Ronald Reagan, would go outside of the box," Mr. Mnuchin said in the interview Tuesday. He said Mr. Trump won't hesitate to call up corporate chiefs to lean on them about jobs, factory closures and other matters.

"Mnuchin Has A 'History Of Profiting Off The Victims Of Predatory Lending'"

The IndyMac deal will likely be a feature of Mr. Mnuchin's confirmation process. Sen. Ron Wyden, the top Democrat on the Senate committee that will hold hearings on the proposed appointment, said Tuesday that Mr. Mnuchin has a "history of profiting off the victims of predatory lending."

Foreclosures on the homes of delinquent IndyMac borrowers sparked protests outside Mr. Mnuchin's mansion in the Bel Air neighborhood of Los Angeles. The bank, which was renamed OneWest Bank and is now part of CIT Group Inc., is under civil investigation by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for loan-servicing practices.

CIT said it is "committed to fair-lending and works hard to meet the credit needs of all communities and neighborhoods we serve."

Mr. Mnuchin, whose father spent his entire career at Goldman, came of age on Wall Street in the 1980s as the business of slicing loans into securities was booming. As a mortgage banker at Goldman, he saw the savings-and-loan crisis

and efforts by the government to wind down hundreds of insolvent financial institutions.

Colleagues recall Mr. Mnuchin's ability to quickly weigh the risks involved in particular trades. He made partner in 1994 and oversaw Goldman's mortgage-trading desk before becoming chief information officer.

Like other partners, he earned tens of millions of dollars when Goldman became a publicly traded company in 1999.

He bought a 6,500-square-foot apartment in a famous Park Avenue building. Messrs. Mnuchin and Trump were soon in the same philanthropic and social circles, attending dinner parties at each other's Manhattan homes and mingling at the U.S. Open tennis tournament and the Metropolitan Museum of Art Gala.

The reserved Mr. Mnuchin never struck colleagues as a political animal but contributed regularly to political campaigns, records show.

In the interview, he said he has been a registered Republican for "as long as I can remember," yet he also gave a total of \$7,400 since 2000 to Democrat Hillary Clinton's campaigns.

Mr. Mnuchin donated to the campaigns of Democrats Barack Obama, John Edwards, John Kerry and Al Gore.

The only Republican presidential candidate Mr. Mnuchin gave money to was Mitt Romney in 2012.

In 2002, Mr. Mnuchin left Goldman and wound up running an investment fund set up by billionaire investor George Soros. Mr. Soros was a big contributor to the super PAC backing Mrs. Clinton in her unsuccessful presidential campaign this year and has donated to other groups supporting Democrats.

Mr. Mnuchin and two former Goldman colleagues struck out on their own in 2004 with a new hedge fund, Dune Capital Management LP, which received financial backing from Mr. Soros. Mr. Mnuchin soon steered Dune into the business of financing Hollywood films, which began to elevate his public profile. He also was part of a group that lent money to Mr. Trump for a Chicago condominium project.

When IndyMac unraveled in 2008, the images of customers lined up around corners and across parking lots became an enduring symbol of the financial crisis. Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. officials descended on IndyMac's headquarters on July 11 and shut down the bank.

It was the second-largest bank failure of the crisis, surpassed only by Washington Mutual Inc. in September 2008.

Federal officials expected to suffer as much as \$8 billion in losses from IndyMac. That left regulators looking for someone to take over the bank and mitigate the damage. Speed was essential, since the FDIC was bracing for a wave of additional bank failures.

Mr. Mnuchin assembled an all-star cast drawn from his years on Wall Street, including Mr. Soros, hedge-fund manager John Paulson, billionaire Michael Dell's investment firm and several former Goldman executives, including J. Christopher Flowers. They signed up on the basis that Mr. Mnuchin would personally run the bank, according to people familiar with the matter.

By now, he knew that few bidders would be willing to buy all the failed bank's assets. And he knew he was taking a giant risk.

At the end of 2008, Mr. Mnuchin persuaded the FDIC to sell IndyMac for about \$1.5 billion. The deal included IndyMac branches, deposits and assets. The FDIC also agreed to protect the buyers from the most severe losses for years. That loss-sharing arrangement turned out to be a master stroke.

Mr. Mnuchin threw himself into managing IndyMac, where he became chairman and chief executive of the parent company. He moved from New York to California. To accomplish his goal of a quick turnaround, Mr. Mnuchin needed to deal with IndyMac's bad mortgages and other assets, a job made easier by the FDIC's agreement.

