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Beyond the election

CLASS STRUGGLE

What makes this Nov. 3 U.S. election unique is that it has become an arena for class struggle.

Voting is still dominated by big capital. No party with any chance of winning represents the real interests of laboring people, in the U.S. or worldwide. Both the Republican and Democratic parties serve a tiny elite of billionaires. They both use police inside the U.S. and the Pentagon abroad to maintain the dominance of that class.

Nevertheless, what makes the outcome of the voting vital is that it measures the possibility of building working-class solidarity in the coming period.

Words are less important than deeds, but Trump has used a flood of racist words

to mobilize the most backward and dangerous scum of U.S. society. His constant rants have filled a cesspool with racism, xenophobia, misogyny, bigotry directed at LGBTQ2S+ people, and insult and disdain for the tens of millions of people with disabilities and for the millions formerly or currently in prison.

A referendum on racism

This election embodies a referendum on racism. An overwhelming vote against Trump, an anti-racist vote, would at least create the possibility of building a unified working-class struggle, even if it can't empty the cesspool of bigotry.

Such a struggle can fight for real gains

for all workers within the United States and bring hope to the billions of people around the world who feel the imperialist heel on their necks.

To be clear, for Workers World, the working class includes all those who must work to survive: those in traditional jobs as well as gig jobs, unemployed, students hoping for future jobs, workers in the informal economy including sex workers, retired workers. They are of all colors and nationalities, born in the U.S., migrants — with or without papers — of all genders and gender identities, all sexualities, of all ages, and those with disabilities. This is our class.

Have no illusions. The Democratic candidate has openly demonstrated that he is a faithful servant to Wall Street and the

banks, and that his party will carry out the strategic interests of U.S. imperialism on a world scale. Whether the Joe Biden/Kamala Harris team does this more efficiently and scientifically than the Donald Trump/Mike Pence team makes them no less a threat to the people of the world and the working class in the United States.

It is reasonable, however, that few would consider the two parties exactly equal in relation to their own survival. The Democratic Party has a multinational base. It also passed the Heroes Act in the House, which would keep 30-50 million people housed and fed. The Republicans refuse any help for the unemployed. The Republicans also threaten the right to

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editorial

Justice for Walter Wallace!

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Outrage over the police killing of Walter Wallace, Jr., a Black husband, father, son, and twin, erupted throughout his West Philadelphia neighborhood on Oct. 26, as news of the incident spread. Wallace was shot multiple times by police on his block in front of his mother and neighbors who frantically urged police not to shoot.

Workers World spoke with MOVE leader Pam Africa, a neighbor of the Wallace family, who gave an account of what neighbors witnessed: "Police were out earlier in the afternoon when his mother reported a domestic incident. They were at the house but left. Then police returned a few hours later. They knew he had mental health issues. Why didn't they send counselors?"

Wallace's father, Walter Wallace, Sr. told reporters that "his son struggled with mental health issues and was on medication. Why did they have to gun him down?"



Protesters defy the police following murder of Walter Wallace on Oct. 26 in Philadelphia.

Other witnesses stated that Wallace was on the porch with his mother when police returned the second time. As he stepped off the porch, police immediately drew their guns. His mother ran after

him, trying to shield him, telling police he was her son. As soon as Wallace entered the street, and was still at least ten feet away, police fired over 13 bullets. It is not clear how many hit Wallace, who was

dead upon arrival at a nearby hospital. There are conflicting reports on whether Wallace had a knife.

As news of the murder spread, demonstrators gathered at Malcolm X Park in West Philadelphia, and marched to the nearby 18th Police District. The crowd eventually grew to several hundred who confronted the police well into the early hours of the morning. One police car was overturned and burned. One officer was struck by a pickup truck, and several others were reportedly struck by bricks and other projectiles.

Over 90 arrests were made, with some protesters taken to the 1st Police District several miles away in South Philadelphia. Videos from the conflict show residents throughout the predominantly Black neighborhood along 52nd Street repeatedly questioning police over their excessive use of force.

Community meetings and more protests are being organized. More information can be found at #WalterWallace. □

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NO RACISM! NO FASCISM! NO COUPS!

Nov. 7 Anti-Racist Workers Assembly

Shut down white supremacy & fascism by expanding the calls for strikes against racism

Come to the Anti-Racist Workers Assembly

Sat., Nov. 7, 1 p.m.

59th St. and Broadway (near Trump Int’l Hotel)

- Other Important Actions:
- NOV. 2: Black Solidarity Day
 - NOV. 3: Election Day & Poll Defense
 - NOV. 4: Post-Election Protest for a People’s Mandate

Four days after the election, join the call for workers’ intervention in the unfolding crisis. Oct. 18 protest at Union Square, NYC.



WW PHOTO

We face a major political crisis and we face a pandemic of racist police violence, the highest COVID-19 deaths in the world, and an economic meltdown.

A growing movement for a general strike/shutdown signals a new day in the class struggle.

This can go far beyond the organized labor movement. We are ALL workers, and we can push forward with mass actions.

Something big is going on in the labor movement:

The Rochester Labor Council called on the AFL-CIO to call a general strike if President Donald Trump refuses to leave office.

Soon after, the Central Wisconsin Area Labor Federation passed a similar resolution, followed by the Seattle Labor Council and Troy, N.Y., Labor Council. On the West Coast, ILWU Longshore workers and teachers’ unions are passing resolutions and making plans. The Southern Workers Assembly called for “No business as usual at work, school,

wherever you are!”

More than 58 local, regional and national labor unions declared that the labor movement must organize work stoppages and general strikes against racism and police terror. (www.laborforblacklives.org)

Workers have held work stoppages in recent months to protest unsafe conditions in schools, warehouses and medical centers. They are in the forefront of the movement to bring back the general strike.

The Nov. 7 Workers Assembly Against Racism has the potential to help make the general strike/shutdown more than an idea, but a reality.

On Oct. 18 a Workers Assembly Against Racism held at Union Square, with participation from 70 community and labor organizations and activists, made a strong call for workers to intervene decisively with a mass rally on Saturday, Nov. 7.

Let’s get in the streets in this moment of national crisis!

WW now in print on monthly basis

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Workers World suspended printing and mailing of the newspaper on March 19. We have continued publishing articles on workers.org, along with a weekly PDF of what would have been the printed version.

We are pleased to announce that we have resumed printing and mailing on a monthly basis, for now. Subscribers should have received a printed paper in September and October. Print subscriptions will still be extended in

consideration of the temporary suspension of printing and the currently more limited print schedule.

We recommend that subscribers with internet access get our free email subscription and share our articles with your contacts and on social media.

— *WW managing editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette and Minnie Bruce Pratt.*

Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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ELECTION 2020

Freedom struggle on the move in North Carolina

By calvin deutschbein
Chapel Hill, N.C.

On Oct. 23, Chatham County became the first county in North Carolina to surpass its November 2016 early voter turnout. This has happened halfway through an early voting period that extends for another eight days — and didn't include many mail-in ballots sent but not yet received.

North Carolina has been a hotly contested site in this election cycle, not just in the theater of bourgeois politics but also in the very real struggle waged by masses of people fighting for their survival and liberation.

Repressive legal and extralegal bodies of capitalism have been set in motion to suppress and intimidate voters. For instance, during the state primary, an array of white militias gathered outside the main early voting site in Chatham County to menace voters of color.

But across the state, time after time, masses of people have easily overpowered the far right in numbers, in organization and in solidarity.

Repressive courts

While the U.S. Supreme Court's shift to the right has been highlighted in corporate media, in North Carolina it is the lower federal courts — similarly but more secretively packed with followers of the white supremacist in the White House — that have placed voting rights under attack.

In North Carolina, 10,000 mail-in

ballots have been made doubtful by a collaboration between federal court judges and the state Republican Party. Constant changes to rules for accepting mail-in ballots, both to make the process less accessible and to invalidate existing ballots, have been the tool for election fraud and voter suppression.

Even the 10,000 ballot number is quite suspicious in North Carolina, as that is the number of votes by which the former Republican governor lost in 2016 — and the cut-off number for calling for a recount. In short, 10,000 is exactly the number of votes Republicans would need to throw out in order to change the election result.

Fascists go down fighting

The North Carolina Republican Party seized state power a decade ago through a variety of legal and extralegal machinations. Since then the North Carolina GOP has remained one of the most openly fascist state-level GOP parties in the U.S.

But this party, with its determination to advance the interests of white supremacy in North Carolina, has been under siege through nominally democratic processes and by action in the streets. For years it has been powerfully challenged by people's movements like Moral Mondays, the Poor People's Party, and a current of radical organizing begun in the 1970s by the Communist Workers Party and continued by Black Workers for Justice.



PHOTO: SIEMBRA NC

La Raza Triad, a member of Siembra NC, organizes against the pandemic and for voting rights in Silas Creek, near Winston-Salem, N.C., Oct. 25.

No surprise, then, that some of the GOP-elected lawmakers, seeing masses of people mobilized against them, took matters into their own hands. In Raleigh, the state capital, a day after early voting began, Gary Pendleton, a former Republican state legislator, was charged with assault against an election worker.

Pendleton was acting as an official Republican poll observer, a role that had previously been illegal under a court decree banning the Republican Party from engaging in direct voter intimidation efforts. The ruling was allowed to expire in 2018.

Workers and im/migrants not intimidated

The attack in Raleigh was not an isolated incident. An hour away in Greensboro, during a voter turnout effort, members of Siembra NC faced down other menacing

Republican poll observers. Siembra NC is an organization of Latinx people defending their rights and building power “with papers and without papers.” Established in 2017, with member leadership teams in Alamance, Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, Orange and Randolph counties, the group is no stranger to resisting intimidation.

In a press release, Siembra NC contextualized the power of their movement compared to the far right: “As voter intimidation goes, this was ‘amateur hour,’ but it's a good reminder that conservative activists will do anything to keep Latinos from voting.”

So far, the record-breaking turnout is overwhelming the oppressive capacities of the far right.

Just the beginning

While winning liberation will require much more than electoral turnout, the importance of ballot access is still essential to the Black and Brown freedom struggles in the U.S. The rising tide of open fascist threat has been powerfully repudiated by the working class and the oppressed in North Carolina, and throughout the U.S.

Months into street demonstrations, amidst growing pushes by organized labor toward a general strike — and as the contradictions of capitalism grow ever more stark — mass mobilization around the issue of voting rights is a sign of rising class consciousness in the U.S. — and of the potential for a historic repudiation of capitalism and imperialism. □

Ableism and voter suppression: struggles are intertwined

By Kristin Turgeon

This is a lightly edited version of a talk given on the Oct. 22 Workers World Party webinar, “Voter suppression and COVID and their impact on disabled people.”

Voting has always been a hot topic, and in the 2020 election many people see it as vital. Every time you go online or turn on the TV or radio you hear and see PSAs exhorting you to vote.

What has also thankfully come to light is voter suppression targeting poor communities, especially communities of color. This is not new, of course, but some people are hearing of it for the first time and there has been a lot of grassroots action taken to try to fix the problem.

However, one form of voter suppression is hardly being talked about. It is extremely hard for disabled people to vote. When I,



WWW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

Kristin Turgeon

a blind person, tried to vote in 2016 I was unable to. I tried to request an absentee ballot and was told I had to fill out an application, but when I went to fill it out online the website was not accessible with a screenreader — without which I couldn't use a computer.

