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 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

Continued on page 10
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)

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 mess.

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.

Several, 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 98 local, regional and national labor unions declared that the labor movement must organize work stoppages and general strikes against racism and police terror. (www.labordforblackslives.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 move 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 a 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 its 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 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 Grevenn, Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead, Betsy 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 multiracial, multigender, and multigenerational 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 onrecurring quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on immigrants, misogyny, LGBTQ+ 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, and an economic mess.

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Freedom struggle on the move in North Carolina

By Calvin Deutsch
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 monitor voters of color.

But across the state, time after time, masses of people have easily overpowered the right far 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 secretly packed with followers of the white supremacist House of White Power— 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, hobbling the process to make the process less accessible and to invalidate existing ballots, have been the tool of 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 margin of votes that 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 hybrid 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.

This party’s latest determination to advance the interests of white supremacy in North Carolina, has been under siege through nominating democratic candidates 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.

A movement has been growing since the Rodney King decision in 1991, decided to take this position.

On Oct. 21, the MLK Labor Council, which covers King County around and including Seattle, resolved to “work with all 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 and nonviolent action including protests and work-stoppages by coordinating peacekeepers and other necessary trainings.” AFSCME Local 904, representing state workers, had passed a resolution two days earlier urging the Council to take this position.

On an October 20 webinar to discuss the general strike strategy, former 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 AFL-CIO Council and the Machinists Union appealed to members to sign the pledge.

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Trumka has not yet taken a position on the general strike, 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 industry or a country—are

Continued on page 4
Birmingham, Ala.

Libraries gutted, police budget increased

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

Protestors arrived at the Birmingham City Council meeting sept. 27 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 above waved their chits and immediately authorized busily gutting social services necessary for the city's people.

While what asked 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 other 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."

Momentum builds for general strike if Trump attempts coup

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 Global Headquarters on Goose Island in Chicago. Participants are encouraged to wear Halloween costumes and bring Mars candy for distribution.

“Mars Wrigley workers are joining a broader struggle of workers and customers united against and were fired need to be reinstated with back pay,” Carden said. “We also want Mars Wrigley, DHL, XPO, temporary 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 to support 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.”

What is not needed is an increase in an increasingly reactionary police state. The current Birmingham budget is a prime example of how liberalization, no matter how “progressive” its mask, is ultimately an exploitative capitalist machine.

Meanwhile, Birmingham library workers and community allies continue to organize in order to unfund the police! Re-fund the libraries!

Devin C, a transgender Marxist organizaing fire fighters, is a founding member of the Socialist Trans Initiative and a founder of the Workers World Party–Central Gulf Coast branch.
March for missing and murdered Indigenous people and their families

By Jim McPhan
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 sheriff’s on the Muckleshoot Reservation near Seattle.

The multinational march demanded justice for Muckleshoot, 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 Institute’s 2018 report, there were 5,748 reports of missing U.S. and Alaskan Native women and girls in 2016.

Rally leader Rosanne White pointed out that Seattle has the highest rate of this anti-Indigenous violence in the U.S. Donnny Stevenson, Vice-Chair of the Muckleshoot Tribe, told the crowd the longer it is okay for our people to be marginalized. We come from a culture of warriors. We are standing up to say enough is enough!”

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 were photographed attending a rally in Waukegan, Ill. where police shot Jacob Blake in the back seven times on Aug. 23, 2020.

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 extremist 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 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.”

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 follow- ing 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.”

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 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 back pocket).

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.
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 any criminal charges, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections gave Lamas the superintendent job at SCI Rockview by a sexual predator inmate.

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 extraordi- nary 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 will ask 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, write to Eric Wolfgang / Miley S. Fletcher, BZ-2221 SCI Forest and email re-crpadocsecretary@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 patreon.com/wwp to donate today!

Self-defense is a right!
California protest demands democracy

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 Courthouse in support of two women who defended themselves and their families against abusive partners.

The domestic violence survivors, formerly incarcerated people, protested before the court on going to jail for defending themselves and their families against abusive partners, and Michaela Bowers, a Black woman who was 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 her mom being so strong and how they feel Howard should not be incarcerated for defending herself and her daughters against physical abuse.

A statement by Michaela’s’ son Orlynn Bailey was also read during the rally. Though two hung juries have produced mis- trials in Bowers’ case, Bailey noted, “The prosecutor rests 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 joint statement by both women’s groups 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. “We are here to win justice for Michaela Howard and Wendy Bowers. ... Remember that Black Lives Matter includes Black lives who are domestic violence victims.”