Mr. Mnuchin set out to refashion OneWest as a plain-vanilla lender that eschewed the unconventional mortgages that got IndyMac in trouble. It was a major provider of Alt-A loans, a category between prime and subprime that often involved borrowers who didn't fully document their income or assets.

He began scouting opportunities for OneWest to buy other small lenders. Before long, OneWest had doubled the number of branches that IndyMac had when it failed. OneWest often paid more than other banks for deposits, helping it attract new customers while interest rates were unusually low.

“In October 2011, Dozens Of Activists Gathered Outside His Mansion To Protest Onewest's Evictions, Waving Signs And Shouting Angry Slogans”

Banks often go out of their way to avoid losses, even when borrowers are in violation of loan terms. The loss-sharing agreement took away some of the disincentives, since future losses would be borne partly by the government.

In October 2011, dozens of activists gathered outside his mansion to protest OneWest's evictions, waving signs and shouting angry slogans. Mr. Mnuchin has said he was rattled, and OneWest agreed to pay for security services at his home.

Mr. Mnuchin said Tuesday it was “unfortunate that anyone was foreclosed, (but) all these loans were originated under previous management.”

In 2013, OneWest had more than \$300 million in profits, nearly equal to what IndyMac earned in 2006. It had a loss of \$767 million in the first half of 2008.

Mr. Mnuchin's next step was to sell. He toyed with the idea of taking OneWest public. Then a better option came along. Another Goldman veteran, former Merrill Lynch & Co. Chief Executive John Thain, had taken over commercial lender CIT Group Inc. and was trying to fortify its finances. OneWest was a source of stable deposits.

In July 2014, CIT agreed to buy OneWest for \$3.4 billion, a bounty of more than \$3 billion, including dividends. Mr. Mnuchin's take was several hundred million dollars, according to a person familiar with the matter. He stayed on at CIT.

After the sale, newly discovered accounting problems forced CIT to take a \$230 million charge.

It inherited another problem from nearly \$40 million of loans OneWest made in 2014 to struggling film studio Relativity Media LLC, in which Mr. Mnuchin was a big investor through his Dune Capital hedge fund.

Relativity filed for bankruptcy less than a year later, and CIT struggled to get the loans repaid.

A film-financing company that also was owed money by Relativity accused OneWest of getting favorable repayments because of Mr. Mnuchin's dual roles at the bank and the studio. He declined to comment.

Mr. Mnuchin left CIT amid a management shake-up announced last year, receiving a \$10.9 million severance payment.

His exit came just as Mr. Trump's bid for the Republican nomination was gaining momentum. "The timing worked out well," Mr. Mnuchin told The Wall Street Journal earlier this year.

Before formally launching his presidential bid, Mr. Trump turned to Mr. Mnuchin for advice over dinner.

Mr. Mnuchin helped write a tax-cutting plan and tried to rein in some of Mr. Trump's populist rhetoric, including his vow to not "let Wall street get away with murder," people familiar with the matter said.

"I don't think he has negative views on Wall Street," Mr. Mnuchin said of Mr. Trump in the earlier interview.

When Mr. Trump delivered his victory speech after the New York primary in April, Mr. Mnuchin stood behind him and took photos of the crowd with his cellphone. The next morning, Mr. Trump asked if he would consider taking the role of national finance chairman, an operation that had previously relied largely on Mr. Trump's own bank account. Mr. Mnuchin agreed.

Mr. Mnuchin had no previous experience in political fundraising and the finance operation endured early setbacks. It eventually got on track.

Mr. Mnuchin, who divorced his second wife in 2014, brought his fiancée, Scottish actress Louise Linton, on the Trump campaign plane, where she got to see a draft of one of his foreign-policy speeches, she wrote in an Instagram post.

Since Election Night, Mr. Mnuchin has been commuting from Los Angeles to New York and has been a regular presence inside Trump Tower as the president-elect works on the transition team.

Mr. Trump's financial agenda, which Mr. Mnuchin would lead as Treasury secretary, has ignited a broad stock-market rally. CIT shares are up about 13%, increasing the value of Mr. Mnuchin's stake by about \$11 million. It is now worth more than \$100 million.

YOUR INVITATION:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2472 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025 or email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

The Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but it was the rebellion of low-ranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless suicidal policy.

