

for me. I have personally been involved in it, working with different associations and trying to get these guys together. Three years ago, I realized that one port couldn't do it by itself. Because every time we tried to do something in Charleston, they'd just divert the ship somewhere else and the next port would have a heyday. They would get all the work and we'd starve and then after we all went back and didn't have no money, then they'd bring the ships back in.

It took me three years and a computer to put together the leaders from around the country, to get in touch with these guys, the different leaders of each association as I have in Charleston—little guys that are tired of the crap and want to stick together and say, "Look, enough is enough."

When I contacted these guys around the country, from Baltimore, Jacksonville, Savannah, Virginia, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Seattle, and Houston, I called a meeting of all the leaders from different ports around the country.

EIR: When was that?

Bates: This was Dec. 4, 1999. That will be a day, when, once all this happens, that will be our birthday. That will be the day we started all this. These guys flew in, drove in, whatever they could do to get here. When the Teamsters heard that we were having that meeting, they called me and they said, "Let us come to that meeting. We think we could help you." Of course, we were excited about that.

That's what it's going to take, all the ports working together to get these steamship lines to raise their rates, get the Federal government to change our status from independent contractors to employees.

EIR: But, you know, if the whole economy goes the way the Internet stocks are today, there won't be anything to organize.

Bates: That's true.

EIR: That's why we're saying, find out what the policy has to be at the top, at the same time that you organize.

Bates: Exactly.

Interview: Jim Stewart

The Port Is Trying To Starve the Drivers Out

Jim Stewart heads the Savannah Port Truckers Association in Savannah, Georgia. He led a protest of independent port truckers, who shut down the Savannah port over a labor dispute beginning on Oct. 23, which is ongoing as we go to print.

Stewart is also a board member of the Maritime Workers Advancement Association. He was interviewed by Marianna Wertz on Oct. 18.

EIR: I understand you've shut down the Port of Savannah for several days.

Stewart: For the first couple of days, there was very little of anything in here, just a few company trucks and some out-of-state trucks that were coming in, but they had used a lot of those last week, because it was so backed up with the new computer system. The lines were three to four miles long outside the port gates.

EIR: Because the computer system wasn't functioning?

Stewart: Exactly. It's still messed up.

EIR: What is wrong with the computer?

Stewart: They spent almost \$4 million on a new system. They did this once before, when they spent a million or so and the system never ran right and they had to finally scrap it. This system gives the port control over what everybody is doing in the ports. It's the port system, not the steamship line system. They implemented something without properly training everybody on it. Instead of working the bugs out of it, or starting with one lane, or one line, or bringing it in when the freight slacked down, they just implemented it.

They knew what it was going to do. We had a protest rally here, along with 15 other ports on Oct. 4, and they had bragged to the media about the new system, which was going to start Oct. 2. Just as soon as they found out we were going to have the rally on Oct. 4, they announced on the news that there had been a glitch in the system, and they decided not to start it Oct. 2. They knew, if they started it that day, and we had a protest rally on Oct. 5, with the trucks backed up for miles, it would have blown up in their face then.

EIR: What are you demanding?

Stewart: What we want is for them to do something about it. They did something about it when they introduced this thing. They should back off of it or go back to handwriting, or do something until after the peak season is over with. The first of the year, freight slows down out of the port. At least wait until then, if they want to implement this new system.

EIR: Have they been responsive?

Stewart: No, they will not talk to the port truck drivers. Their smug program all week has been to starve the drivers out. They've been so boisterous and smug, about how there shouldn't be more than 20, 25 radicals out there Monday and it will probably be all over with by lunch. So they didn't expect to see all the drivers that they've seen out here, picketing the port.

EIR: How many people do you have out there?

Stewart: We've had almost 200 at one time. Now, we're doing a different program now. We made an announcement this morning, to let the drivers go back to work who want to work, the ones that want to stand out here, stand out here. We're going to do a rotation system. We're putting placards and picket signs, on the side of the trucks, and letting the trucks go into the port. We're taking the protest into the port, and to the customers across town and everywhere else.

EIR: Are you tying this to the question of the gas price, and the fact you can't make a living anymore?

Stewart: Oh, yes, it all ties into it. Even before they implemented this program, last week, the guys couldn't make it off what they were making. The freight rates are so low, and the waiting times were ridiculous even before this started. It is at the point where everybody is just about to lose everything they've got.

When they implemented this, that was the straw that broke the camel's back. You cannot sit out here for hours waiting to get one box in and one box out.

EIR: What do you get for a box?

Stewart: They're getting anything from \$20 to \$35 a box to go into port and to take a box out of the port. One of the guys right here now, he just pulled up, and he's been in there four and a half hours, to get one box in and one box out.

EIR: In Mr. LaRouche's paper, and what he's saying is that this kind of thing is part of the breakdown of the whole financial system that's going on worldwide. The stock markets are dropping drastically all over the world.

Stewart: I just caught something about that on the news. We're all in this for the long run. Everybody from all over the nation.

EIR: How are the drivers doing?

Stewart: There are several girls that own trucks out here. One has three kids, she's three months behind in payments on the truck. She didn't need this to start last week. We've got public opinion on our side. We told everybody this morning to bring pictures of your kids. We're going to put them on poster boards and put them on the side of this motor home we have parked on the side of the road. We want people to see what this is affecting. We want to put a face on it.

These people will get their big executive check on Friday, they'll be in Jacksonville, Charleston, who knows?—for the weekend, playing golf. These people, here, are going to be trying to figure out, over the weekend, what they can put on the table to eat, and what's going to be repossessed next.

EIR: That's America today.

Stewart: And that's disgusting. That's why I'm in this, and I'm in it to the end.

LaRouche: Financier Takeover Would Be Tantamount to Treason

The following letter was sent to Lyndon LaRouche by Camden, New Jersey City Councilman Ali Sloan El, Sr. Councilman Sloan El is leading a fight against the attempted takeover of cities in New Jersey under State Senate Bill 1507, also known as the "Municipal Rehabilitation and Economic Revitalization Act." The letter, and LaRouche's response, were read at a rally there, on Oct. 19:

I am writing today to discuss with you New Jersey State Senate Bill 1507, pending before the New Jersey Legislature, and to officially ask for your written position on American democracy and the right of a municipality to choose its elected representatives. Senate Bill 1507, as it is currently written, effectively abolishes representative government in New Jersey and renders the citizens' right to vote for their local elected officials worthless. Gov. Christine Todd Whitman has decided that the American citizens are unfit to govern and must be subjected to colonialization. This bill undermines the precepts of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, and, if passed, promises to establish policy that will eat away at the fabric of democracy.

The effects of this bill can be seen in excerpts from the bill as follows:

“. . . The governing body shall act as advisers to the Chief Management Officer (CMO). . . . The CMO . . . may at any time abolish the position of municipal auditor, attorney, business administrator, or other chief administrative officer, department director, or a member of any board, agency, commission, or authority of any entity whose members are appointed by the governing body, mayor, or other chief executive. . . . The Chief Management Officer may abolish positions in the municipality . . . at any time.”

According to the landmark decision of the United States Supreme Court of 1801 in the case of *Marbury v. Madison*, it was determined that the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of the land and must prevail over any other law, Federal, state, or local, which conflicts with it. In this instance, the state is not only attempting through S-1507 to override the Constitution by usurping the vested powers of local elected officials (therefore surreptitiously overriding the citizen's right to vote), but it is also attempting to establish policy that forbids the citizens through their representatives