

10,000 protesters demand 'Clean Energy Revolution!'



By CHRISTINE MARIE

"People gonna rise like the water," the most poignant of the new songs of the climate justice movement, makes a strong prediction. And the potential breadth and power of that people was on display in a new way on July 24, as close to 10,000 marchers took to the streets on a sweltering day (97 degrees) before the opening of the Democratic Party Convention in Philadelphia.

The march began at City Hall after a press conference anchored by front-line activists from communities devastated by extreme extraction from Pennsylvania to Honduras. There Teresa Hill of ACTION United condemned the plans to turn Philadelphia into a major "energy hub" for fracked gas, whose methane emissions are alone capable of taking us to a climate tipping point. Laura Zuñiga Cáceres, daughter of the slain Honduran environmental and Lenca warrior Berta Cáceres, closed with the now immortal words of her famous mother, "Wake up Humanity! Time is running out!"

While there have been larger marches, the July 24 "March for a Clean Energy Revolution" focused more pointedly on the immediate dangers of the fracking process and the massive infrastructure that is being constructed around the United States for fracked gas, which is obstructing the effort for an emergency transition to renewable energy. The unequivocal de-

mands for a ban on fracking, keeping fossil fuels in the ground, and a quick and just transition to 100% renewable energy represent the vanguard of the movement and the terms on which the growing movement will be most effectively mobilized.

The insistence that both political parties were failing humanity on the climate front came through loud and clear. Mark Schlosberg, the organizing director for Food & Water Watch, the group that leads Americans Against Fracking and brought 900 national and local groups to endorse the march, built the demonstration by forcefully arguing, "both parties' platforms fall far short of addressing the climate emergency we are in."

These principled demands and the unwillingness to subordinate the movement to the Democratic Party agenda brought together a large number of activists from front-line communities in a display of determination to take back the earth from those who would sacrifice them and the land for profit. Participants included those struggling against the assault on their health in the Pennsylvania gas fields; those living next to the radioactive tailings ponds of the Southwest and the potential storage sites at Seneca Falls, N.Y.; and those from the urban centers where parked oil trains deprive their children of breath.

At the final rally, in front of Independence Hall, Teresa Hill of the Green Justice Philadelphia Coalition pointed out that the local refineries are located exclusively in economically depressed neighborhoods:

(Photo) Participants in the July 24 Clean Energy Revolution March included biologist and author Sandra Steingraber (ctr.), of Food & Water Watch.

"And they think that people of color and low-income people won't fight back. But as we said to the CEO of this oil refinery, who still hopes to *expand* the refinery, we are saying NO! ... We will fight! Fight for our right to breathe!" Marchers reflected the understanding of the enormity of this struggle in chants such as "Hydo-fracking: Shut it Down!; Oil Pipelines: Shut it Down!; the Whole Damn System: Shut it Down!"

One of the constituencies that were most warmly welcomed was that of public health advocates and workers. The organizer of the health contingent, Karuna Jagger of Breast Cancer Action, rallied the crowd at the final rally when she said, "We are marching to demand an end to fracking and other dangerous drilling practices that rely on toxic chemicals and are linked to an array of deadly diseases and disorders."

The devastating impact of the fracking on working-class lives is now documented in rising number of white papers. Sandra Steingraber, the science adviser to Food & Water Watch, wrote in the wake of the march that the number of premature births—premature birth being the number one predictor of infant mortality—rose 40% if one was forced by economic

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Charges dismissed against Baltimore killer cops

By MARK UGOLINI

On July 27, Baltimore prosecutors dropped remaining charges against three cops awaiting trial for involvement in the death of Freddie Gray. Gray, a 25-year-old Black youth, died of injuries sustained while in police custody a week following his arrest on April 12, 2015.

Officers Garret Miller, William Porter, and Sgt. Alicia White were initially charged with multiple offenses including involuntary manslaughter, assault, misconduct in office and reckless endangerment. All were scheduled for trial in the coming months.

The three other officers charged in the case—Edward Nero, Caesar Goodson Jr., and Lt Brian Rice—were acquitted by a judge of all charges at bench trials earlier this year.

Gray's death was due to a fatal spinal cord injury. Video and eyewitness accounts indicate that at least part of the injury likely occurred during a beating cops inflicted on Gray prior to being thrown into a police van.

Then, without calling for medical assistance—despite Gray's pleas to be taken to the hospital—Gray was subjected to a brutal and sadistic treatment well known to other victims of cop violence—what Baltimore police jokingly refer to a "rough ride" through the streets in the police van. This high-speed bumpy ride with erratic turns occurred while Gray was injured, hand-



cuffed, and unsecured by a seat belt.