-- David Cortright; Soldiers In Revolt

War Banks And Lobotomies

From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: December 13, 2013
Subject: War Banks and Lobotomies

Written by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree

war banks and lobotomies

**broken people broken lives
chopped up like hamburger hills
found in all the wars making bad decisions
trying to be like someone else living beyond the tears
in a world where wrong is right
& is taught that way in schools
full of twisted history where young minds are open
& mark a multiple answer on a test
with their best guess
because the broken people broken lives
of their elders are never heard as the young walk down
a land mined path full of lies
& not even given a chance to sort it out
all by themselves instead the rockets fly
bullets buzz by their ears
dust & filth is everywhere and
a small country is horrified
children's lives are broken
broken people everywhere
stunned by blood their parents dead**

they are taken to an orphanage
& all the high talk on the news
is a political game with false truth on christmas day
where the people try to buy
items that move up their life's status
that the rich already have
& religion falls on the deaf ears of the elite
and they think it's funny when the people pray
and then run up their credit cards
while the truth lies under christmas trees because
materialism is what it's all about
because yachts, new cars & four castle homes
around the world can not fit under a christmas tree
the proletariat have to be content
with a \$800 laptop bought for \$200
waiting in the snow at 5am on black friday
for their youngest boy that will flip out many
of the kids at school in awe
but every day is Christmas for the rich
as they vault away money from wars
from the mortgages that take 30 years
to pay off private property that the bank's own
just in time to retire & die slowly from work
as the discontent bury their faces in the Bible
the paranormal & get rich gold tricks
buy 12 Lotto tickets
that act like lobotomies for the american people
while a stern Pakistani man can't stop the tear
rolling down slowly from his eye
to his beard as he stares at
the dead remains of his family

Written by Dennis Serdel for Military Resistance

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Violent Protests Erupt Over Haiti Presidential Election Result That Gives Victory To Banana Exporter:

“The Outcome Of The Election Is The Result Of A Conspiracy By The Economic Oligarchy”

“In The Upscale Suburb Of Pétionville, Residents Dance And Cheer The Result”

29 November 2016 Reuters

Violent protests have erupted in Haiti as losing candidates rejected the preliminary results of an election that indicated political newcomer Jovenel Moïse would be the next president.

Moïse, a banana exporter who ran for former president Michel Martelly's Bald Heads party, won with 55.67% of votes cast in the 20 November election, the electoral council said on Monday. The result avoids a second round run-off next year.

Police used teargas on protesters in the La Saline neighborhood, a stronghold of Fanmi Lavalas, the leftist party of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. It called the results an “electoral coup”.

A Reuters witness heard gunshots in the city.

The US embassy also issued reports of demonstrations, gunshots and burning tires in downtown Port-au-Prince and Malpasse, a town close to the border with the Dominican Republic.

A spokesman for the Haitian national police said it was responding to protests in La Saline but could not confirm whether protests in Malpasse had taken place.

Moïse, the frontrunner in a scrapped election last year, received a majority of votes, meaning there is no need for a second round.

“We salute those who voted for me and those who did not vote for me,” Moïse said. “We are going to use the people, the sun, the land and water to develop the country.”

In the upscale suburb of Pétionville, residents danced and cheered the result.

Jude Célestin, a mechanical engineer who had led a government construction firm, came in second. He received just under a fifth of the vote.

Moïse Jean-Charles, a leftist senator, netted 11%, while Maryse Narcisse, running for Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party, won around 9%, the preliminary results showed.

However, turnout was low and 10% of sheets tallying votes were thrown out because of irregularities. In a country of 10 million people, Jovenel Moïse received just 600,000 votes.

Three people on the nine-member electoral council did not sign the report declaring Moïse the winner, although the council's president did not say who had abstained.

Those elements fueled a universal condemnation of the results from the losing candidates, who have 72 hours to contest before the final results are released on 29 December.

"We reject the results because they are invalid votes that have been counted," said Michel André, a lawyer for second-place finisher Célestin. "Jude Célestin will challenge the results."

Moïse Jean-Charles also said on Tuesday that he would fight the results. "The outcome of the election is the result of a conspiracy by the economic oligarchy and sectors of the international community," he said.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Occupation Forces Open Fire On Palestinian Fishing Boats, As Usual

November 30, 2016 IMEMC News

Israeli navy ships opened fire, on Wednesday at dawn, on several Palestinian fishing boats, in the Sudaniyya Sea area, in the northern part of the Gaza Strip.