When I called the town office to report this and ask for help I never received a call back. I'm not the only visually impaired person who was unable to vote. Absentee ballots aren't accessible in 43 states. With every state using a different system, visually impaired people all over the country are struggling with accessibility challenges.

With Covid spiking in many areas, people don't feel safe going to the polls or having someone help them fill out paperwork that we should be able to fill out

ourselves. We shouldn't have to choose between not voting at all or not having a private vote. Many polling places are also not accessible to wheelchair users or to seniors. People with developmental disabilities can and have been barred from voting.

Voter suppression shows struggles are intertwined

This is not to say that this form of voter suppression stands alone; in fact, the opposite is true. Although all of these accessibility problems violate the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act], administrations in some states are using the inaccessibility of polling places in communities of color to shut them down. This is both racist and ableist. Why didn't they move the polling places to a more accessible location?

This proves that the struggle against ableism is intertwined with the struggles against racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and all our other

struggles — none of which will be ended by voting. History shows us that real human rights are only won through the rising of the workers and the oppressed.

That doesn't mean that you shouldn't vote if you feel like it's important. It also doesn't mean that the right to vote doesn't matter. But I'm a socialist and an anti-capitalist. I don't feel that any real and lasting change can come from Joe Biden and certainly not from Trump.

Police brutality will not end under Biden. Evictions and high rents won't end under Biden. The fascists aren't going to evaporate or leave the country if Trump loses.

Change will only come when we the people fight for the world we want. A world in which everyone has food, a home, health care, a job, and an education. A world where those things are considered human rights instead of a world driven only by profit. Then we will have free and fair elections and the lesser of two evils will no longer be the best bad choice. □

Momentum builds for general strike if Trump attempts coup

By Martha Grevatt

A movement has been growing since the Rochester Labor Council's Oct. 8 resolution supporting a general strike if Trump refuses to leave office. This bold initiative was followed by a similar resolution by the Central Wisconsin Labor Federation. Both groups called on the AFL-CIO to launch the general strike to thwart a right-wing, racist, anti-worker Trump coup.

Now the push is on for workers to withhold their labor in defense of their basic democratic rights. The Western Massachusetts Area Labor Federation passed a resolution Oct. 19 for a general strike and other “nonviolent action,” if

“Donald Trump and his GOP enablers attempt to obstruct, subvert, sabotage, overturn or reject a fair and complete count of presidential ballots.” Federation organizer Lydia Wood explained, “We consider that the most powerful tool the movement has.” There are 30 member unions in the federation.

On Oct. 21, the MLK Labor Council, which covers King County around and including Seattle, resolved to “work with allies in the anti-racist, environmental justice, feminist and poor peoples movements as well as the LGBTQ+, religious minorities and immigrant communities to make contingency plans in response to undemocratic actions by President

Trump and his allies.”

The council resolved further that “MLK Labor will take actions to prepare for widespread nonviolent action including protests and work-stoppages by coordinating peacekeeper and other necessary trainings.” AFSCME Local 304, representing state workers, had passed a resolution two days earlier urging the Council to take this position.

An October 20 webinar to discuss the general strike strategy featured Association of Flight Attendants-CWA President Sara Nelson, a potential candidate to succeed AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. Tens of thousands of rank-and-file unionists have signed a

“defend democracy” pledge to take to the streets and shut the country down, if necessary to prevent a coup. The Detroit area branch of the American Postal Workers Union appealed to members to sign the pledge.

Trumka has not yet taken a position on the general strike calls. But, as Portland Electrical Workers (IBEW) member Doreen McGrath states: “There is a lot of groundswell from rank-and-file workers who are putting pressure on union leadership to pass these resolutions.”

General strikes — collective work stoppages involving a large section of workers in a particular area or a country — are

Continued on page 4

Birmingham, Ala.

Libraries gutted, police budget increased

By Devin C
Occupied Muscogee Creek
land — Birmingham, Ala.

Protesters arrived at the Birmingham City Council meeting on Sept. 22 to challenge the city’s drastic budget cuts. They were promptly banned from speaking at the meeting or even entering the building. They remained outside chanting and calling out for Mayor Randall Woodfin and the Council members to rethink the budget. But the ruling class leaders three floors up ignored their chants and continued busily gutting social services necessary for the city’s people.

Woodfin, a Democrat, ran under arguably the most progressive agenda a mayoral candidate in the city had ever proposed — and won. He has now let his true capitalist colors show — gutting Birmingham’s public libraries and promising a massive increase to the police budget.

On Sept. 25, over 150 library workers were laid off or furloughed from the city’s library system. Woodfin has adamantly refused to address any pushback from citizens.

When asked what this means for the city, Jamie Foster of People’s Budget Birmingham told WW: “There are only 11 to 12 librarians still employed in the entire

Birmingham Public Library system, which was the largest library system in Alabama until now. The Eastwood branch in District 2 has closed permanently, and the libraries still open have rotating days and hours for limited services. Curbside service is severely limited and even nonexistent in some places. There is no date set for furloughed workers to return to work.”

Privatizing public services
while the people suffer

Although there is no confirmation from the city, many people in the Birmingham area believe that shuttering libraries and library services is just another step in Birmingham’s goal to privatize public services.

When asked about this, Foster commented further: “Our city has recently privatized a majority of our financial department, and the mayor recently proposed privatizing public waste and refuse services under the guise of ‘cost savings and efficiency.’ From what we currently know, Woodfin’s administration is looking into further privatization of public works and services, under the false



Librarians protest in Birmingham, Ala., Sept. 22.

pretenses of economic savings due, in part, to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Increasing the police budget

What is not being gutted and reduced due to “economic savings” is the Birmingham police budget. Local residents Rachel Crisson and Hannah Hurley reported to Workers World that Woodfin has approved an increase in the police budget of over \$11 million for more surveillance equipment, guns and resources to terrorize the working and oppressed persons of Birmingham.

Meanwhile, the library budget was cut from \$15.3 million to \$6.2 million.

The City Council informed the library administrators that what remained of the new budget, \$3.6 million, must last until the end of this year.

Critics of libraries often cite the rise of for-pay ebooks and online courses as rendering libraries obsolete, but libraries are public institutions of knowledge. Public libraries must be fully funded and remain open to meet the needs of those most oppressed, who have the least access to information necessary to assist in survival and mount resistance.

What is not needed is an increase in an increasingly reactionary police state. The attack on people’s needs in the current Birmingham budget is a prime example of how liberalism, no matter how “progressive” its mask, is ultimately an exploitative capitalist machine.

Meanwhile, Birmingham library workers and community allies continue to organize and fight back. Defund the police! Re-fund the libraries!

Devin C, a transgender Marxist organizer and writer, is president of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative) and a founder of the Workers World Party—Central Gulf Coast branch.

Warehouse workers organize for COVID-19 safety at Mars Wrigley

By Mike Kuhlenbeck

The Warehouse Workers for Justice, Mars Workers for Justice, the Foodchain Workers Alliance and the HEAL Alliance are organizing a rally at Mars Wrigley headquarters on Oct. 27. It will be part of a Halloween week of actions protesting the candy company’s retaliation against warehouse workers in Joliet, Ill., for sounding the alarm on the lack of COVID-19 safety precautions.

Mars Wrigley is the most profitable candy manufacturer in the world, producing a variety of confectionaries such as chocolate bars, chewing gum and hard candies. With an estimated net worth of \$90 billion, the Mars family is “America’s third-wealthiest family ‘dynasty.’” (Business Insider, Mar. 27, 2019)

Even with the pandemic, the industry has been thriving this Halloween season. But as with other essential workers, those who pack and load the candies for the company fear for their safety and the safety of their families.

One of the key distribution hubs for Mars’ U.S. operations is a 1.4 million-square-foot warehouse in Joliet located in Centerpoint, the largest inland port in North America. Two third-party logistics companies, DHL and XPO, run the warehouse, which is staffed by at least four staffing agencies.

Broader struggle of warehouse workers

In July, several COVID-19 cases were reported in the warehouse. Over 100 workers responded by delivering a petition addressed to Mars Wrigley, DHL and XPO. The petition called for hazard pay and increased safety measures to protect them from COVID-19 in the workplace. Their demands included: paid sick leave, essential personal protective equipment (PPE), adequate and regular warehouse sanitation and the elimination of the point system which prioritizes productivity over workers’ safety.

At least five of the workers who signed the petition



Warehouse workers rally outside Mars Wrigley Joliet headquarters.

have been fired under suspicious circumstances, including one worker who was fired as recently as this month. They have since filed unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board, alleging “retaliation for engaging in federally protected concerted activity.”

WWJ Emergency Food Supply Chain Organizer Tommy Carden told Workers World, “Although Mars can play the blame game and lay the blame on XPO and DHL, the fact is this is Mars candy we’re dealing with, and Mars Wrigley needs to stop hiding behind its contractors and fix the problem.

“Workers shouldn’t fear retaliation when they speak up on COVID conditions and concerns.” Carden continued, “What’s happening at Mars sends the wrong message to workers that if they speak up for safety, they will be fired.”

Citing the more than 20,000 Amazon employees, many of them warehouse workers, who have contracted COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, Carden said, “Mars Wrigley workers are joining a broader struggle of warehouse workers engaged in similar fights across the country who are speaking up and telling major companies like Mars Wrigley, Amazon and Walmart that they cannot put profits and speed above the health and safety

of the workers who make their distribution possible during a global pandemic.”

Founded in 2009, WWJ “fights for good, stable, living-wage jobs in Chicago’s massive logistics and transportation industry,” according to their website. “We educate workers on their rights, help workers enforce their rights and fight for public and private policies that promote full-time work with respect and fair wages in our region’s warehouses and distribution centers.” (warehouseworkersforjustice.org)

Rehire workers with back pay

WWJ will rally and hold a press conference on Oct. 27 at Mars Global Headquarters on Goose Island in Chicago. Participants are encouraged to wear Halloween costumes and bring Mars candy, which will be “re-delivered” to the company along with a public petition to Mars Wrigley Global President Andrew Clarke containing hundreds of signatures supporting the campaign.

Carden said they expect the support for the workers to grow over the coming days.

“First and foremost, the workers who were retaliated against and were fired need to be reinstated with back pay,” Carden said. “We also want Mars Wrigley, DHL, XPO, temp agencies and other subcontractors to meet the demands of workers. We want to make sure these workers are heard and they have a voice, and if they have a concern in the workplace they are listened to.”

A DHL spokesperson denied the allegations of unfair labor practices and refused to comment on the firing of warehouse workers. “DHL Supply Chain has prioritized employee health and safety throughout the COVID-19 pandemic,” the spokesperson told Workers World.

“In our efforts to ensure business continuity for our customers and the flow of essential goods to communities across the U.S., we have deployed a range of safety measures and protocols, such as social distancing, alternate shifts, deep cleaning of facilities, mandatory temperature-taking and face coverings and the supply of protective equipment and hygiene and sanitary products.”

When asked for comment, Carden said, “DHL’s response shows that its true motivation here is ‘business continuity,’ not the well-being of its workers and their families. Although DHL claims there has been a single digit number of cases at the Joliet warehouse, workers tell us the actual numbers are higher. While it is nice to hear DHL saying that employee health is a priority, actions speak louder than words.”