The trial of William Porter ended with a hung jury in December. Porter was the cop who went to "check on" Gray during the "rough ride" but made no attempt to secure him in his seat with a seat belt or call an ambulance for medical assistance.

Marilyn J. Mosby, the prosecutor in the case, said, "We do not believe Freddie Gray killed himself," and called the decision to drop the charges "agonizing." In a statement, she angrily blamed the police department for lack of cooperation

and sabotage of prosecution efforts.

The July 27 *New York Times* reports that in Gray's Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood "residents unanimously agreed with Ms. Mosby's assertion that Mr. Gray's death was a homicide. Alethea Booze, 72, said she had witnessed the arrest. 'He wasn't hollering until two officers put that knee in his back and he was screaming,' Ms. Booze said. 'Everybody was screaming, 'Call the ambulance, call the ambulance,' and the officers didn't do anything.'"

The outrage over the death of Freddy

Gray sparked massive peaceful protests against cop violence in Baltimore and cities around the country. Black Lives Matter, a leading organizer of these protests, spoke out against this injustice. Baltimore BLM leader DeRay Mckesson told *The Times*: "The dismissals are a reminder that the laws, practices, and policies justify the actions of the police at all costs. Freddie Gray should be alive today and someone should be held accountable for his death."

Jeff Mackler, Socialist Action candidate for U.S. president, condemned the so-called U.S. "justice" system: "This whole sequence of acquittals and dismissals takes criminal Baltimore cops off the hook and is outrageous. Freddie Gray was brutalized by cops before he got into the police van, then tortured

with a 'rough ride' by cops who made no effort whatsoever to provide him the medical attention he so desperately needed.

"This is further proof that capitalism, a system that breeds racism and profits from it, will not provide justice without massive struggles of working people and oppressed communities around the country. We call for an immediate end to cop violence in minority and working-class communities. Prosecute and jail killer cops!"

Socialist Action: Where we stand

Socialist Action is a national organization of activists committed to the emancipation of workers and the oppressed. We strive to revitalize the antiwar, environmental, labor, anti-racist, feminist, student, and other social movements with a mass-action perspective. Recognizing the divisions that exist on the left and within the workers' movement, we seek to form united front type organizations around specific issues where various groups have agreement. In this way we seek to maximize our impact and demonstrate the power and effectiveness of mass action.

In the process we hope to bring activists together from different backgrounds into a revolutionary workers' party that can successfully challenge the wealthy elite—whose profit-driven system is driving down living standards and threatens all life on this planet.

We are active partisans of the working class and believe in the need for independent working-class politics—not alliances with the bosses' parties. That is why we call for workers in the U.S. to break from the Democratic and Republican parties to build a Labor Party based on the trade unions.

We support the struggles of those who are specially oppressed under capitalism—women, LGBT people, national minorities, etc. We support the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, including Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. We are internationalists, and hold that workers of one country have more in common with workers of another than with their own nation's capitalist class. We seek to link struggles across national boundaries, and to build an international revolutionary movement that will facilitate the sharing of experiences and political lessons. That is why we maintain fraternal relations with the Fourth International.

Socialist Action believes that the capitalist state and its institutions are instruments of the ruling class, and that therefore they cannot be used as tools of the working class but have to be smashed. That is why we fight for revolution. When we fight for specific reforms, we do so with the understanding that in the final analysis real social change can only come about with the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of a workers' government, and the fight for socialism. Our ultimate goal is a truly democratic, environmentally sustainable, and egalitarian society organized to satisfy human needs rather than corporate greed. We invite you to join us in the struggle to make the world a better place!

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Platform of the 2016 Socialist Action Campaign

1) Abolish the U.S. war machine now!

- Bring all troops home now! Close all U.S. foreign and domestic military bases. End all military spending now – not a penny for war!
- U.S. out of the Middle East!
- No to U.S. overt and covert wars, drone wars, oil wars, privatized death squad wars, sanction and embargo wars or wars for the re-colonization of Africa.
- Abolish NATO and all other imperialist military alliances!
- Self-determination for all oppressed nations and peoples.
- Self-determination for Puerto Rico. No to imperialist-imposed austerity in Puerto Rico. Abolish Puerto Rico's debt to U.S. banks and speculating hedge funds.
- Self-determination for Palestine! End all U.S. aid to apartheid Israel. For a democratic, secular Palestine with the right of all Palestinian refugees to return. Solidarity with Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns.
- U.S. hands off the Cuban Revolution.