Eyewitnesses said the navy fired many live rounds, and used loud speakers ordering the fishing back to the shore.

The attack caused no damage or injuries, but forced the fishers to leave without being able to fish.

Such attacks are frequent in the besieged and improvised coastal region, and are largely accompanied by assaults targeting farmers and workers, on Palestinian lands close to the border fence in the Gaza Strip.

Stupid Petty Tyranny Notes:

Following Zionist Complaints, Bus Company Halts Arabic-Language Announcements: “One Complainant Said The Announcements Reminded Him Of Iran, Adding That Soon They Would ‘Start Building Mosques’”



A Dan bus in Be'er Sheva, which includes station names in both Hebrew and Arabic.

November 29, 2016 By John Brown,* +972 Magazine. *John Brown is the pseudonym of an Israeli academic and a blogger. This article was first published in Hebrew on Local Call.

An Israeli bus company in the southern city of Be'er Sheva stopped activating its Arabic-language announcement system last week, following complaints by city residents.

The company, Dan Be'er Sheva, won a tender in January of this year, replacing the Metro Dan company to the delight of many residents, who have repeatedly criticized the city's poor public transportation.

The new buses include a PA system, which announces upcoming stations in both Hebrew and Arabic in order to make public transportation accessible to more segments of the population.

Tens of thousands of Arabic speakers live in Be'er Sheva, which serves as a metropolis to over 200,000 Bedouin in the surrounding areas. Arabic is Israel's second official language.

It turns out that Arabic announcements, however, were too much for some residents.

Their complaints over the bi-lingual PA system were first published on social media and included calls for boycotting the company. A local Be'er Sheva news site even ran a story under the headline, "Be'er Sheva's residents are enraged: 'Announcements in Arabic on the bus, from Metro Dan we have become Metro-Gaza.'" According to the article, the residents were surprised to discover not only that the bus also includes the written Arabic name for every stop, but that the bus' PA system announces the name of every station in Arabic.

One complainant said the announcements reminded him of Iran, adding that soon they would "start building mosques."

Following the complaints, the company put an end to Arabic announcements on public buses, at least temporarily. According to the Ministry of Transportation, public buses must include written Arabic names, but not announcements.

Attorney Shada Aamer of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) demanded Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz bring back the announcements.

"There is no doubt that this decision is illegitimate and illegal, which excludes an entire public from the public sphere and harms its basic right to equality," Aamer wrote. "The Transportation Ministry must work to permanently fix the situation and to bring back the Arabic announcements in all bus lines in Be'er Sheva and in the rest of the country."

The Transportation Ministry issued the following response:

"The written information on city buses in Be'er Sheva appears in both languages, Hebrew and Arabic. As for the announcement system in Arabic, the issue will be taken into consideration according to the criteria and will be activated across public transportation. Announcements in Arabic on public transportation in Be'er Sheva were activated prematurely for less than a day, and thus was removed immediately. Following our inquiry, the announcement system will be activated according to the determined plan."

Implementing Arabic announcement systems in public transportation in Israel's main cities is one of the recent positive developments in the country. In light of the repeated waves of incitement by the government, it might be one of the only ones.

**To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to:
<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/>
The occupied nation is Palestine.
The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**Fidel Castro (1926-2016):
“A Major Feature Of Fidel Castro’s 47-
Year-Old Rule Was His Manipulation Of
Popular Support And The Creation Of A
Political System That Does Not Hesitate
To Use Repression, And Not Only
Against Class Enemies, To Cement Its
Power”**



Fidel Castro speaking to the press after his arrival in Washington, D.C., on April 15, 1959

NOVEMBER 26, 2016 BY SAMUEL FARBER, IN THESE TIMES AND THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Samuel Farber is a professor of political science at Brooklyn College. Born and raised in Cuba, his books include *Revolution and Reaction in Cuba, 1933-1960*, *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*, and most recently *The Politics of Che Guevara: Theory and Practice* (Haymarket Books, 2016)

After a long illness that forced him to withdraw from office in July 2006, Fidel Castro died on November 25. Castro had previously survived many U.S. efforts to overthrow his government and physically eliminate him including the sponsorship of invasions, numerous assassination attempts and terrorist attacks.

