

**SEIU Leader, Dennis Rivera - Leader of Raid on Puerto Rico Teachers Federation and 1,000 SEIU Members Will Lead the Puerto Rican Day Parade in New York This Coming Sunday, June 8, 2008**

By Howie Rotman, June 4, 2008

Over one thousand 1199SEIU members will lead this year's National Puerto Rican Day Parade on Sunday, June 8 in New York City. The contingent will accompany an 1199SEIU float and be led by parade Grand Marshall Dennis Rivera, former 1199SEIU president and current Chair of SEIU Healthcare. Dennis Rivera is the first labor leader to head the Puerto Rican Day Parade.

The 1199SEIU contingent will gather at 8am, and the Manhattan parade will start at 11 am at Fifth Avenue and 44th Street and proceed uptown along Fifth Avenue to 86th Street.

Crowds in excess of two million are expected to line Fifth Avenue on Sunday, June 8 for the 2008 Puerto Rican Day Parade.

This Puerto Rican Day parade led by SEIU leader Dennis Rivera and a thousand strong contingent from SEIU follows back-to-back with the SEIU convention that commenced this past weekend in Puerto Rico where the Puerto Rico Teacher's Federation (FMPR) protested SEIU leadership's attempts to take over their union by cutting deals with Puerto Rico's corrupt Governor Acevedo Vila, who was indicted on 19 criminal counts in March and is accused of tax fraud, concealing illegal donations, and engaging in a massive conspiracy to violate campaign finance laws. If convicted on all these charges, Acevedo Vila faces 20 years in jail. Acevedo Vila was an honored speaker at the SEIU Convention on its first day.

In a news release on June 1, Labor Note's Mark Brenner, who covered the convention, said riot police were on hand as the Puerto Rican teacher's union picketed the SEIU convention in San Juan. Brenner reported: "The police attempted to keep the FMPR demonstrators out of the convention area and about fifty of them broke through the police lines and set up a picket line in front of the SEIU convention. It was quite a scene. I mean, you had riot police blocking the entrance to the convention center, with SEIU delegates behind them. It was really unbelievable and I think it really threw a lot of SEIU delegates for a loop!! "

Protest actions by FMPR outside the SEIU convention were going on throughout the convention, but limited contact was made with union convention delegates, because in an account by eye witness Brenner:

"While most [SEIU] delegates had no idea what was going on, convention planners didn't give them much time to find out. [SEIU] Sergeants-at-arms quickly started hustling delegates back inside the building and within minutes San Juan police reinforcements

arrived. Later it came out that planners didn't let people leave the building to see what was going on. A team of 20 beefy cops quickly set up a barrier between the picketers and SEIU convention-goers, while several SEIU rank and filers watched and worried for the safety of the teachers, noting sympathetically "This is what unions do. This is how we got started." The SEIU communications staff squirmed on the sidelines, trying to figure out what to make of the confrontation. The irony of seeing them sweat wasn't lost on me either, considering SEIU crashed the Labor Notes conference just two months ago. To be clear, teachers only clashed with the cops (and rent-a-cops) during this episode. If they ever got close to a crowd of SEIU members they tried to hand them a flyer or start a conversation about why they were there."

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The following was reported by Juan Gonzalez in the New York Daily News on February 29, 2008: New York labor leader Dennis Rivera in shady Puerto Rico union deal

SEIU chief Dennis Rivera helped get Puerto Rico teachers union ousted so he could hijack members, critics charge.

In what some call a shameful betrayal of solidarity, powerhouse New York labor leader Dennis Rivera has joined Puerto Rico's governor in a stunning attempt to break the island's largest union.

Eight days ago, the Puerto Rico Federation of Teachers, which represents 40,000 teachers, paralyzed island public schools with a strike. The teachers, who earn top wages of \$26,000 a year, had worked for 30 months without a contract. Union leaders were furious that Gov. Anibal Acevedo Vila imposed new working conditions last year, decertified the union in January and suspended its dues check-off. The governor's draconian actions came after the union's membership voted in November to authorize a strike.

Since 1998, Puerto Rico's government workers have not been allowed to strike. While the clash between the teachers' militant leaders and the government was grabbing the headlines, Rivera was maneuvering to snatch control of the teachers for his Service Employees International Union.

Top labor leaders here and in Puerto Rico say Acevedo Vila gave Rivera, a close friend and a vice president of the 1.6-million member SEIU, a green light last year to oust the teachers federation and replace it with a newly formed labor group, the Union of Puerto Rican Teachers. That new union is a subsidiary of the Puerto Rico Teachers Association, a group that has long represented principals and supervisors at island public schools.

In January, Rivera and Aida Diaz, president of the principals group, announced that the principals were affiliating with SEIU and their new subsidiary would demand an election

to oust the Federation of Teachers . The principals and supervisors, in effect, created a new union for their subordinates. What they didn't say was that they had the backing of the governor in this union-raiding scheme. "The governor told Dennis, 'It's essentially yours to take,'" said one source who claims he was at a meeting in late December between top island union leaders, the governor and Rivera.

This week, El Diario-La Prensa reported that Rivera and Acevedo Vila also met in September at a San Juan restaurant to discuss the teachers union as well as possible financial backing by SEIU for the governor.

"That's a total fabrication," Rivera said yesterday of the Diario story. "Did I meet with the governor of Puerto Rico in a public restaurant around August? Yes, I've met with him maybe 20 times. Did I offer him donations in any way, shape or form? Absolutely not."

Rivera also denied any talks with the governor about a campaign by SEIU to become the bargaining agent for Puerto Rico's teachers. ACEVEDO VILA'S office did not respond yesterday to a request for comment. The governor flatly denied to Puerto Rico reporters this week that he attended any meeting with Rivera to discuss financial support.

A few days after Rivera and the principals' union held their press conference the government of Puerto Rico decertified the teachers federation. Acevedo's education secretary has ruled that the federation will not be permitted to run in any new elections for a union to represent the teachers.

In Puerto Rico, there is a long history of antagonism between independent unions, like the teachers and the electrical workers, and the labor organizations connected to the AFL-CIO or the new Change to Win federation, of which SEIU is a part.

Too many U.S -based unions operate in an arrogant and colonialist fashion, the independents say. What they never expected was to see the most influential Puerto Rican labor leader in the U.S. [Dennis Rivera] treat them just like those old Washington labor leaders have done for so long.

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Given that Dennis Rivera and Washington SEIU leadership is raiding the largest union in Puerto Rico, - and fortified the SEIU Convention that started last weekend with barricades and riot police who were unleashed to attack Puerto Rican Teacher Federation union members who were attempting to discuss their situation with SEIU Convention delegates in Puerto Rico - why should Dennis Rivera ,leading a 1,000 strong SEIU contingent, be allowed to LEAD a Puerto Rican Day Parade in Manhattan on Sunday, June 8, as millions of people look on ?

SEIU will be gathering for the parade at 8am this coming Sunday, June 8.

The parade will start at 11 am at Fifth Avenue and 44th Street and proceed uptown along Fifth Avenue to 86th Street.

This is an opportunity for people who support the FMPR to talk to SEIU members - and Dennis Rivera- as SEIU assembles for the parade, about supporting the FMPR union members. This is an opportunity to educate SEIU members about putting pressure on the leader of the Puerto Rican Day Parade, Dennis Rivera, and other SEIU leaders, to discontinue its collusion with a corrupt Puerto Rican Governor; for SEIU "leadership" to discontinue busting the Puerto Rican Teachers Federation in its ambitions to build union "density" using colonialist aggression tactics of the worst possible kind.

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