2) Immediate conversion to 100% renewable power: sun, wind, geothermal and micro-hydro! Keep all fossil fuels in the ground!

- Guarantee jobs at top union wages for all fossil fuel workers during and after a just and rapid transition to clean and renewable energy systems.
- Immediate conversion to carbon-sequestering agro-ecological farming.
- Immediate halt to expansion of all new fossil fuel extraction and transportation projects
- 100% tax on all fossil fuel corporations. Zero profits for the polluters.
- Close down and dismantle the fossil fuel industry, from extraction on up.
- Dramatically expand mass transit – for the least mobile first; reverse urban sprawl and unsustainable development patterns. Remediate and expand our forests, wetlands and natural eco-systems.
- For an immediate cleanup of Native American, African American and Latino communities that have been victimized by environmental racism.
- No to nuclear weapons. Close all nuclear power plants now.
- U.S. reparations and zero interest loans to neo-colonial and island nations suffering from climate change due to past practices of the major industrial and imperialist nations.

3) Jobs for all at top union wages!

- Shorten the work week by 25 percent with no cut in pay so that everyone can work and enjoy more free time. Modern technology should benefit the 99 percent not the boss class one percent.
- Create a massive public works program to provide jobs at top union wages through building homes, converting to 100% renewable power, expanding mass public transportation, constructing hospitals, parks, schools, and other social necessities. Priority should be given to projects where they are most needed—especially in Black and Latino communities.
- Raise all pensions, Social Security benefits, unemployment and disability compensation, welfare, and veterans benefits to top union wage scales and protect them with cost-of-living escalator provisions.
- For \$15 and a union now as a first short step on the road to a much higher minimum wage to sustain a quality standard of living.

4) Quality health care, education and housing for all as basic rights!

- Close down the profit-gauging “healthcare” insurance companies and establish a single-payer system in rapid transition to a universal and free national system, that is, socialized medicine. Use the savings towards provision of quality health care for all and retraining insurance workers for new jobs.
- Free quality public education at all levels from the cradle to the grave.
- Cancel all student and medical debt.
- Void all drug patents to cut public costs to a minimum.
- End all home foreclosures. Establish and expand rent-control to combat the mass-displacement of poor and oppressed communities through gentrification.
- Massive government funding to repair, modern-



Karen SCHRAUFNAGEL for VP!

Karen Schraufnagel is a member of Socialist Action's National Committee and organizer of its Twin Cities branch. She is a founder of Minnesotans Against Islamophobia, and is active in the anti-Zionist Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement and the animal rights, antiwar, and environmental movements.

ize, and build homes, starting where need is greatest.

5) End the racist, slave labor for profit prison-industrial complex!

- Build schools, not jails.
- Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Oscar Lopez Rivera and all political prisoners.
- Abolish the racist and classist death penalty.
- Prosecute and jail killer cops
- De-criminalize all drugs. Take the profit out of drug trafficking. End the racist “war on drugs.” Massive investment in restorative justice, mental health, and drug treatment services.
- Rapidly empty the prisons while immediately organizing quality, humane rehabilitation facilities to rebuild ruined lives.
- End “zero tolerance” school policies. Cops out of the schools.
- Abolish racist “money ball” extortion schemes including defendant-funded court proceedings, mandatory court surcharges, fines and fees.
- Abolish all racist exclusionary election laws.
- For Black and Latino-organized control of Black and Latino communities. Police out of Black and Latino neighborhoods.
- Reparations for African-American, Puerto-Rican, and Mexican-American communities in compensation for wealth stolen over centuries.

6) Immediate amnesty, legalization and equal rights for all immigrants. End the racist, Islamophobic “War on Terror!”

- End all deportations now! Repeal all anti-immigrant legislation. Close down ICE
- Demilitarize and open the borders.
- No to the surveillance, persecution, demonization and government-orchestrated frame-up trials in Muslim communities in the U.S. and worldwide.

7) Abolish all racist, sexist and homophobic discriminatory laws and practices!

- Equal pay for equal work.
- Affirmative action with quotas to remedy past discrimination and prevent future discrimination.
- To assure economic independence for women, government-financed, free 24-hour child-care centers and maternity leave with full pay. Guarantee the right of every mother to raise a healthy child.
- End violence against women and the LGBTQI community.
- Repeal the Hyde Amendment. Free unrestricted abortion on demand.
- Reproductive justice now. End coercive contraception projects targeting low income women and women in prison. End the criminalization of pregnant women.
- Free Purvi Patel.
- Ban workplace and housing discrimination and adoption restrictions based on sexual orientation or gender identity
- Outlaw discrimination by businesses or employees based on sexual preference or gender identity
- Repeal all local, state and federal discriminatory laws against LGBTQI people.