He held supreme political power in Cuba for more than 47 years, and even after having left high office he continued to be politically engaged for several years meeting with numerous foreign personalities and writing his *Reflexiones* in the Cuban Communist Party press.

Fidel was a son of Cuban-born Lina Ruz and Galician immigrant Ángel Castro, who became a wealthy sugar landlord in the island.

Fidel attended a Jesuit high school, regarded as one of the best schools in Cuba. Upon entering the University of Havana Law School in 1945, he began his political life by collaborating with one of the various political gangster groups that plagued the university.

As a militant university activist, Fidel participated, in 1947, in an attempt to invade the Dominican Republic to provoke an uprising against Trujillo, and in the 1948 “Bogotazo,” the widespread rioting that shook the Colombian capital after the assassination of Liberal leader Eliecer Gaitán.

The disorganized and chaotic nature of these failed enterprises played an important role in shaping Castro’s views on political discipline and the suppression of dissident views and factions within the revolutionary movement.

He then joined the crusading Ortodoxo Party led by the charismatic senator Eduardo “Eddy” Chibás, where he became a candidate for the House of Representatives. The Ortodoxo was a democratic and progressive reform party unambiguously opposed to Communism, and focused on the elimination of the widespread political corruption in the island.

It was the youth section of this party that became the main recruiting ground for Fidel Castro when he turned to the armed struggle against the newly installed military dictatorship of retired General Fulgencio Batista.

Batista took power in a coup d’etat on March 10, 1952, to prevent the general election that was supposed to take place—and which he was certain to lose—on June 1 of the same year. By late 1956, a little over two years before Batista was overthrown, Castro’s 26th of July Movement, named after the day of his failed armed attack in 1953, had begun to emerge as the hegemonic pole of opposition to the dictatorship.

This was made possible, in part, by the collapse of Cuba’s older political parties, including the Ortodoxos, and by the failure of the uprisings led by other organizations. But his hegemony among the revolutionary ranks was also the outcome of his own political talents. Castro was a canny revolutionary politician, and a master at utilizing the key elements of the prevailing democratic political ideology in the opposition to Batista to attract and broaden the support of all of Cuba’s social classes. This is how he repeatedly endorsed, before the victory of the revolutionary movement, the progressive and

democratic Constitution of 1940, which was widely popular. This is also how, without diminishing his political militancy, he played down the social radicalism of his 1953 History Will Absolve Me.

Fidel Castro was also a consummate tactician that instantly grasped and acted on the key issues of the moment.

For example, after having been released from prison and taken refuge in Mexico in 1955, he coined the slogan “in 1956, we will be either martyrs or free men.” He knew that with this pledge he was bound to return to Cuba on that year, even if he was not militarily ready, or run the immense risk of losing credibility. Nevertheless, he decided this was necessary to differentiate his group from his armed competitors and to revive the popular political consciousness particularly among the youth, which had become so eroded by disillusion.

He kept his word landing in Cuba with 81 other men aboard the Granma in the early part of December, 1956, which significantly increased his prestige.

After Victory

Fidel Castro’s absolute defeat of Batista’s Army opened the way for the transformation of a multi-class democratic political revolution into a social revolution.

In the first couple of years after the revolution, Fidel Castro cemented his overwhelming popular support with a radical redistribution of wealth that later turned into a wholesale nationalization of the economy that included even the smallest retail establishments.

This highly bureaucratic economy led to very poor performance which was greatly aggravated by the criminal economic blockade that the United States imposed on Cuba as early as 1960. It was the massive Soviet aid that Cuba received that made it possible for the regime to maintain an austere standard of living that guaranteed the satisfaction of the most basic needs of the population, especially education and health.

Equally important in buttressing popular support for the Castro regime was the revival of a popular anti-imperialism that had been dormant in the island since the thirties.

Organizational Control

Fidel Castro’s government channeled popular support into popular mobilization. This was the Cuban government’s most significant contribution to the international Communist tradition. But while encouraging popular participation, Fidel prevented popular democratic control, and kept as much personal political command as he could.

Under his leadership, the Cuban one-party state was established in the early 1960s and was legally sanctioned by the Constitution adopted in 1976.

The ruling Communist Party uses the “mass organizations” as transmission belts for the party’s “orientations.”

When these “mass organizations” were originally established in 1960, all the previously existing independent organizations that could have potentially competed with the official institutions were eliminated.