For more information and updates on the rally, visit fb.me/e/CHNXhFw2r or sign the petition: tinyurl.com/y5vspxd2. □

Momentum builds for general strike if Trump attempts coup

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uncommon in the U.S. Besides May Day 2006, the best-known general strikes took place in Seattle in 1919 and in Minneapolis and San Francisco in 1934. Others occurred in Terre Haute, Ind., in 1935, Lansing, Mich., in 1937 and Oakland, Calif., in 1946 — all a long time ago.

More calls for “no business as

usual” are sure to come if Trump does not respect the vote of workers and oppressed people. This general strike would be one of the few political strikes — as distinguished from economic strikes — in U.S. labor history. The most recent was the mass strike of immigrant workers on May 1, 2006. In 1947, 250,000 autoworkers walked off the job to protest the anti-union Taft-Hartley

Act, which led to union-busting across the country in the decades that followed. Recently, professional athletes struck in solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

A general strike countrywide — or even in scattered locations — over a political crisis would intensify the class struggle in ways unseen in decades. □

March for missing and murdered Indigenous people and their families

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

On Oct. 24, 200 people marched through downtown Seattle to demand “Justice for Renee Davis and baby Massi.” The Indigenous-led march marked the fourth year since Davis of the Muckleshoot Nation was murdered by King County sheriffs on the Muckleshoot Reservation near Seattle.

The multinational march demanded justice for, and honored, Indigenous and Black lives. The rally and march included drummers, dancers, canoe families and

ceremony along with speakers.

The murders and disappearances of Indigenous women constitute a worldwide crime perpetrated by the system of capitalist colonialism. According to the Urban Health Institute’s 2018 report, there were 5,718 reports of missing U.S. and Alaskan Native women and girls in 2016.

Rally leader Roxanne White pointed out that Seattle has the highest rate of this anti-Indigenous violence in the U.S.

Donney Stevenson, Vice-Chair of the Muckleshoot Tribe, told the crowd, “No longer is it okay for our people to be marginalized. We come from a culture of

warriors. We are standing up to say enough is enough!” Katrina Johnson spoke in strong solidarity with Renee Davis. Cops murdered her cousin Charleena Lyles, a Black mother of three children. (tinyurl.com/y39tmrlp)

Davis, a mother of three daughters, was murdered by the cops while pregnant with her child Massi. The county cops were asked to do a wellness check on Davis at her house. But the cops, Timothy Lewis and Nicholas Pritchett, burst into Davis’ house and shot her numerous times while she was lying in bed. (tinyurl.com/



Justice for Renee Davis protest.

y2gh6uje) This is exactly what racist cops did to Breonna Taylor, a Black health care worker, in Louisville, Ky.

Renee Davis, who was learning the Coastal Salish language, was honored as a mother, a cultural advocate, a hunter and a fisher. □

Proud Boys and the Philly police

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Twice — on Nov. 17, 2018 and on Sept. 19, 2020 — when the far-right Proud Boys announced plans to demonstrate in Philadelphia, thousands of anti-racist activists turned out to tell them: “You are not welcome in our city!”

To avoid another such confrontation, on Sept. 26 members of the hate group gathered in a Walmart parking lot in South Philadelphia, with no previous public notice. They were escorted by a large police caravan as they marched through Center City wearing body armor and helmets and yelling at onlookers.

which legal and tactical information was shared. (The Guardian, Feb. 15, 2019)

Three days after the Proud Boys march, during the presidential debate on Sept. 29, Donald Trump told the group to “stand back and stand by.” Complaining that “bad things happen in Philadelphia,” he explicitly called on his followers to show up at polling places.

Police and fascists collude openly

Many are concerned that, because of their friendly relationship with the Proud Boys, Philadelphia police will do little to prevent any racist attempt at voter intimidation. During the months of Black Lives Matter protests following the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, there were at least two incidents in which Philadelphia police openly sided with white racists who were wielding bats and other weapons against protesters.

Ten members of the Proud Boys were photographed attending a rally for Vice President Mike Pence at the North Philadelphia headquarters of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) on July 9. After the rally, they were witnessed at a party inside. Later, on Twitter, they claimed to have spent \$1,000 at the FOP bar that night. (Daily Beast, July 16).

Given the racist history of the Philadelphia police department from its very inception, it is not surprising that the Proud Boys are seeking to ally themselves with the FOP. This is the city where the notoriously racist Frank Rizzo once served as police commissioner.

Philadelphia is where police dropped a bomb on the MOVE family in 1985, causing a fire that destroyed 61 homes in a Black neighborhood and killed 11 people.

In June 2019 the Plain View Project released a report on racist and violent social media posts by thousands of police officers across the U.S., including over 300 in the Philadelphia police department. This led to a wave of protests, temporary suspensions of 114 officers, and the termination of 15 others, including 11 who resigned to avoid formal charges. In July, nine of those who were fired or resigned sued the city for \$18 million, claiming their First Amendment rights were violated.

While racist posts by police officers have resulted in disciplinary action and



Over 2,000 people protested against the Proud Boys in Philadelphia on Nov. 17, 2018.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

even termination, it is rare for police departments to have policies prohibiting officers from affiliating with white supremacist groups. Yet, according to a recently released report from a former FBI special agent, “U.S. law enforcement officials have been tied to racist militant activities in more than a dozen states since 2000.” (theguardian.com, Aug. 27)

The Philadelphia police department is not unique. □

Police force pregnancy test on Portland Black Lives Matter activist

By Johnnie Lewis
Portland, Ore.

Portland Black Lives Matter activist Ellen Bennington told local progressive newspaper the Portland Mercury in an Oct. 16 interview that she was forced to undergo an illegal pregnancy test following her arrest after a BLM demonstration.

She had been taken to the Multnomah County jail, where she demanded her right to an attorney and her right to remain silent when questioned. Upon making these demands, jail staff told Bennington she was “upset” and demanded she give a urine sample.

When she asked what the test was for, staff said, “For analysis and to make sure you’re not pregnant.” When Bennington said, “I am not pregnant,” she was told, “Either you submit a urine sample or you’ll be placed in disciplinary solitary.” (tinyurl.com/yxohs8wr)

Bennington said the guards were trying to intimidate her, and they targeted her for illegal punishment for demanding her rights. After she gave the sample, she was strip-searched by several female guards and put into solitary confinement in a filthy cell, where she was held until noon the following day.

Bennington said she and a friend had been walking away from a Black Lives Matter demonstration

Aug. 31, when a Portland police van drove up beside them. A cop inside yelled, “Get them,” meaning her and her friend. Bennington was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, interfering with a peace officer, resisting arrest and possession of a concealed weapon (a small sheathed knife was inside her backpack).

Rachel Myles, another BLM activist, was also arrested that night. Seeing Bennington inside the jail, Myles heard two guards tell Bennington, “You have two options—you can take the pee test, or you can be subject to disciplinary action.”

Myles said Bennington asked her what to do. Myles told her, “I can’t tell you what to do, but this is not a choice. This is coercion under duress.” Myles was told to “shut up” by guards, and then she was put in solitary confinement.

As noted, even though Bennington was deprived of her rights and gave the urine sample, she was still put into solitary confinement. □



Black Lives Matter protest, July 2020 PHOTO: CAITLIN OCHS

Waukegan, Ill. Black Lives Matter protests continue

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Black Lives Matter protests are continuing in Waukegan, Ill., after police shot an unarmed young Black couple on Oct. 20. Marcellis Stinnette, 19, was killed. His partner, Tafara Williams, 20, was seriously injured. Waukegan is 15 miles from Kenosha, Wis., where police shot Jacob Blake in the back seven times on Aug. 23, setting off a community uprising.

On Oct. 22 and 24, hundreds of protesters marched in Waukegan, saying they would continue until they get justice. Clyde McLemore with Black Lives Matter of Lake County emphasized: “The country is in a state of emergency for Black



and Brown people.” (nbc.chicago.com, Oct. 24) Williams spoke to marchers from her hospital bed by phone, saying: “Don’t allow them to do this to us. No justice, no peace.” Here, Williams’ mother, Cliffina Johnson, addresses the Oct. 24 rally, as Williams’ child, Marcellis Stinnete Jr., is held by an aunt. □

Transgender woman in PA prison speaks out

From Miley Selena Fletcher
August 24, 2020
@S.C.I. Forest
Marienville, Pa. 16239

The following is an edited version of a letter received from an incarcerated trans woman at State Correctional Institution Forest in Pennsylvania:

I am a transgender woman forced to live in an all-male institution around transphobic male inmates, guards and staff. It is a sad environment. It does not discriminate when it comes to transgender women — white, Black, Spanish, Indian, Asian in a male institution. You are hounded by not only the male inmates, but also the guards and staff and abused physically and sexually.

It's a "witch hunt" against transgender women incarcerated in male institutions. I was denied going to a female facility and told it was "because of what I did at the State Correctional Institution at Chester, located in Chester, Pennsylvania."

At SCI Chester, I spoke up on protecting women and the lack of security at that institution under Superintendent Ms. Lamas. If you do not know Ms. Lamas, she is responsible for the rape of a woman employee at the SCI Rockview by a sexual predator inmate.

By NO means was Lamas ever prosecuted or lost her job. As a superintendent (warden) at Rockview, she was told by the woman employee that the male inmate was stalking her. The woman employee ended up being captured in her office, knocked out, then raped.

Superintendent Lamas stated to the media: "She knew what she was getting into working in an all-male prison institution." Instead of being fired, losing her pension or facing criminal charges, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections gave Lamas the superintendent job at SCI Chester.

At SCI Chester, 90% of employees are women. They wear fancy wigs, dress in tight clothing and walk as a woman should. As a trans woman at SCI Chester. I questioned why a psychologist called me into her office, tucked way in the back of the program service building, when no one was in that building but her and I. So I

wrote and reminded the PA DOC about the Rockview incident.

In retaliation, the PA DOC had me locked up and transferred immediately [to SCI Forest] — only because I questioned a security violation by SCI Chester's security and placed Lamas as an unprofessional who has no concern for the safety of women under her custody, care and control. When I brought this into the light, I was being who I am [as] "a woman." I did not feel safe there under Ms. Lamas' custody, care and control.

When [Corrections Classification Program Manager] C.C.P.M. Mr. Gustafson here at SCI Forest told me, "You were denied to go to a female institution because of what you did at SCI Chester. The PA DOC denied it for those reasons." I looked at him and said, okay, that's fine. I know as a woman what I did was right.

Women at SCI Chester came to my cell thanking me for bringing that up even though they couldn't. They feared losing their jobs if they brought it up. Ms. Lamas told me, "They know when they come to work what they're getting into. They don't need your opinion." I told her no! It makes your jobs much harder to deny if it does happen here.

I was transferred to a maximum security all-male institution SCI Forest. I live on a special needs unit (SNU). As a transgender woman, I am still in a male institution, where men can intimidate me, hit me if I say no to them that I won't date them and be mentally, physically and sexually abused.

Transgender people incarcerated face unique extraordinary vulnerabilities in prison: risks of physical, sexual assaults and harm. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality — which conducted a survey of nearly 30,000 transgender people in the United States — transgender inmates in the general prison population are ten times as likely to be abused by other inmates and five times likely to be abused by staff.

When I speak up or complain about a legitimate situation, this is what happens to me. So am I right, or am I wrong? What is next?

SCI Forest has no problem placing transgender on population blocks. I am on a SNU block, but for how long before the unit team gets tired of me? I already told them ahead of time, "If you place me on another block,



I will be forced to take self lock-up protected custody."