Jeff MACKLER for U.S. President!

Jeff Mackler, National Secretary of Socialist Action, is a former teachers union elected officer, a veteran opponent of U.S. wars and interventions, and a leading environmental and social justice activist. He is a founder of the Northern California Climate Mobilization, director of the Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, and the author and editor of 24 books and pamphlets on labor and social history, politics, and economics.

- Quality safe housing for youth and workers facing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

8) Defend civil liberties! Abolish the “national security” state!

- End all government surveillance. Abolish the National Security Administration and all other secret and repressive government spy agencies.
- Repeal the Patriot Act and all other anti-democratic legislation.
- End all restrictions on the right to organize, assemble, and protest.
- Stop the persecution of all whistle blowers like Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden!

9) For a democratically-planned socialist economy in which the banks, basic industries and all natural resources are the collective property of working people – the 99 percent – and democratically operated for human betterment not the individual profits of the one percent

- Tax the rich and their corporations, not working people! End corporate bailouts! [Note:\$32 trillion in corporate bailouts was granted to corporate America in the years immediately following the 2008 economic crash. See Project Censored Report. For every dollar paid in taxes by U.S. corporations \$27 is granted back in government subsidies. See: 2016 Oxfam Report.]
- Close all tax loopholes for the rich. Nationalize all illegally “offshored” corporate profits.
- For a steeply-graduated progressive income tax!
- 100% tax on all incomes over \$300,000. Zero percent tax on all incomes under \$50,000.
- Low interest, long-term government loans to protect small farmers gouged by banks and food trusts.
- End all military and military-related spending: Use the money saved towards a massive public works program and to fulfill the demands above.

10) For working class political action independent of and against the twin parties of capitalism

- For a united, democratic and fighting labor movement that champions the economic, social and political interests of all working people.
- For a Labor Party based on a revitalized, democratic, and expanded labor movement allied with the oppressed and exploited.
- Organize the unorganized 90 percent! Repeal Taft Hartley and all other anti-union legislation.
- Open the corporate books for union inspection!

For a workers government and a fully democratic society of, by and for working people and the oppressed! Abolish capitalism! For socialism! ■



Fight for 15 convention expands movement's reach

By ANN MONTAGUE

In Richmond, Va., on Aug. 12-13, the new chapter of the Fight for 15 and a Union movement once again expanded its reach and broadened its scope. The first Fight for 15 and a Union Convention was called to bring together low-wage workers from across the country to energize the Fight for 15 and embark on a plan of uniting fast-food workers with 20 different industries—including not only home care, child care, and airport workers but also cell phone companies, truck companies, nail salons, and universities.

This movement of low-wage workers has grown like wildfire since the first Fast Food Strike on Nov. 29, 2012, when over 100 workers walked off the job in New York City. On April 4, 2013, over 200 went on strike in New York City. For a while, every couple of weeks, another city saw strikes—including Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Milwaukee, and Seattle. On July 29 of that year, all those cities went on strike again—adding Flint and Kansas City. They went out again on Dec. 6.

On Sept. 4, 2014, another national strike took place in 150 cities. This time thousands of home-care workers showed up. The first actions of civil disobedience started at that time. Over 400 workers were arrested—including workers in Ferguson, Missouri and New York City—for protesting in solidarity with workers a month after the police shooting of Michael Brown. On Dec. 4, 2014, thousands of workers in 190 cities were joined by caregivers, airport workers, and workers at discount and convenient stores. The chant of “15 and a union” was joined with “Hands up, don’t shoot” and “I can’t breathe.” Black Lives Matter endorsed those strikes.

On April 15, 2015, tens of thousands of fast-food workers in more than 500 cities took to the streets in what has been described as the largest protest by low-wage workers in U.S. history.

The Richmond convention was the first time that



workers who had been organizing and fighting for a minimum wage of \$15 could really observe how diverse and widespread the movement has become in four years. One long-time rank-and-file activist from Oregon commented, “I was greatly impressed by the number of different industries represented at the convention as well as the diversity and youth of its participants. I don’t think I have ever been to a large gathering with such a strong, militant, and justifiably angry tone.”