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 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 tinylurl.com/9ynls24s and the press release at tinylurl.com/yyqzppgb 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.

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

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 prisoner and 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)

Quid 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—is the move to treat pain 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. They admitted that their company pushed 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, the company can be said to have fuelled 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.

Purdue Pharma—which they own—and into their family trusts. This action, which they called ethical, means 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 $1 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 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.

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Maher al-Akhras with his daughter.

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.

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

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 prisoner and 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)

Quid 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.

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In the midst of losing money because of the set

1. RELEASE THEM ALL!

2. FREE ACCESS TO PHONE CALLS, MAIL AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

3. END PRE-TRIAL DETENTION

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

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

6. STOP ALL PRISON TRANSFERS, CELL Extractions and SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

7. HUMANE AND LIVABLE CONDITION FOR ALL

8. HEALTHY AND FREE MEALS FOR ALL

9. WORK FURLough WITH FULL PAY

10. ALLOW THE FORMATION OF PRISONER UnIONS

Workers Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party @pwsctp

Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party

Workers.org

Oct. 29, 2020    Page 7

By Christian Noakes

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Evo Morales after the four-year disaster caused by the government. Despite its flip-flopping from giving a forceful show of support to gather under the ideas of General Perón - sive celebration of the Peronist loyalty longer stay in power in a representative zation, education and mobilization are on politics. From this it can understand tions that the conservative and fascist cease, it only paused for a moment and organizations and its intellectuals them- States, a country where popular and social lapsed without thought to the United President Allende in 1973 to the victory of some time ago, this time the people of in the region starting in 2015. As we said the neoliberal night that was reinstalled awakening was taking place, following in Chile a massive demonstration com -victory for the Latin American region. To the 0.001 percent: You are the deputies and business sectors intend against social justice, eliminating labor government's neoliberal policies. The call exposed the need to combat the policies, 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] Bolivar pointed out that “The homeland is America.” Sometimes the daily nature of our problems and the particularity of our context makes us believe in a difference between Latin Americans and Caribbean forms part of a whole that struggles and dreams of a bet- ter world, each one in their country, in their conditions and their context. We must keep in mind that as Bolivar 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 oth- ers 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 through- out this hemisphere.” 

A simultaneous struggle in the whole of this hemisphere

By Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein

Workers World received this article from its author, written Oct. 22 by a Venezuelan political analyst and essayist. Translation by John Catalfoutto.

During the final months of last year, I wrote two articles in succes- sive months under the titles “Latin America is on fire” and “Some reflec- tions on current 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 these readers responded by saying that the mass participation that progress- ive governments had generated in the region in the first 15 years of this century would be in accordance with the need for a new leadership that will carry the struggle to higher levels until we achieve indepen- dence and democratic 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 optimistic, 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 events that inaugurated this previous weekend that influenced this transfor- mation 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 surren- dered, but only its elites, who have col- lapsed without the United States, a country where popular and social organizations and its intellectuals them- selves 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 condi- tions 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 – organi- zation, education and mobilization are the needed and adequate instruments to build a fascist block that can no longer stay in power in a representative democracy.

Argentina

Last weekend began with the mas- sive celebration of the Peronist loyalty day in Argentina on Oct. 17. The limita- tions imposed by the pandemic did not prevent that wide range of citizens who gather under the ideas of General Perón from sponsoring 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 without taking Peronism into account. There are neoliberal and right-wing cur- rents within Peronism that differ little from Macri’s government, and that are not the least bit reluctant to kick the boots of the empire. Still I am left with the words of the Argentine writer Santiago Gomboa, 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 commemo- rated 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 contin- uity to Pinochet’s legacy, all under the watchful eye of the armed forces and secu- rity forces, also modeled by the dictator.

The gigantic fighting spirit of the Chilean people is present today when, gath- ering 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 organi- zation — still fragile — but which has man- aged 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.]

Ecuador

Also last Sunday, Oct. 18, the magis- trates of Ecuador’s Constituent 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 elec- tions of February 2021. This ruling, which cannot be appealed, allows the participa- tion of both candidates in next year’s elec- tions, overcoming a new antidemocratic maneuver attempted by Lenin Moreno’s government in alliance with the tradi- tional 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 elec- toral 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 over- whelming 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, Tuesday, Wednesday, three days after the event, while last year, when 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 oth- ers 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 through- out this hemisphere.”