I am not going to go through the abuse by inmates or staff in this institution. I feel safe being on the SNU at this time until I can be accepted to go to a female/women's facility. I do hope that this brings light to your understanding of how transgender women are treated. I also hope that you may write the PA DOC and question why I was turned down due to what I did at SCI Chester.

Respectfully Sincerely,
Miley S. Fletcher

Note: To contact the PA DOC about this situation reference Eric Wolfgang / Miley S. Fletcher, BZ-2211 SCI Forest and email ra-crpdocsecretary@pa.gov.

Print issue resumed for incarcerated subscribers — Please donate to Patreon!

This is an update on the status of Workers World newspaper. Our print edition has been temporarily suspended during the COVID-19 crisis for health and safety reasons. However, we are thrilled to announce we are resuming print once a month, for the time being.

We have received reports from our incarcerated siblings, like Bryant Arroyo at S.C.I. Frackville in Pennsylvania and Michael "Spider" Gonzales at the Polunsky Unit in Texas, that there was audible joy when our most recent print issue was delivered inside to our incarcerated subscribers!

Our ability to break through the walls of isolation imposed by capitalists holding the keys to these cages is made possible by your generous support. Workers World Party is dedicated to providing subscriptions to incarcerated members of our class for free. If you're interested in supporting this mission of providing revolutionary socialist and abolitionist news and analysis to all our family behind bars, please go to patron.com/www to donate today!

Self-defense is a right! California protest hits domestic violence

By Judy Greenspan
Bakersfield, Calif.

Oct. 23 — The chant of "Self-defense is not a crime! Free our sisters doing time!" rang out at the Kern County Superior Court Building today in support of two women who defended themselves and their families against abusive partners.

The domestic violence survivors, formerly incarcerated people, prison abolition activists, clergy and family members converging on the courthouse were there in support of Wendy Howard, a white woman facing first-degree murder charges for killing her abusive partner, and Michael Bowers, a Black woman incarcerated since February 2017 for defending herself against her abuser.

Howard — a mother, grandmother and community leader in Kern County — was not able to speak at the rally due to a court "gag order." She was represented by friends and several of her children, who wore pictures of their mom with the words "Justice for Wendy." Oldest daughter Miranda spoke about the violence the family had suffered and why they feel Howard should not be incarcerated for defending herself and her daughters against physical abuse.

A statement by Michael Bowers' son, Orlynn Bailey, was also read during the rally. Though two hung juries have produced mistrials in Bowers' case, Bailey noted, "The prosecutor insists on keeping my mother incarcerated." Bailey also criticized the racism

of the Kern County justice system: "Kern County continues to marginalize Black people through law enforcement and the judicial system. There are major disparities between Black women and Caucasian women facing similar charges, with Black women usually serving heavier sentences."

A coalition group supporting both cases is Survived and Punished, based in Los Angeles. Several members spoke at the rally on behalf of both women. Alisa Bierria linked the struggle of battered women to the Black Lives Matter Movement, saying: "We are here to win justice for Michael Howard and Wendy Bowers. ... Remember that Black Lives Matter includes Black lives who are domestic violence victims."



WWW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

'Free our sisters!' was the chant of a Bakersfield, Calif., crowd rallying on Oct. 23 for two women who protected themselves and their families against domestic violence.

Bierria added, "'Say Her Name' for all the Black women whose lives have been lost by police violence, and also for all those Black women who are still alive but are not with their families because they have been targeted and criminalized and incarcerated."

Fighting domestic violence

After the speakout, the group rallied at the office of District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer, who is prosecuting the cases. There people took out their cell phones and dialed Zimmer, demanding she drop all charges against Bowers and Howard. "Drop the charges now!" rang out through the day.

The rally was scheduled to coincide with a hearing for Howard, whose trial is now postponed to the end of March 2021. She remains free on bail until then but under the shadow of a possible sentence to life in prison.

While Howard was in the Kern County Jail, she met Bowers and other women facing similar charges. Now Bowers and Howard are both fighting to drop the charges and to educate the community about the rights of domestic violence survivors.

The protest — during the Domestic Violence Awareness month of October — was organized and coordinated by No Justice Under Capitalism, a Bay Area coalition protesting conditions inside prisons for people with COVID, and Survived and Punished, which supports incarcerated women and trans people inside women's prisons.

For more information, check out the toolkit at tinyurl.com/y5nlsz45 and the press release at tinyurl.com/y4g2p6qp from Domestic Violence and Prosecution of Self Defense Toolkit prepared by NJUC.

On prison hunger strike

Maher al-Akhras fights for all Palestinians

By Christian Noakes

Maher al-Akhras, a 49-year-old Palestinian political prisoner and father of six from the Occupied West Bank, has been on hunger strike since his July 27 arrest by Israeli forces. He is under administrative detention—a practice both British and Israeli colonizers have long used to hold Palestinians captive indefinitely without charge or trial.



Maher al-Akhras with his daughter.

This cruel and unjust practice is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The violation of the latter means that such inhumane practices constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes. Israel is currently holding over 350 Palestinians in administrative detention. Israeli authorities have so far refused to release al-Akhras. They have stated that they would not extend his detention beyond Nov. 26, provided he ends his hunger strike. This empty concession has not deterred al-Akhras from continuing to fight for justice. He has committed himself to refuse food and medical treatment until his release.

After more than 91 days without food, al-Akhras’ health is now rapidly deteriorating. His family members and supporters fear that he will soon lose his life. However, al-Akhras has not wavered in his fight for justice for himself and all Palestinians.

‘Free Palestine!’

A visibly weak al-Akhras stated in a message from his hospital bed: “My only conditions are freedom or death. I either live freely with my children, or I am killed in the name of false justice. The strike is ... in defense of every Palestinian prisoner and in defense of my people who are suffering from the occupation, and my victory in this strike is a victory for the prisoners and my Palestinian people.” (samidoun.net, Oct. 8)

Quds News Network reported that Al-Akhras’ mother, wife and his three oldest sons announced that they were starting a public hunger strike after Israeli forces denied them the right to visit him at Kaplan Medical Center. (Oct. 24)

Anat Matar, a Tel Aviv University philosophy professor who coordinates the Israeli Committee on Palestinian Prisoners advocacy group, stated, “What he [al-Akhras] wants is to move the discussion from his own case to the general one, and that is why he pays with his own life.” (guardian.com, Oct. 21)

In putting his life on the line for the Palestinian struggle against colonial oppression, al-Akhras has shown immense courage, dedication and selflessness. His case further highlights both the resolve of Palestinians to be free in their own homeland and the extreme cruelty of Zionist occupiers who continue to rob Palestinians of their land and their freedom. His sacrifice is a beacon of hope for all those fighting for a free Palestine. □

Purdue Pharma guilty in opioid deaths

By Princess Harmony

A contributing cause to the opioid epidemic — overprescription of painkillers like OxyContin — has been identified by both individuals and the state. Since the start of the opioid crisis, overdoses have continued to rise, with COVID-19-based isolation pushing even more people toward the abuse of prescription and illicit opioids. Purdue Pharma made a deal with the Justice Department to pay \$8 billion in fines. The upside to this agreement is that they finally will pay for all the lives that were lost, destroyed, or otherwise endangered due to Purdue’s pushing of opioids. The downside to this agreement is that it potentially may interfere with the settlements and lawsuits filed by states and cities.

In the midst of losing money because of the settlement, the Sackler family moved \$10 billion out of Purdue Pharma — which they own — and into their family trusts. This action, which they called ethical and lawful, may deny funds to localities and states



seeking financial justice for the loss of their people. In the deal, Purdue Pharma pleaded guilty to three felony counts and agreed to pay the \$8 billion in fines. They admitted that their company pushed

for OxyContin to be prescribed to patients who didn’t actually need it. Now, Purdue Pharma is being transformed into a public trust — something to serve the public good. As it stands, some of the money extracted by the Justice Department will be given to the states and localities to support anti-drug and anti-addiction programs and treatment centers. That said, attorney generals in many states oppose the settlement, as it could potentially keep the Sacklers and other executives from facing punishment as individual people.

With the aggressive marketing of opioids stopped, the country can begin to heal from the chaos created by the Sacklers. This settlement, however, is only one of the thousands of lawsuits and punishments that face Purdue Pharma. Whether or not individuals from the Sackler family or executives of Purdue Pharma will be punished directly remains to be seen. □



Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party

@pscwwp

1

RELEASE THEM ALL!

The Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party calls for immediate and mass releases of prisoners due to the inability to social distance. This must include the release of those workers sentenced to life in prison and life without parole (LWOP). We emphasize the immediate release of elder and immunocompromised prisoners. Those released should be assigned to a job or guaranteed income, housing, medical care and healthy food.

2

FREE ACCESS TO PHONE CALLS, MAIL AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Prisoners, family and community have the right to communicate with each other. The state has used the pandemic to isolate incarcerated workers from their communities and their class.

3

END PRE-TRIAL DETENTION

We call for the immediate release of the thousands of workers currently being held in prisons, jails and detention centers across the country without having been convicted of a crime. We demand a complete moratorium of any prisoner transfers, especially without a conviction.

4

FREE NON-COERCIVE COVID TESTING, ACCESS TO CDC APPROVED HAND SANITIZER, PPE, AND HYGIENE ITEMS

5

ALL PRISONERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID MUST BE IMMEDIATELY TRANSFERRED TO NON-PRISON HOSPITALS

No punishment for those who test positive. No more de facto executions by COVID-19!

6

STOP ALL PRISON TRANSFERS, CELL EXTRACTIONS AND SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Transfers spread COVID19. Cell extractions and solitary confinement are tools of retaliation against prisoner organizers. Solitary confinement is torture.

7

HUMANE AND LIVABLE CONDITION FOR ALL

Including consistent showers and air conditioning in every cell and facility. A shocking number of prison facilities across the United States have no air conditioning in any spaces where prisoners are confined. Permanent lockdown in prisons has meant prisoners must choose between shower, exercise, fresh air, and speaking to their families.

8

HEALTHY AND FREE MEALS FOR ALL

The shocking decline of quality and portions of food in prisons is causing an entirely new public health crisis in prisons. Prisoners are being forced to eat expired, rotten, and otherwise unhealthy food in order for contractors to cut corners and collect more profits.

9

WORK FURLOUGH WITH FULL PAY

No prisoners should be forced to work for slave wages, especially during a pandemic. All prisoners should receive full wages during this requisite work stoppage and have access to commissary supplies free of charge. Prisoners should be paid the same minimum wage as workers on the other side of the walls.

10

ALLOW THE FORMATION OF PRISONER UNIONS

Incarcerated workers must have the right to organize unions and political organizations without fear of reprisals to address the threats unique to their facilities. For these demands to be effective in transitioning to full abolition, prisoners must be able to organize, politically and for self-defense. Organize for abolition!

A simultaneous struggle in the whole of this hemisphere

By Sergio Rodriguez Gelfenstein

Workers World received this article from its author, written Oct. 21 by a Venezuelan political analyst and essayist. Translation by John Catalinotto.

During the final months of last year, I wrote two articles in successive months under the titles “Latin America is on fire” and “Some reflections on recent events in the region,” in which I observed that the winds of change were beginning to blow. In this regard, several readers wrote to me with opinions ranging from “thank you for conveying optimism” to “is it possible to be optimistic?”

One of my articles concluded by saying that the mass participation that progressive governments had generated in the region in the first 15 years of this century would facilitate the emergence of a “new leadership that will carry the struggle to higher levels until we achieve independence and definitive freedom.”