These included the “sociedades de color,” which for a long time had been the bedrock of black organizational life in Cuba, numerous women’s organizations mostly engaged in welfare activities, and the trade unions which became incorporated into the state apparatus after a thorough purge of all dissenting views.

Fidel Castro’s personal control from the top was a major source of economic irrationality and waste.

The overall balance of his personal interventions in economic affairs is quite negative. These ranged from the economically disastrous campaign for a 10-million-ton sugar crop in 1970, which failed to achieve its sugar goals and greatly disrupted the rest of the economy, to the economic incoherence and intrusive micro-management of his “Battle of Ideas” shortly before he left office.

Manipulation And Repression

A major feature of Fidel Castro’s 47-year-old rule was his manipulation of popular support. This was especially evident in the first two years of the revolution (1959-1960) during which he never revealed even to his supporters where he intended to go politically.

The systematic censorship that his government established since 1960 is intrinsic to the manipulative politics of his regime, and has continued under Raúl Castro. The mass media, in compliance with the “orientations” of the Ideological Department of the Cuban Communist Party, publishes only the news that satisfy the political needs of the government.

Censorship is most striking in radio and television, which is under the aegis of the ICRT (Instituto Cubano de Radio y Television—Cuban Institute of Radio and Television), an institution despised by many artists and intellectuals for its censorious and arbitrary practices.

The systematic absence of transparency in the operations of the Cuban government has continued under Raúl Castro’s rule. A clear example is the sudden removal, in 2009, of two top political leaders, Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque and Vice President Carlos Lage, without a full explanation from the government for the decision. Since then a video detailing the government’s version of that event has been produced but shown only to selected audiences of leaders and cadres of the Cuban Communist Party.

Censorship and the lack of transparency has at times turned into outright mendacity, like in the case of Fidel Castro’s repeated denials of physical mistreatment in Cuban prisons, in the face of its well documented existence by several independent human rights organizations.

Fidel Castro created a political system that does not hesitate to use repression, and not only against class enemies, to cement its power. It is a system that has resorted to police and administrative methods to settle political conflict.

This system has used the legal system in an arbitrary manner to stifle political dissent and opposition.

Among the laws it has invoked to achieve this aim are those punishing enemy propaganda, contempt for authority (desacato), rebellion, acts against state security, clandestine printing, distribution of false news, pre-criminal social dangerousness, illicit associations, meetings and demonstrations, resistance, defamation and libel.

In 2006, Fidel Castro admitted that at one time there had been 15,000 political prisoners in Cuba, although in 1967 he cited the figure of 20,000.

Foreign Policy:

“As A General Rule, Fidel Castro’s Cuba Has, Even In The First Stages Of Its Foreign Policy In The Early 1960s, Refrained From Supporting Revolutionary Movements Against Governments That Had Good Relations With Havana”

For many Latin Americans and other people in the Third World it is not the establishment of Communism in Cuba that elicited their sympathy for the Cuban leader. It was rather his outright challenge to the North American empire and his dogged persistence in that effort, not only affirming Cuban independence but also supporting and sponsoring movements abroad against the local ruling classes and the U.S. empire.

Fidel’s government paid the price for this with Washington’s sponsorship of military invasions, assassination attempts and terror campaigns, in addition to the long standing economic blockade of the island.

Standing up to the North American Goliath was not only a matter of overcoming a vastly superior power, but also the arrogance and racism of the powerful northern neighbor. As the historian Louis A. Perez has noted, Washington often saw Cubans as children who had to be taught how to behave.

Yet there are numerous misconceptions on the left about Cuban foreign policy.

While it is true that Fidel Castro maintained his opposition to the U.S. empire to his last breath, his Cuban foreign policy, especially after the late 1960s, was moved more by the defense of Cuban state interests as defined by him and by his alliance with the USSR than by the pursuit of anti-capitalist revolution as such.

Because the Soviet Union regarded Latin America as part of the U.S. sphere of influence, it applied strong political and economic pressure on Cuba to play down its open support for guerrilla warfare in Latin America. By the late 1960s, the USSR succeeded in this effort and that is why in the 1970s Cuba turned to Africa with a vigor

that came from knowing that its policies in that continent were strategically more compatible with Soviet interests, in spite of their many tactical disagreements.

This strategic alliance with the USSR helps to explain why Cuba's African policy had quite different implications for Angola and South African apartheid where it was generally on the left, than for the Horn of Africa, where it was not.