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 of them • External tensions: strengths and setbacks • To the 0.001 percent: You are cheering too soon
By Devin C. Crewe

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’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 Florida the Panhandle,” the hurricane Center said. The following days, residents of Mexico and the trade uninsured disasters was written in the aftermath of Hurricane Sally’s earlier devastating flood at the Panhandle.

Hurricane Sally made landfall in Gulf Shores on Sept. 16 at a Category 2 storm. But meteorologists allowed 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, 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. Sheriff’s department staff drove around, 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 homeless people from homeless camps and taking them to the shelter. Our public transportation, the city busses, which are constantly at risk of being defunded, are also picking up people.

“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 lines and tree limbs were downed.

“I can’t even imagine what it was like living through Ivan,” one Pensacola resident told Workers World as she received information about hurricane Sally. “I don’t know if I would have been able to sleep through that.”

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan hit Pensacola, Ala., earlier in the historic 2020 climate crisis storm season.

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 now more than 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, every day 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 Kimber, homeless rights advocate and director of the Alfred Washburn Center, a homeless day center in Pensacola. Kimber and many others delivered people to the shelters in the increasingly difficult weather circumstances.

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 hundreds of residents. Kimber and many others delivered people to the shelters in the increasingly difficult weather circumstances.

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 hundreds of residents. Kimber and many others delivered people to the shelters in the increasingly difficult weather circumstances.

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

Another disaster 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 braced by the large company. They 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! 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 over- whelmed with water damage and the 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-managed 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. After Hurricane Ivan, Cuba has a socialist-directed economy. Cuba puts the needs of the masses over everything else. There are no for-profit shelters, no need for that. People can 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 Sally was written in the aftermath of Hurricane Sally’s earlier devastating flood at the Panhandle.

Devin C is a non-binary transgender advocate and organizer of the Socialist Trans Iniative, a transgender advocacy organization in northwest Florida.
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 rant 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 pre-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 pre-Trump coup d’état.

That sector of organized labor is discussing the possibility of a general strike to stop a Trump coup is an encouraging sign of inter-imperialist mass struggle among multinational nations, 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 incompe-tence—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’t possibly be fair.

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 developing to confront capitalistic domination of the economy and indeed all. It will only open the next phase of struggle.

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 State Department revealed that 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. Trump then put in place a “zero-tolerance” attack on in-migrants, 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.

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 parental 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 burned winter lodges 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 breakup 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 systems of discrimination and on anti-imperialist organizations.

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 justifying in conducting hundreds of raids against individuals and organizations, banning Muslim aid organizations and deporting hundreds of foreigners it deems “suspicious.”

Daminigan 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 “collaboration with terrorism.” Communist 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. 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 France imperialism in North or West Africa, now make up nearly 10 percent of the people living in France and are 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.

**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 the prophet. 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 a large national demonstration on Oct. 20 to denounce terrorism, support teachers — who say they feel under attack — and honor the memory of Paty.

“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.”}

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**Continued from page 1**

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

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The reality is that Ecuadorians live in a dictatorship, a police state that protects the interests of the International Monetary Fund and the capitalist Ecuadorian oligarchy.

Ecuador

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 resign when Andres Arauz, the presidential candidate of the Citizens for Revolution (RC) as its candidate for president in the upcoming election in February 2021. Arauz’s electoral campaign 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 providing Correa’s movement from that of the Indigenous peoples, Moreno was able to get his dictatorship and a rebellion with minimal concessions. This year, the mobilization of the people 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.

Sorcer Moreno abdicated his electoral promises three years ago, he and the powerful International Monetary Fund (IMF) have desperately tried to annihilate the RC.

So far they have failed. Instead, his brutal repression 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 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 region, against Washington’s domination, are all connected.

October 2019


But last October’s intense class struggle set the stage for today’s far more controversial agreement to take amnesty for demonstrators and other key demands off the table during negotiations to end the insurrection on Oct. 7.

The government conceded a little, withdrawing Decree 88, which had ended food subsidies and cut the price of bus 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 582 Cuban doctors last November in a health care coup d’état.

Moreno has used the coronavirus pandemic as a shield to close the borders of the country and to prevent the people from stopping his onslaught of privatization and termination of vital social services. His courts have summarily dissolved Indigenous peoples as a group of people, 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 exploitation possible for the rich and laws in the public sector, and health care cuts that have led to 35,870 deaths related to the pandemic.

Framed 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 25% of Ecuadorian workers unemployed – with almost half employed in the informal economy. Life for these workers is precarious.