Today, a year later and taking into account the events of the last few days on this continent, I can confirm that this view was correct, and not just because I’m an optimistic individual. It’s also by observing real events under the magnifying glass of dialectical analysis, studying new events that negate the earlier events. These new events produce quantitative changes that transform the quality of the struggle.

The central event during a victorious weekend that influenced this transformation was the elections in Bolivia. This showed that the peoples of Latin America are beginning to make it clear that an awakening was taking place, following the neoliberal night that was reinstalled in the region starting in 2015. As we said some time ago, this time the people of the continent would not have to wait 25 years, as they did from the overthrow of President Allende in 1973 to the victory of Comandante Chávez in 1998.

It wasn’t Latin America that surrendered, but only its elites, who have collapsed without thought to the United States, a country where popular and social organizations and its intellectuals themselves are beginning to wonder if they are indeed living in a democracy. The spirit of struggle south of the Rio Bravo did not cease, it only paused for a moment and can now wake up, study the new conditions that the conservative and fascist right wing in the region has imposed on politics. From this it can understand that — as it has always been — organization, education and mobilization are the needed and adequate instruments to break the neofascist block that can no longer stay in power in a representative democracy.

Argentina

Last weekend began with the massive celebration of the Peronist loyalty day in Argentina on Oct. 17. The limitations imposed by the pandemic did not prevent that wide range of citizens who gather under the ideas of General Perón from giving a forceful show of support to the government. Despite its flip-flopping on some issues, this new government is making an effort to restore the country after the four-year disaster caused by the neoliberal right-wing [Macri regime] that governed between 2015 and 2019.

It is impossible to understand Argentina



MAS supporters of President Evo Morales.



Evo Morales

without taking Peronism into account. There are neoliberal and right-wing currents within Peronism that differ little from Macri’s government, and that are not the least bit reluctant to lick the boots of the empire. Still I am left with the words of Emilio Pérsico, secretary general of the Evita Movement, who said on Oct. 17 that “Peronism is revolutionary, because it gave power to those who had no power and incorporated the workers into politics,” assuring everyone that “it is still in force among the workers and the humble of the country.”

Chile

Oct. 18 was a day of celebration and victory for the Latin American region. In Chile a massive demonstration commemorated the first anniversary of the beginning of the struggle for the recovery of dignity and homeland. Hundreds of thousands of people mobilized to express their opposition to the extreme structure of neoliberalism in a country that was considered the model to follow because it was administered by “socialists” and “democratic Christians” who gave continuity to Pinochet’s legacy, all under the watchful eye of the armed forces and security forces, also modeled by the dictator.

The imperishable fighting spirit of the Chilean people is present today when, gathering the best traditions of their history, the young generations raise their own flags at the same time that from new perspectives they produce a leadership and an organization — still fragile — but which has managed to force the system to organize a tricky plebiscite. Despite its trickiness, this plebiscite is a new arena of combat that can lead to greater and more decisive struggles. As pointed out in the demonstrations. “Chile is no longer the same.” [The plebiscite, held a week later on Oct. 25, showed that 78% of the voters wanted to replace the Pinochet constitution.]

Colombia

That same Oct. 18 in Colombia, the Minga formed by thousands of Indigenous people and peasants entered Bogotá, where they were warmly received by the citizens of the capital. [Minga is a Quechua word meaning “collective work.”] Throughout their journey from the south of the country, they were acclaimed in fields and cities by women and men who identified with the decision of the marchers, who asked to speak to the president, simply to ask him to stop killing them.

Alvaro Uribe’s opinion regarding this form of struggle is shown in a tweet from April 6, 2019, when he said, “It is preferable to close that highway for two years, to instead improve and take care of the detour, than to sign agreements with the minga that is backed by terrorism.”

When in a country, fighting for the right to life is considered by the elites an act of terror, we are facing a situation that the Colombian writer Santiago Gamboa calls “a celebration of democratic hate.”

Nevertheless, the protest movement against Iván Duque, who governs on behalf of Uribe, has led to the Oct. 21 national strike, called by the committee in which community, student, union, women’s, transportation and business organizations, among others, are participating. The strike aims at “defending life and democracy, protesting against violence and demanding the negotiation of the national emergency plan.”

Ecuador

Also last Sunday, Oct. 18, the magistrates of Ecuador’s Contentious Electoral Tribunal (TCE) dismissed the appeal filed against Andrés Arauz and Carlos Rabascall, candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency of the Republic, respectively, by the Union for Hope (UNES) movement for the general elections of February 2021. This ruling, which cannot be appealed, allows the participation of both candidates in next year’s elections, overcoming a new antidemocratic maneuver attempted by Lenín Moreno’s government in alliance with the traditional right wing of the country.

In a statement, the UNES movement explained that once the decision is carried out, an action that is planned for today, Oct. 21, the National Electoral Council “must authorize this pair of candidates representing the Citizen Revolution.” They can now enter with force in the electoral race. [See article on Ecuador, this issue of Workers World.]

Bolivia

Finally, the historic day of October 18 would close in the early hours of Monday morning with the confirmation of the overwhelming electoral victory of the Movement toward Socialism-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (MAS-IPSP) of Bolivia. The MAS-IPSP not only won the presidency of the country, but also achieved

the absolute majority that will give it control of both houses of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly.

More than just an election, this meant the defeat of the coup d’état carried out last year by the fascist right, with the support of the U.S. government and the OAS. In this context, the victory of the MAS represents the failure of U.S. policy. The U.S. showed it felt this as a blow if we consider that the recognition of the new elected authorities was made by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, today, Wednesday, three days after the event, while last year,

an overjoyed Donald Trump himself personally and immediately congratulated the self-proclaimed de facto president [Jeanine Áñez], who was imposed in that position after the coup d’état.

Costa Rica

Not everything would end there, on Monday, Oct. 19, a national strike in Costa Rica successfully protested the government’s neoliberal policies. The call exposed the need to combat the policies, bills and measures of a neoliberal nature promoted by the government of the Citizen Action Party. Likewise, it denounced that “the deputies and business sectors intend to make work more precarious and act against social justice, eliminating labor and union rights, and negatively affecting social security at the times when we most need to strengthen it.”

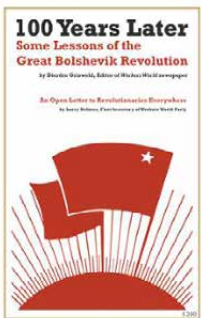
Olman Chinchilla, president of the Central of the Costa Rican Workers’ Movement (CMTC), the organization that called for the strike, stated that “... we are doing it for Costa Rica, for our country, in defense of our strategic institutions, for labor rights, and to demonstrate that we want absolutely nothing to do with the International Monetary Fund.”

[Nineteenth century South American independence leader Simón] Bolívar pointed out that “The homeland is America.” Sometimes the daily nature of our problems and the particularity of our conflicts do not allow us to see that Latin Americans and Caribbeans form part of a whole that struggles and dreams of a better world, each one in their country, in their conditions and their context.

We must keep in mind that as Bolívar taught us in his “Letter from Jamaica”: “Just because our successes have been partial and intermittent is no reason to doubt our fortune. In some places the independents win victories, while in others the tyrants seem to be gaining ground. But what is the final outcome? Is not the entire New World stirred to action and armed for defense? If we look around, we observe a simultaneous struggle throughout this hemisphere.” □

100 Years Later

Some Lessons of the Great Bolshevik Revolution



By Deirdre Griswold

Contents: From Marx’s view of social evolution to Lenin’s ‘Imperialism’ ♦ Social gains in the early years of Soviet power ♦ ‘Whose state? Our state’—meaning all nationalities ♦ External and internal problems, strengths and setbacks ♦ To the 0.001 percent: You are cheering too soon

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Category 5 capitalism

By Devin C
Creek/Muscogee land —
Pensacola, Fla., and Gulf Shores, Ala.

Oct. 26 — In an historic hurricane season that emphasizes climate crisis is now, Hurricane Zeta is currently barreling down on Mexico and the U.S. There have been so many tropical storms and hurricanes this season that the U.S. Hurricane Center has run out of official names and turned to the Greek alphabet. Predicted to hit Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula first, Zeta is expected to be at or near hurricane strength when it approaches the U.S. Gulf Coast. "There is an increasing risk of dangerous storm surge, wind and rainfall impacts from Louisiana to the Florida Panhandle," the Hurricane Center said. The following article on capitalist-made unnatural disasters was written in the aftermath of Hurricane Sally’s earlier devastating landfall at the Panhandle.

Hurricane Sally made landfall in Gulf Shores on Sept. 16 as a Category 2 storm. But meteorologists admitted its slow speed caused rainfall levels to match those of a Category 5 hurricane. It quickly moved towards Pensacola, collapsing a section of the mammoth Three Mile Bridge connecting Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties.

As Hurricane Sally bore down on northwest Florida and south Alabama, this writer sent out a message on social media: “As usual, capitalism is not equipped to handle events like this. No homeless shelters would open up yesterday for the vast homeless population of north-west Florida.

“It wasn’t until 8:30 p.m. last night that two smaller shelters and one large makeshift shelter were finally opened up. The sheriff’s department started offering rides to any person who is homeless who wanted to go, but due to their ongoing abuse and mistreatment of the homeless population, no one trusts them enough to get in their cruisers.

“Now individuals in Escambia County with cars higher off the ground are driving around in this storm, picking up people from rained-out homeless camps and taking them to the shelter. Our public transportation, the city buses, which are constantly at risk of being defunded, are also picking people up.

“Once again it is the workers who are acting and saving the day.”

No shelter in the storm

Originally slated to hit southern Mississippi and Louisiana, Hurricane Sally instead slammed into these Alabama and Florida beach and tourist cities, which have a combined population of over 520,000 people. The effect of the hurricane was so powerful that power outages were reported in Panama City, Fla. — 80 miles away. The maximum wind speed at landfall was 105 mph, making this the strongest hurricane to hit the area since Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

Pensacola has a vast homeless population but, in the days before the hurricane, the city administration carried on as though no catastrophe were coming for the house-less. No shelters opened their doors to accept anyone. No makeshift shelters were set up. FEMA or the Red Cross were nowhere to be found.

For an agonizing few days, houseless people in Pensacola wondered where they would wait out the storm. Finally, 12 hours before Hurricane Sally hit, the Red Cross announced the Pensacola Bay Center as a makeshift shelter. Additionally, two regular shelters decided to open their doors, waiving their insulting pre-requisites (a \$10 per night fee and a forced breathalyzer test for anyone who enters).

The problem with the larger makeshift Red Cross shelter was that it would not open until 8:00 p.m., long after the sun had set, and no one had bothered to secure mass transportation for the homeless populations to be moved there.

Bus drivers to the rescue

However, the courageous drivers of the ECAT (Escambia County Area Transit), Pensacola’s public bus

system, braved the incoming rainfall and increasing wind speeds to pick people up and take them to shelter. Local reactionary politicians have been trying to gut ECAT for years and put bus drivers and public transit workers out of a job. If their plans had been successful, who would have picked up all these people caught in the deadly storm and transported them to safety?