In this part of the continent, Fidel Castro's government supported a "leftist" bloody dictatorship in Ethiopia and indirectly helped that government in its efforts to suppress Eritrean independence.

The single most important factor explaining Cuba's policy in that area was that the new Ethiopian government had taken the side of the Soviets in the Cold War.

It was for the same reasons that Fidel Castro, to the great surprise and disappointment of the Cuban people, supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, although it was clear that Castro's political dislike for Dubcek's liberal policies played an important role in his decision to support the Soviet action.

Fidel Castro also supported, at least implicitly, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, although he did it with much discomfort and in a low-key manner because, as it happened, Cuba had just assumed the leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement, the great majority of whose members strongly opposed the Soviet intervention.

As a general rule, Fidel Castro's Cuba has, even in the first stages of its foreign policy in the early 1960s, refrained from supporting revolutionary movements against governments that had good relations with Havana and rejected U.S. policy towards the island, independently of the ideological coloration of those governments.

The most paradigmatic cases of the "reasons of state" approach of Cuban foreign policy are the very amicable relations that Cuba maintained with the Mexico of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and with Franco's Spain.

It is also worth noting that in various Latin American countries such as Guatemala, El Salvador and Venezuela, Fidel Castro's government favored some guerrilla and opposition movements and opposed others depending on the degree to which they were willing to support Cuba's policies.

Fidel Castro In Historical Perspective

The establishment of a Soviet-type regime in Cuba, cannot be explained on the basis of generalizations about underdevelopment, dictatorship and imperialism, which have been applied to the whole of Latin America. The single most important factor that explains the uniqueness of Cuba's development is the political leadership of Fidel Castro that made a major difference in the triumph against Batista and in determining the course taken by the Cuban Revolution after it came to power.

In turn, Fidel Castro's role was made possible by the particular socio-economic and political make-up of the Cuba of the late 1950s. This included the existence of economically substantial but politically weak classes—capitalist, middle, and working class; a professional and in many ways mercenary army whose leadership had weak ties with the economically powerful classes; and a considerably decayed system of traditional political parties.

Castro's legacy, however, has become uncertain ever since the collapse of the USSR. Under Raúl Castro, the government, particularly after the sixth Communist Party congress in 2011, promised significant changes in the Cuban economy that point in the general direction of the Sino-Vietnamese model that combines an opening to the capitalist market place with political authoritarianism.

The reestablishment of diplomatic relations with the United States announced in December of 2014, which Fidel Castro reluctantly endorsed some time later, is likely to facilitate this economic strategy especially in the now unlikely event that the U.S. Congress modifies or repeals the Helms Burton Act approved in 1996 (with President Clinton's consent) that made into law the U.S. economic blockade of the island.

Meanwhile, corruption and inequality are growing and corroding Cuban society, contributing to an overall sense of pessimism and the desire of many, particularly young people, to leave the country at the first opportunity.

In light of a likely future state capitalist transition and the role that foreign capital and political powers such as the United States, Brazil, Spain, Canada, Russia and China may play in it, the prospects for Cuban national sovereignty—perhaps the one unambiguously positive element of Fidel Castro's legacy—are highly uncertain.

MORE:

The Cuban Revolution: “Let's Doff The Cap To Two Real Heroes Who Did The Grunt Work”





Juan Antonio Echeverria

From: Clancy Sigal
Subject: WHO ACTUALLY ORGANIZED THE CUBAN REVOLUTION?
Date: Nov 29, 2016 9:05 PM

CAN WE HAVE A LITTLE CLARITY ABOUT WHO ACTUALLY ORGANIZED THE CUBAN REVOLUTION BEFORE WE GET BACK ONTO THE TRUMP MESS?

Now when we need group solidarity is no time to rain on history's parade. That is, history written carelessly.

Talking obsessively about Fidel (r.i.p.) as the "maximum leader" and inspiration of the 1959 uprising against the corrupt USA-backed Batista regime is like citing only George Washington in our 1776 American revolution without Ben Franklin, Jefferson, Tom Paine etc.

It's amazing how few of Castro's obit-tributes mention his role in the horrific 1962 Cuba Missiles Crisis where, until he was pulled back by Khrushchev, he seemed totally OK with shooting ICBMs on our eastern seaboard to protect "his" revolution.

Yes, I know about the literacy rates and the wonderful export of Cuban doctors to diseased countries. And those doctors really are wonderful.

But just before we pass on let's doff the cap to two real heroes who did the grunt work.