Support for gov’t plumpets

Despite its enormous stolen wealth and control of the mass media and the huge amount of repressed hostility from within the so-called “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 has killed 11 people. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 32 of 39 demonstrators lost an eye due to the impact of tear gas canisters and other tear gas devices.

Called the “minister of death,” Romo was forced to apologize for his brutal repression of a Sept. 15 peaceful protest by hundreds of prisoners who were not paid for their front-line work during the pandemic.

The ironic title of Romero’s hateful anti-Correa propaganda piece, “Oct. 7: Democracy Under Attack,” promotes The Big Lie. The reality is that 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, while the government expects a much bigger insurrection if the people’s vote is fraudulently stolen.

Pabón revealed an early warning from Vice President Jorge Glas, for which he was sequestered like former Brazilian President Luís 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 on 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 dismissed the alleged “plan” in a live broadcast on Oct. 7, flanked by his uniformed generals, “I knew they were coming” (youtube, Oct. 14). The charges were later reduced to “rebellion,” because only the cops were armed.

Pabón thanked the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights for her release in December after 72 days in prison, because IACHR had granted measures of protection in favor of the alleged conspirators.

The RC leader talked with Contexto y Acción about lawfare and political anni-

hilation. 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 leg-

acy.” (ctxt.es, Sept. 7)

Pabón said, “This undoubtedly has a financial and political significance. What Nicolás Maduro has had to experi-

ence has been created to distract the people from the real issues. Leonidas Iza, president of the Cotopaxi Indigenous and Farmers Union, expressed the sentiment: “We are a new generation against the hereditary in-

stitutions to defend the interests of the people. There 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 17 Venezuelan taxi-drivers, who were supposedly engaged in a plot to assassinate Moreno, would coincide with the allega-

tions against President Nicolás Maduro.

In August 2019, in an interview with elestado, 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 polit-

ical and financial hegemonies. The cost is high. But at the same time we must re-

consider, when the aggression and the blocking cease, how can we guarantee an economic process that avoids the depen-

dence on the external sector and on oil. What Nicolás Maduro has had to experi-

ence has been 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 Leónidas Iza

In Ecuador, all issues are Indigenous issues. Leónidas Iza, president of the Cotopaxi Indigenous and Farmers Movement (MICH), 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 interests or regional groups that finally end up turning the wheel and driv-

ing 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, xeno-

phobic and regionalist neoliberal author-

itarian regime. In other words we need an accord which includes the Indigenous peoples and the people: Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, LGBT+, socialists and communists.

For a source in Spanish giving background on October 2019, see “Outburst: Rebellion of October in Ecuador” (tinyurl.com/yadi4qau)
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 modernoator do Ted Kelly en Filadelfia. Sintonice las juntas a las 8 a.m. ET / 5 p.m. PT para un análisis revolucionario de los miembros de WWP y nuestros aliados. Los vídeos de WWP están disponibles en youtube.com/wwprovido.

Ted Kelly: Hemos hablado sobre el complot fascista en Michigan [donde las milicias neonazis 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, ¿debemos 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.

Larry Holmes: Desde una perspectiva marxista, el fascismo se ve de diferente manera dependiendo de quién eres en la sociedad. Para nosotros, ¿es Trump un fascista? Un fascista es alguien que es violentamente antiobrero, quiere aplastar a los sindicatos, quiere aplastar a los oprimidos, va a aterrorizar a los votantes y no pudieran hacerlo porque están demasiado en deuda con Wall Street. El Partido Demócrata puede parecer diferente: puede parecer más negro, más moderno, más sindicalizado, 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 acti- vistas sindicales que tienen un poco de esperanza de que sí voten por Biden, este presidente fascista, sexistas y supreroma fascista blanco será derrotado. Y deberá ser derrotado. No estamos reñidos con esos sentimientos entre las personas que hablan 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 aterrorizan a los votantes en las urnas, creo que deberíamos estar ahí para defender a las personas negras, al igual que en este país. Fidel lo creía y yo estoy de acuerdo con él.

Los jóvenes saben que no hay espe- ranza bajo el capitalismo, y por eso que un sector de ellos está a favor de Bernie Sanders, que era un abogado “socialista”. Si el Partido Demócrata quisiera un sim- bolo de cambio, lo habrían elegido. (Sí, es un anciano blanco; ¡parece que no pue- den escoger de eso!) Pero estaba a favor de Medicare para todos, y elegiría habría sido un guión de odio 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 moderno, más sindicalizado, pero, al igual que el Partido Republicano, está en deuda con Wall Street.

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