A second, much less popular strategy was tried out by the Escambia County Sheriff’s Office, which drove around

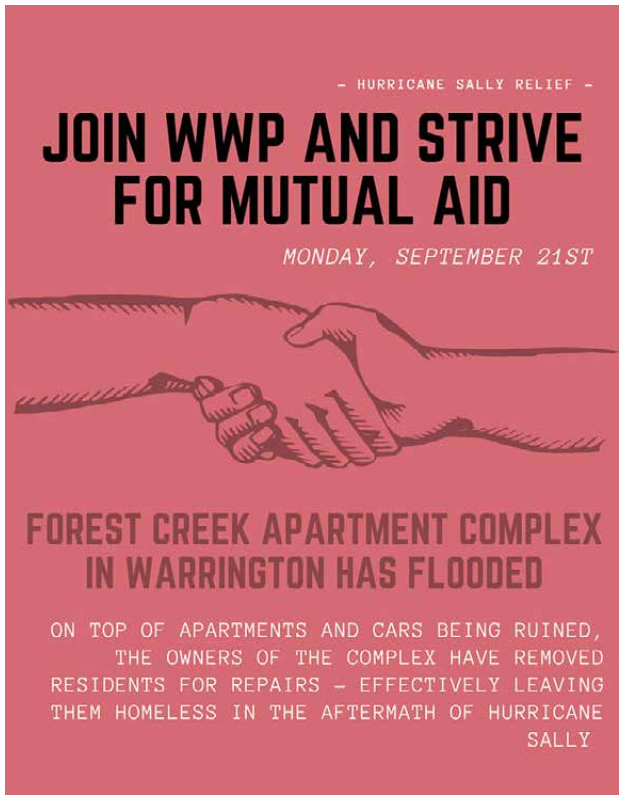


IMAGE: WWP — CENTRAL GULF COAST

An appeal for mutual aid after Hurricane Sally hit Pensacola, Fla., earlier in the historic 2020 climate crisis storm season.

to homeless camps, or up to people who were homeless, and offered them rides to the shelters. But the ECSO has a long history of violence, harassment and abuse against the houseless population in Escambia County. A May 27 Workers World article described the ECSO destruction of at least one homeless camp. The regular police process in the area is that after a homeless camp is set up, police discover it and destroy it, sometimes arresting the people living there.

So it surprised no one (except the ECSO, apparently) that no one, homeless or not, wanted a ride from them. The level of distrust and fear from the homeless population of Escambia County towards the ECSO is deeply rooted, and none knew for sure if they would even make it to the shelter, or be taken to jail for some trumped-up charges.

Working class solidarity

Instead the people, the masses of Pensacola, everyday workers, jumped into action. Several people risked their own safety driving around the city as the hurricane neared, finding homeless camps and people who were homeless, and offering them rides to the shelters. One such person was Mike Kimberl, homeless rights advocate and director of the Alfred Washburn Center, a homeless day center in Pensacola. Kimberl and many others delivered people to the shelters in the increasingly difficult weather.

At the end of the day, it was the bus drivers and local working class residents who came to the aid of endangered people to bring them to safety.

Hurricane housing, transportation crises

Many people have lost their homes forever, but hundreds more are now homeless after the slumlords of a low-income complex, Forest Creek Apartments, evicted every single tenant four days after the hurricane. These residents are mostly Black and have been displaced en masse by slumlords using the damage to the apartment

as an excuse to kick out residents under the guise of “repairing the apartments.” Workers World Party-Central Gulf Coast is actively involved in the struggle against the evictions.

Another damaging outcome of Hurricane Sally was the destruction of the Three Mile Bridge over Pensacola Bay, which connects Pensacola to neighboring Gulf Breeze and Pensacola Beach, where thousands are employed and live.

Three Mile Bridge was under construction at the time of the hurricane. But barges around the bridge, on which construction equipment sat, had not been properly secured by the barge company. One barge slammed into the side of Three Mile Bridge, causing a complete collapse of a section and rendering the bridge unusable.

Thousands of people now cannot get to work between Pensacola and the beach towns except by an alternate route that adds 25 miles and 30 minutes to their commute. But many cannot afford the additional cost of gas for this route. Because of the corner-cutting and negligence of a construction company, thousands of jobs of low-wage workers are now at stake. There is currently no estimate as to when the bridge will be repaired — effectively making these workers jobless indefinitely.

Capitalism has once again proven its uselessness. Its unplanned economy has left thousands displaced, jobless and homeless in the wake of a hurricane. Residents are told to fend for themselves — or if they’re lucky, go to a shelter, if they can find a way! There they can survive off of crackers and room temperature water for a few days, not knowing if their home is still standing, wondering where to go from there.

Many are forced to return to dilapidated homes overwhelmed with water damage as well as electrical and structural destruction. They have no way to pay for repairs, which will be overpriced after this catastrophe. Credit cards are quickly maxed out, money runs out paying for estimates on repairs and the repairs themselves — and then the house still has leaks in the roof or mold in the walls. There seems to be no end to the horrors of capitalism.

Only there is. The solution to disaster capitalism is socialism, a planned economy that is people-based, people-maintained and people-guided.

Socialism vs. disaster capitalism

A lot of the hurricanes that hit the U.S. also hit Cuba. Yet revolutionary Cuba has bounced back from every hurricane with very little damage and even fewer casualties. The lives of people in Cuba following a hurricane do not come to a screeching halt, as do many in the U.S.

Why is this? Cuba has a planned economy! Cuba has a socialist-directed economy. Cuba puts the needs of the masses over everything else. There are no for-profit industries that overcharge people in need, that take advantage of and exploit the masses. There is no denial of the climate change that is directly influencing the increasingly violent storms around the world.

Hurricane defense in Cuba is viewed as a defense against climate change and as protection of the people. And it works!

It will take something other than texts to your local U.S. senator for a socialist revolution to take place in this capitalist, imperialist, neocolonialist country. It will take the unwavering unity of the oppressed and the workers to rise up and carry out a protracted struggle against the ruling class.

A socialist revolution can lead to a system that is based on the needs of the masses, centered around and led by the most oppressed, and maintained through a planned economy. That is how we fight and that is how we win. And when we fight and when we win, no obstacle, even a catastrophic hurricane, can stop us.

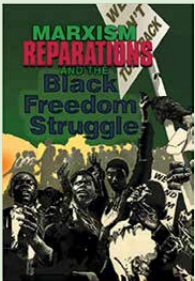
Devin C is a non-binary transgender advocate and member of Workers World Party — Central Gulf Coast. They are the president of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative), a transgender advocacy organization in northwest Florida.

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

Edited by Monica Moorehead

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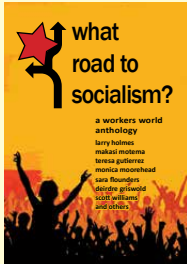


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Beyond the election

CLASS STRUGGLE

Continued from page 1

legal abortion and same-sex marriage and would deny tens of millions of people health care.

Not to mention Trump’s calamitous handling of the COVID-19 crisis.

Tens of millions of people, out of fury, fear or both, will vote for Biden because they can’t stand Trump’s racist rants or because they need to survive. That is their right.

Defend the right to vote

And this right must be defended. Trump’s threat to prevent large sections of the population from voting — or from having their votes count — also makes this election unique. His threat exceeds the “usual” voter suppression of people once

imprisoned and the historical voter suppression depriving African Americans and other people of color of their right to vote. It is a frontal attack on democratic rights.

With this attack, the Trump gang has turned the election into an arena of class struggle. Those who fight racism and all forms of discrimination must now assist in defense of the right to vote, even though the choice remains between two representatives of the capitalist ruling class.

The first line of defense would be to prevent the pro-Trump fascist gangs, including the police forces, from blocking people who want to vote. This voter suppression will be aimed mainly at Black, Latinx and other sectors of the population they believe will vote against Trump. The second line of defense is to assure the accurate count of the votes, half of which will

arrive by mail or early voting. The third line is to stop a pro-Trump coup d’état.

That sectors of organized labor are discussing the possibility of a general strike to stop a Trump coup is an encouraging sign of incipient mass struggle. The multinational millions, led by African Americans, who took to the streets to fight police killings and first put Trump on the defensive, have also shouted “Shut it down!”

A mobilization joining these progressive forces in action can mark the birth of an instrument of united class struggle.

The polls — which of course give no guarantee — put the incumbent administration, itself riven with contradictions and infected with the coronavirus as well as with its own corruption and incompetence — behind in the total popular vote

by even more than in 2016. That’s why Trump has threatened voter suppression to try to steal the election using the biased and undemocratic Electoral College.

Whatever the outcome, the election can only open the next phase of struggle. More important than the exact vote will be whatever working-class unity can be mobilized in the streets and the workplaces. This can start by defending the right to vote, and develop to confront capitalist domination of the economy and of all society. It will have to counter whichever capitalist party takes office.

Let the referendum against racism mark the beginning of a struggle for socialism, which is the only way to a future for the broad working class, in the U.S. and around the world. □

Lost children — and the U.S. empire

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has had to reveal that it “lost track” of the families of 545 children forcibly separated from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border. The migrant children are still suffering, alone and parentless, in the U.S. An Oct. 21 court filing by the American Civil Liberties Union says their deported parents are unreachable, many having fled into hiding in their countries of origin.

The “caging” of migrant families and unaccompanied minors in temporary shelters began during the Obama administration. White supremacist Trump then put in place a “zero-tolerance” attack on immigrants, including ordering parent-child separations at the U.S. border in 2017-2018. This was a deliberate measure to make families fearful of seeking shelter in the U.S. as they fled home countries devastated by military and economic wars fomented by U.S. imperialism.

The number of migrant children in U.S. custody has increased again to about 1,900 in October, up from 800 a few months ago,

as more unaccompanied children cross the border, sent out alone by their desperate families. (Washington Post, Oct. 23)

Meanwhile, the Trump administration’s assault on migrant children continues, this time with pressure on scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to agree to a dangerous and court-prohibited plan to use border hotels to hold children before deporting them. CDC officials have resisted, saying this puts the children at serious health risk during the coronavirus pandemic.

Widespread horror at the earlier parent-child separations sparked massive demonstrations in the U.S. These protests must continue — consistently and forcefully — against all U.S. racist policies that attack, undermine and attempt to destroy the familial and cultural structures that are essential to oppressed peoples’ survival and resistance.

Caging continues U.S. racist history

Such racist attacks have been part of the strategy of building the U.S. empire

from its beginning.

In 1779, during the American Revolutionary War, Gen. George Washington (the “Father of His Country”) ordered a scorched-earth military campaign against Haudenosaunee nations in the Mohawk Valley of what is now New York state. “Revolutionary” soldiers leveled villages and orchards, burned winter crops and drove Indigenous families into exile, where many starved to death.

The history of the U.S. is bloodied with massacres of unarmed Indigenous people, often children and elderly, as U.S. armies implemented the “Manifest Destiny” of U.S. expansion through theft of Indigenous lands across the continent.

And legal enslavement of African people in the U.S. from its beginning, with the designation of human beings as chattel property to be bought and sold, meant centuries of forcible breaking up of Black family units and relationships. This buying-and-selling assault on the social structures of Black people was the original foundation of current U.S. capitalist

economic wealth.

The very structure of the U.S. as an imperialist country continues to rest on systematic and legally “justified” white supremacist attacks on communities of Indigenous, Black and Brown people. These attacks continue — from the separation of migrant Latinx families at the U.S. border, to attacks on Indigenous communities defending land and water rights, to police murders and wholesale imprisonment of impoverished oppressed communities.