The official story, as manufactured by Che Guevara and boosted by our celebrity-is-all culture, is that Castro's 200 guerillas single-handedly defeated tens of thousands of Batista's professional soldiers and liberated the people of Cuba.

The reality is that FRANK PAIS, a young school teacher, and JUAN ANTONIO ECHEVERRIA, an architecture student, did the ground-level work of organizing city-

based insurgencies in Santiago and Havana which built popular support for resistance and undermining the authority of Batista and his secret police.

At the time, though not in our media, both Pais and Echeverria rivaled Castro in popularity and power. Neither lived to see the movement succeed.

About Che Guevara the less said the better. “Seremos como el Che! Cuban children are drilled to chant. I sure hope not.

And oh those iconic posters on every Sixties college dorm wall! With the help of Russia’s KGB he masterminded creation of the Cuban secret police that executed and imprisoned thousands of disagreeables, gays, former comrades and anyone else the “idealistic” (delusionary) Che disliked.

The Cuban revolution had to happen. The Cuban people are in trouble again with Madman Trump’s ascendancy.

(If Donald wasn’t in the White House he and Fidel might get along famously; two “charismatic” personalities with loose mouths and a distaste for dissent.)

I’m sorry if this offends some of my friends. But in all the hoorah let’s not forget Frank Pais and Juan Antonio Echeverria.

MORE:

**“A Life Of Luxury”
“A Longtime Castro Bodyguard
Pegged Castro's Net Worth At \$168
Million”
“Punta Cero Was His Lavish Residence”**

NOV 26, 2016 by Keith Flamer, CONTRIBUTOR; Forbes & 11/28/16 BY TIM MARCIN, IBT Media Inc.

Fidel Castro long told Cubans he lived off of a meager salary.

But the Cuban leader, who died Saturday at the age of 90, passed away a very wealthy man — and he reportedly had been for many years.

Fidel Castro was born on his father Ángel Castro’s prosperous 25,000-acre, 400-employee sugar plantation (called Las Manacas farm) in small town Birán, Cuba—about 500 miles from Havana on the eastern end of the island. The property now serves as a Castro museum.

Forbes Magazine, perhaps the news outlet best-known for tracking the net worth of wealthy individuals, made international waves in 2006 when it listed Castro among the richest world leaders.



Cuban President Fidel Castro examines photos of his relatives at his native house in Birán, Cuba. (Photo by Pablo Pildain/AFP/Getty Images)

[T]he magazine pegged Castro's wealth at \$900 million a decade ago. A large portion of that staggering wealth reportedly came from the Cuban leader wielding control over state-backed interests, including a convention center, a pharmaceuticals company and a retail chain.

Castro, of course, denied the reports of his massive wealth.

But Forbes wrote at the time that "former Cuban officials insist Castro, who travels exclusively in a fleet of black Mercedes, has skimmed profits from these outfits for years."

In a country where the average monthly wage is just \$20 and where food reportedly often remains scarce, Castro lived a life of luxury. Juan Reinaldo Sanchez, a longtime Castro bodyguard, wrote a 2014 book detailing the leader's cozy existence, reported Australia's News Corp.

Sanchez pegged Castro's net worth at \$168 million, while revealing the leader's favorite luxuries, such as a private island, lavish spear-fishing expeditions and trips on a 85-foot yacht.

But perhaps the most stunning sign of Castro's true wealth was his compound, known as Punto Cero or Point Zero. While the leader reportedly had a number of other properties, Punta Cero was his lavish residence shrouded in secrecy, details leaking out slowly over the years.

Castro eventually ceded power to his brother Raul and retired to the gated community “Punto Cero” (Point Zero), his top-secret 75-acre suburban Havana home which resembled a vast military compound.

The property required four gardeners, had two chefs, six greenhouses, and, somewhat oddly, a dairy cow for each member of the Castro family, according to Sanchez's book.



Fidel Castro meets with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and his brother President Raul Castro at Punto Cero near Havana in 2010. (Photo by Ricardo Stuckert/AFP/Getty Images)



Castro's compound on the former grounds of the Havana Biltmore Yacht and Country Club.

Punto Cero was far from the “fisherman’s cottage” Castro publicly claimed as his main asset.

The luxurious complex in the Jaimanitas neighborhood (15 miles outside Havana proper) served as Castro's summer residence near the capital city's embassy district.



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