A transitional program aimed at the end of capitalism in the U.S. and the beginning of socialism means fighting to abolish ICE and the Border Patrol, fighting to abolish the police and close the prisons, and fighting to end white supremacy.

Communist revolutionaries aim to put an end forever to these racist attacks on oppressed communities and families — including the migrant children still waiting to be reunited with their parents. □

Gov’t of France uses tragedy to attack Muslim community

By G. Dunkel

On Oct. 16, Samuel Paty, a teacher in France, was brutally killed as he left his school. Paty had just finished teaching a nationally required class discussing “freedom of speech” as it related to the case of Charlie Hebdo magazine five years ago. At that time, a terrorist attack on the magazine killed many of those responsible for caricatures of Mohammad. A group of Muslims, accused of collaborating with the Charlie Hebdo attackers, are currently on trial.

Soon after Paty was killed, police fatally shot his killer, who had declared he was acting to protect Islam.

Despite his statement, Muslims living in France rejected his act. Dalil Boubakeur, rector of the Grand Mosque of Paris, called on imams throughout France to condemn terrorism during their Friday sermons.

Groups of Islamic organizations also took part in large national demonstrations on Oct. 20 to condemn terrorism, support teachers — who say they feel under attack — and honor the memory of Paty. (Europe 1, Oct. 23)

President Emmanuel Macron’s center-right government, which has brutally used police against Yellow Vest demonstrators and striking workers, tried to take advantage of the revulsion against Paty’s murder to make political gains. Minister of Interior Gérald Darmanin, proclaiming that France was at war, began a series of sharp actions against

Muslims and their organizations in France.

In effect, he declared war on France’s six million Muslims and on anti-imperialist organizations.

The government claims it is confronting a “terrorist murder conspiracy” and thus is justified in conducting hundreds of raids against individuals and organizations, banning Muslim aid organizations and deporting hundreds of foreigners it deems “suspicious.”

Darmanin labeled the Collective against Islamophobia in France (CCIF) “an enemy of the republic.” The CCIF began its struggle against anti-Muslim bigotry in 2004. It has helped thousands of French Muslims fight discrimination and has been able to mobilize big demonstrations.

The regime also banned the pro-Palestinian group Collectif Cheikh Yassine. Anti-communists tagged the

French Communist Party’s headquarters with a sign calling the PCF “collaborators in terrorism.” Some prominent right-wing French politicians tweeted out the pictures.

The racist, anti-Muslim crusade that French President Emmanuel Macron and his On the March party are currently whipping up is also part of his rivalry with Marine Le Pen’s openly racist and anti-Muslim National Rally party. Le Pen finished second to Macron in the last presidential election and is his most likely rival in the 2022 presidential race.

In France, a smaller proportion of the population say they practice religion than in any other European country. French laws and traditions encourage “laïcité,” which means a secular, non-religious approach to politics and to most French institutions, like schools.

But Muslims, from former colonies of French imperialism in North or West Africa, now make up nearly 10 percent of the people living in France and the largest number who practice any religion.

While workers and farmers in France won secularism as a progressive demand of revolutions and class struggles, in the current situation the Macron government is wielding secularism against a section of the population that has been systematically oppressed. Interior Minister Darmanin even went on television to denounce grocery stores having sections for halal food, saying he was shocked at stores selling “communitarian,” or Muslim-oriented, food. □



Protest against Samuel Paty’s murder used to attack Islam.

Ecuador

After last year’s ‘Great Uprising,’ the struggle continues

By Michael Otto Ibarra, Ecuador

October 23 — Ecuador’s regime mobilized all 47,000 national police to repress massive worker-student demonstrations in Quito, the capital, and 17 provinces of the country on Oct. 22.

Only four days earlier, the government of right-wing President Lenin Moreno was forced to concede to Andrés Arauz the right to represent the Citizen Revolution (RC) as its candidate for president in the upcoming election in February 2021. Arauz and running mate Carlos Rabascall will campaign under the sign of UNES, “Union for Hope.”

Memories of last October’s mass uprising, sparked by a massive revolt against a price hike for gasoline, haunt the Moreno regime. The revolt brought Indigenous organizations, such as the CONAIE, into the streets along with people from every sector including the Citizens’ Revolution, the party of former President Rafael Correa.

By dividing Correa’s movement from that of the Indigenous peoples, Moreno was able to stop the massive rebellion with minimal concessions. This year, the mobilization of the entire police force shows how much the Moreno regime fears a popular uprising. What he fears most is an uprising that unites his two main enemies: the progressive RC and the Indigenous peoples.

Since Moreno abandoned his electoral promises three years ago, he and the powerful interests he serves have desperately tried to annihilate the RC. So far they have failed. Instead, his policies of privatization and the government’s inept and criminal handling of the COVID-19 crisis have alienated greater and greater sections of the population.

In contrast, Andrés Arauz has been welcomed by the people wherever he goes. The latest polls indicate that Arauz will defeat right-wing banker Guillermo Lasso on the first ballot, just as Luis Arce won in Bolivia. In both Ecuador and Bolivia, however, the real struggles for power are in the streets.

The popular struggle in Ecuador against the wealthy and their U.S. imperialist backers takes place in the midst of similar struggles in South America. Evo Morales’ Movement for Socialism just won a landslide presidential election in Bolivia. Mass protests continue in Chile and Colombia despite repression. The struggles in this hemisphere against Washington’s domination are all connected.

October 2019

The rebellion of October 2019, known as the “Great Uprising,” brought hundreds of thousands of people into action. In a graphically illustrated book, Indigenous leader Leonidas Iza calls the uprising a school for revolution. The book, “Outburst: Rebellion of October in

Ecuador,” has lessons for the new generation of revolutionaries.

But last October’s intense class struggle was set when CONAIE leaders made a controversial agreement to take amnesty for demonstrators and other key demands off the table during negotiations to end the insurrection.

The government conceded a little, withdrawing Decree 883, which had ended fuel subsidies and hiked the price of auto and truck fuel. Having stopped the uprising, the regime continued its relentless dismantling of the Citizen Revolution.

During the time the Citizen Revolution ruled Ecuador — the “Decade Won” between 2007 and 2017 — almost 2 million of Ecuador’s 17 million people escaped poverty as the Correa government sought to reduce inequality.

Following U.S. orders, Moreno’s regime expelled 382 Cuban doctors last November in a health care coup d’état.

Moreno has used the coronavirus pandemic as a shield to hijack the country and to prevent the people from stopping his onslaught of privatization and termination of vital social services. His courts have summoned 670 Indigenous people to appear, and leaders still face charges of instigating sabotage, kidnapping and terrorism.

During the past year of ruthless neoliberal adjustment, the government has brutally attacked the people with IMF austerity packages, tax cuts for the rich and laws that make flexible exploited labor. These measures have caused a million layoffs, beginning in the public sector, and health care cuts that have led to 35,870 deaths related to the pandemic.

Fraud involving hospitals and personal protective equipment was too big of a scandal for the corporate media to hide. Neoliberal restructuring — privatization, removal of work rules — has left 23% of Ecuadorian workers underemployed — with almost half employed in the informal economy. Life for these workers is precarious.

Support for gov’t plummets

Despite its enormous stolen wealth and control of the mass media and the manipulated “justice” system, the right wing is losing the battle to recolonize the minds of the people. An example is the mass hostility toward Minister of Government María Paula Romo, the civilian commander of the National Police who have killed 11 people. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), 19 demonstrators lost an eye due to the impact of tear gas canisters and other “nonlethal” projectiles.

Called the “minister of death,” Romo released a book in August in which she claimed last October’s mass demonstrations put Ecuadorian democracy under attack. Romo was forced to apologize for her brutal repression of a Sept. 15 peaceful protest by hundreds of postgraduate

doctors who were not paid for their front-line work during the pandemic.

The ironic title of Romo’s hateful anti-Correa propaganda piece, “October: Democracy Under Attack,” promotes the Big Lie. The reality is Ecuadorians live in a dictatorship — a police state that protects the interests of the International Monetary Fund and the capitalist Ecuadorian oligarchy.

In September, doctors and teachers protested because they hadn’t been paid for months on end. The Minister of the Environment resigned when 398 of his workers were fired. And \$1.7 million was allocated to the National Police to purchase armored vehicles for riot control, because the government expects a much bigger insurrection if the people’s vote is fraudulently stolen.

Many ignored an early warning from Vice President Jorge Glas, for which he was sequestered like former Brazilian President Lula da Silva via legal coup and incarcerated three years ago. Glas was Ecuador’s first target of “lawfare,” which can be defined as the combined media and judicial extermination of political enemies.

RC spokesperson Paola Pabón

The RC’s elected Prefect of Pichincha Province Paola Pabón was arrested Oct. 14, 2019, and imprisoned with others charged with participating in a conspiracy between leaders of RC and Venezuela’s President Nicolás Maduro to violently overthrow the government.

Pabón said that when Moreno denounced the alleged “plan” in a live broadcast on Oct. 7, flanked by his uniformed generals, “I knew they were coming for us.” (youtube, Oct. 14) The absurd charges were later reduced to “rebellion,” because only the cops were armed. Pabón thanked the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights for her release in December after 72 days in prison, because IACHR had granted measures of protection in favor of the alleged co-conspirators.

The RC leader talked with Contexto y Acción about lawfare and political annihilation. She said, “They are breaking us economically. Do you know what so many lawyers’ defenses cost? Our accounts and salaries are frozen,” she said. “To break us personally is a way of breaking the legacy.” (ctxt.es, Sept. 7)

Pabón said, “This undoubtedly has a format that goes beyond the limits of our countries. There are transnational interests here that were uncomfortable with our progressive regimes in the face of global geopolitics, and U.S. embassies have played a role in these processes that we have called the ‘New Condor Plan.’

[Operation Condor was the 1970s CIA plan for violent repression of left sectors in the Southern Hemisphere. Military dictatorships were coordinated by hi-tech telecommunications and the School of the Americas in Panama.]

“So, it is no longer the case of Paola Pabón, it is no longer the case of Lula, it is no longer the case of Rafael Correa. The problem is in reality that we are no longer dealing with democratic states.”

A xenophobic “false flag” arrest of



Trans demonstrators lead Oct. 22 protest in Quito. Is a new uprising ahead?

17 Venezuelan taxi drivers, who were supposedly engaged in a plot to assassinate Moreno, would coincide with the allegations against President Nicolás Maduro.

In August 2019, in an interview with elestado.net, Pabón said, “I think that there are two experiences that are the key to understanding [the struggle in Venezuela]: the popular organization to defend their political process and also [...] institutional strength to defend the sovereignty, not submitting to the political and financial hegemonies. The cost is high. But at the same time we must reconsider, when the aggression and the blocking cease, how can we guarantee an economic process that avoids the dependence on the external sector and on oil. What Nicolás Maduro has had to experience has been cruel, but he could not have resisted as he does without a strong and well articulated popular political organization. ...”

The leaders of RC and the left will need to reevaluate their fraught relations in this critical moment. Correísmo is not in and of itself “the left.” The fragmented left is much more complex. Many believe that CONAIE and the Correistas must unite to end neoliberalism. And it may not be possible for the Ecuadorian people to defeat neoliberalism on their own.

Indigenous spokesperson Leonidas Iza

In Ecuador, all issues are Indigenous issues. Leonidas Iza, president of the Cotopaxi Indigenous and Farmers Movement (MICC), said in a May 24 Youtube interview: “One of the historic questions in Ecuador is that so far we have not been able to change the type of politics we have. It always remains under individual leadership ... the caudillismo [strongman paradigm] does not allow for the possibility of making collective decisions with the Ecuadorian people.

“Imagine political programs that we the people have really dreamed of on the road to transformation. [Our programs] have fallen by the wayside, because they are always surrounded by the large economic groups or by political interest groups that finally end up turning the wheel and driving for their interests.”

Many in Ecuador would agree that without the unity of all progressives it will be hard to stop the establishment of a much more fascist, racist, sexist, xenophobic and regionalist neoliberal authoritarian regime. In other words we need an accord which includes the Indigenous peoples and the people: Afro-descendants, students, workers, ecologists, feminists, LGBTQ+, socialists and communists.

For a source in Spanish giving background on October 2019, see “Outburst: Rebellion of October in Ecuador” (tinyurl.com/y4dj4u4u)



Larry Holmes

¿Respuesta a la amenaza fascista? ¡Lucha de la clase trabajadora!

Los siguientes son comentarios ligeramente editados del seminario web del 8 de octubre del Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero los recientes debates electorales, con el primer secretario del WWP, Larry Holmes, en la ciudad de Nueva York, la principal camarada Teresa Gutiérrez en San Antonio y el camarada moderador Ted Kelly en Filadelfia. Sintonice los jueves a las 8 p.m. ET / 5 p.m. PT para un análisis revolucionario de los miembros de WWP y nuestros aliados. Los videos de WWP están disponibles en youtube.com/wwpvideo.

Ted Kelly: Hemos hablado sobre el complot fascista en Michigan [donde las milicias neofascistas planeaban secuestrar y matar a la gobernadora demócrata Gretchen Whitmer]. Hemos hablado sobre el creciente peligro contra nuestros hermanos, hermanas y hermanos trans, contra las decenas de miles de inmigrantes en los campos de concentración de los Estados Unidos que están sufriendo de todo, desde la muerte en la pandemia hasta las esterilizaciones forzadas. Entonces, ¿es Trump fascista? Y si es fascista, ¿no deberíamos unirnos a los demócratas para detener a Trump? ¿Qué hacemos si Trump no cede? O peor aún, ¿qué hacemos si Trump gana? Estas son preguntas que creo que están en la mente de la clase trabajadora en este momento.



Teresa Gutierrez

Teresa Gutierrez: Creo que Trump es un fascista. Si camina como un pato y habla como un pato, es un pato. Pero no vivimos bajo un sistema fascista. Esa es la diferencia. Si viviéramos bajo el fascismo, no podríamos tener esta reunión. Están ocurriendo acciones fascistas, eso es seguro. Pero todavía no vivimos bajo el fascismo. Creo que hay un elemento de la clase dominante que se está preparando para el fascismo. No lo sabemos, no estamos en las salas de juntas donde podemos escuchar estas cosas. Pero tenemos que estar preparados para cualquier cosa.

Ésa es una de las razones por las que es tan importante ser internacionalista revolucionario. Hay muchos activistas que no ven el hecho de que muchos de nuestros problemas podrían resolverse quitando dinero al Pentágono. El dinero que se destina a la “defensa” y la guerra de Estados Unidos podría usarse para el alivio de COVID, para el cuidado de la salud, para la educación, etc.

Pero no se puede rechazar por voto al

imperialismo; no se puede rechazar por voto al fascismo. Hay que arrancarlo de raíz y eso es una lucha intensa. He tenido el privilegio de viajar y conocer a muchos activistas y revolucionarios de todo el mundo, específicamente de América Latina. Allí tenemos hermanas, hermanos y familiares que han experimentado el fascismo, como nuestros camaradas chilenos del presidente Augusto Pinochet, que era fascista. Dozenas de miles de trabajadores fueron masacrados en Chile.

Aprendemos de estos camaradas lo que se necesita para permanecer en la lucha día tras día, noche tras noche. Por eso tenemos que ser internacionalistas, porque nuestros camaradas, hermanas, hermanos y familiares de todo el mundo han experimentado el brazo desnudo del capitalismo. Tienen mucho que enseñarnos y hay mucho que podemos aprender de ellos.

Por eso tenemos que plantear siempre que no hay fronteras en la lucha obrera. No solo nos preocupamos por la clase trabajadora en los Estados Unidos. Nos preocupamos por cada trabajador. Especialmente porque el imperialismo estadounidense ha creado las condiciones que han obligado a las personas a abandonar sus países de origen.

El internacionalismo tiene que formar parte de nuestro programa en los próximos días. Es un principio del trabajo del Partido y tiene que ser un principio del movimiento.

Larry Holmes: Desde una perspectiva marxista, el fascismo se ve de manera diferente dependiendo de quién eres en la sociedad. Para nosotros, ¿qué es un fascista? Un fascista es alguien que es violentamente racista, violentamente homofóbico, violentamente antiobrero, quiere aplastar a los sindicatos, quiere aplastar a los oprimidos, aplastar a los trabajadores migrantes, llevar a cabo guerras tanto más allá de las fronteras de los Estados Unidos como dentro de la frontera.

Desde el punto de vista de la burguesía, dirán que un fascista es alguien que quiere negar la democracia burguesa y ser un tirano, ser un líder autoritario, destituir al Congreso y emitir edictos, etc.

Lo que los marxistas entienden es que el fascismo no proviene de alguna ideología. No nace en la cabeza de las personas, ni el ultrarreaccionario ni el estado policial forman parte de él.

El fascismo es una respuesta extrema y desesperada a una enorme crisis en el sistema capitalista. Y la burguesía se discute entre sí: “¿Cómo vamos a salvar nuestro sistema?” Algunos dirán: “Bueno, esto es tan malo que la única forma en que podemos salvar el sistema es movilizar alguna base social — la pequeña burguesía, los propietarios de pequeñas empresas — y tratar de infectar a algunos de la clase trabajadora con racismo, homofobia y sexismo”. . Regresar al pasado cuando los oprimidos ni siquiera podían levantar la cabeza. Y hacer lo que sea necesario

para aplastar a los sindicatos y aplastar a la clase trabajadora y dividirla”.

El fascismo para la burguesía es una solución extrema y dolorosa a lo que ellos creen que es una terrible crisis existencial para su sistema, como que si no hacen algo extremo, ¡podrían perder su sistema!

Creo que toda la burguesía es como Trump. Es solo que Trump lo muestra. Pero la burguesía dice las mismas cosas. Toda la mierda sexista y abominable que dice, lo dicen entre ellos. Trump se da cuenta de que hay un sector al que puede llegar, que puede movilizar sobre esa base, siendo “honesto” y llamando a atacar a los oprimidos.

La pregunta es ¿qué tan profundo es su apoyo en la clase dominante? Y tiene algo de apoyo en la clase dominante. ¿Y cuál es la fuerza de su base social? Creo que estas cosas estarán en juego en las próximas semanas, a principios de noviembre y más allá.

¿Quieres luchar contra estos fascistas? Los demócratas te llevarán a la destrucción. Si se depende de los demócratas, los fascistas ganarán. De hecho, uno tiene que preocuparse si Biden gana y su victoria es aceptada, lo cual es cuestionable, ¿qué hará este movimiento fascista en respuesta a él? ¿Crees que se van a quedar callados? ¿Crees que solo dirán “Perdimos”? ¿Crees que de eso se tratará el 2021?

Necesitamos la verdadera estrategia para derrotar al fascismo que se está organizando sobre la base de la clase trabajadora para la lucha de clases de masas, ¡los trabajadores y los oprimidos contra el sistema capitalista! Primero, de formas pequeñas, desiguales, según el lugar donde se encuentre, pero a medida que pasa el tiempo, de formas más grandes y coordinadas. Esta es la lección que aprendieron compañeros y dirigentes del movimiento comunista durante la década de 1930 en Italia, en Alemania, en España y de diferentes maneras, en Chile y en Grecia, no solo ahora sino hace cincuenta años. Los grandes ejemplos históricos son Hitler y Mussolini, pero de ninguna manera son los únicos ejemplos.

Este es un punto de inflexión para quienes se ven a sí mismos como socialistas radicales, comunistas, anticapitalistas, que se orientan hacia la clase trabajadora. Se trata de la importancia de la lucha de clases y la necesidad de hacer lo que debemos hacer para organizar nuestra clase. Eso es mucho trabajo. Pero, ¿quién dijo que algo importante no sería un gran desafío y mucho trabajo?

Esa comprensión y el compromiso de hacer ese trabajo es lo que te convierte en un revolucionario. No solo una buena retórica o un buen discurso. En una crisis, ¿estás listo para entrar? ¿Estás listo para hacer lo que tienes que hacer? ¿Estás listo para dedicar tiempo, hacer los sacrificios?

Teresa Gutierrez: Sobre el fascismo, la gente debería tomar nota de esto: el camarada Fidel Castro siempre dijo que el fascismo no vendría a Estados Unidos.

Y yo le creo. Tiene que ver con la gente de este país. Odiamos a este gobierno. Odiamos este sistema. Pero amamos a nuestra clase trabajadora. Y nuestra clase trabajadora no permitirá el fascismo en este país. Fidel lo creía y yo estoy de acuerdo con él.

Los jóvenes saben que no hay esperanza bajo el capitalismo, y por eso que un sector de ellos estaba a favor de Bernie Sanders, que era un abierto “socialista”. Si el Partido Demócrata quisiera un símbolo de cambio, lo habrían elegido. (Sí, es un anciano blanco; ¡parece que no pueden escapar de eso!) Pero estaba a favor de Medicare para todos, y elegirlo habría sido un guiño de ojo a la base del partido que se estaba organizando y enojado con el capitalismo.

Pero los demócratas no hicieron eso y no pudieron hacerlo porque están demasiado en deuda con Wall Street. El Partido Demócrata puede parecer diferente: puede parecer más negro, más moreno, más sindicado, pero, al igual que el Partido Republicano, está en deuda con Wall Street.

Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero entiende que hay activistas por los derechos de los inmigrantes y activistas sindicales que tienen un poco de esperanza de que si votan por Biden, este presidente fascista, sexista y supremacista blanco será derrotado. Y debería ser derrotado. No estamos reñidos con esos sentimientos entre las personas que luchan por su comunidad. No estamos reñidos con ellos.

Si el Partido Republicano y Trump han pedido a la policía y a las milicias de derecha que salgan a aterrorizar a los votantes en las urnas, creo que deberíamos estar ahí para defender a las personas negras y morenas que pueden estar votando. ¡Imagina! Los republicanos piden que la misma policía que mató a Breonna Taylor vaya a “monitorear” los sitios de votación, muchos de los cuales ya han sido cerrados por los republicanos.

Defendemos el derecho de voto de los negros y morenos y de la clase trabajadora.

Estoy orgulloso de nuestro Partido por asumir esa posición. Pero del 3 de noviembre al 20 de enero podría ser una tormenta de nieve en este país. Conocemos la arrogancia de Trump. Sabemos que los demócratas no son capaces de luchar contra él. Y sabemos que la única transferencia de poder que debe preocuparnos es la transferencia de poder al pueblo.

Entonces, el 4 de noviembre, el día después de las elecciones, tenemos que salir a las calles para organizarnos para el alivio de COVID, detener el terror policial y todas las demás demandas de liberación de los trabajadores y los oprimidos. Ese es nuestro programa. Eso es por lo que estamos luchando. Les pedimos a todos que se unan a nosotros en esta lucha. □