Terrance Wise, a McDonald’s worker and strike organizer in Kansas City, spoke about being part of labor history: “When we get up at 6:00 and prepare for another strike we are not doing anything new. Workers have done this before us and we always need to remember them. We are carrying on a tradition.” He also talked about the legacy of slavery and how the first minimum wage law and the right to organize exempt-

ed farm workers and people who worked in people’s homes. “This was not an accident, this was a decision, a decision to keep Black and Brown and Latino workers oppressed.”

Naquasia Le Grande, one of the fast-food workers in New York who went on the first strike in 2012, seemed to echo the same sentiments as Fight For 15 workers did this weekend about politicians. In an interview with *The Progressive*, she was asked what it meant to her when presidential candidates joined protests: “Let’s just say these candidates have a way of using their words to get what they want. We as fast-food workers reverse it on them. We are using our voice to get what we want. You are not going to get votes just because you are out here with us. That is why we do not endorse anybody.”

A resolution was passed to pressure all candidates in the upcoming elections on the \$15 minimum wage issue. Also, the call went out for a National Day of Action at all state capitols on Sept. 12, as well as a call for direct action and demonstrations at all presidential debates. The participants called specifically for actions in the Southern states and to win the right for all working people to unite in unions without fear of retaliation, and “reverse the tide of anti-union attacks by corporate interests.” This was a call for a national mobilization in an election year that was aimed directly against the two capitalist parties.

In addition, there was a general call for mass fast-food strikes in Richmond (which happened before the march), aligned with the overall move towards organizing in the Southern states for 15 and a Union.

8000 join the march

The highlight of the convention was the march on the second day. Richmond was selected as the site of the convention because it was the capital of the Confederacy and displays “the enduring effects of racist policies that are holding back low-paid workers of color today.”

The day started with McDonald’s workers walking off their jobs to find strong expressions of solidarity from the 8000 workers who marched under the banner of \$15/Freedom/Union. The Rev. William Barber, president of the North Carolina NAACP, spoke under the shadow of the statue of Robert E. Lee to the marchers at the end of the march, “In the South there has been a strategy to play poor whites against Blacks and Latinos. What we are doing is coming together to say that won’t work any more. When we organize the South we will change the nation ... it took 400 years to go from zero wage to 7.25. We cannot wait any longer.”

The clearest statement that defined the next stage of the Fight for 15 and a Union was from Lauralyn, a home-care worker in Richmond. “Both my parents were union workers,” she said. “They marched in Washington with Dr. King. The reason that we are in Richmond today is that it is the former capital of the Confederacy. A place where people were thought of as less. The work they did was thought of as less. We always did the grunt work for low wages.

“White babies drank from our breast, but we could not drink from their fountains. White families relied on us to care for their elderly parents, but we could not ride the bus with them. We cleaned their schools, but our children could not attend. We cooked their food, but we couldn’t sit at their table. Well now we say, ‘Enough is enough!’”

Honeywell workers locked out

By MARK UGOLINI

CHICAGO—In South Bend, Ind., on June 30 over 200 members of UAW Local 9, family members, and supporters protested outside the main gate of Honeywell’s aerospace plant to demand the company immediately end its imposed lock-out and other union-busting activities. The protest included supporters from Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and Steelworkers and Laborers unions.

The *South Bend Tribune* reports: “They chanted and shouted and even sang ‘Solidarity Forever’ ... to express their aggravation with being off their jobs for the past eight weeks.” The newspaper noted that picketing workers were “testy” as vans transported scabs out the plant and past their protest at the end of a shift.

The plant, located in South Bend’s west side, employs a total of 773 people and makes airplane brakes and wheels. During the lock-out, the plant continues to operate with salaried employees and scabs from Strom Engineering, a “per-



sonnel management firm” that features “Industrial Strike Staffing” as one of its primary services.

The 317 members of Local 9 were locked out on May 9 after the union’s five-year contract had expired on May

3, and members voted to reject Honeywell’s new contract offer. The company is attempting to impose a major increase in workers’ share of health-care benefit cost and severe cuts to seniority rights, including extending the new hire proba-

tionary period from 60 to 270 days. Local 9 members voted to reject the company’s new contract proposal by a 9 to 1 margin.

Since May 3, locked-out workers have been without paychecks, and due to Indiana anti-labor legislation have also been denied unemployment benefits. According to state laws, cases that involve a labor dispute (including lockouts) need to be reviewed by an administrative law judge before benefits are disbursed. In this case, the review has been pending for over eight weeks, and there is no indication that unemployment benefits will be provided any time soon.

According to the Local 9 website, “picketing at the plant has continued throughout July with the support of other union workers. Financial contributions have come in from supporters around the country, especially from UAW regions and locals around the country.”

Donations and solidarity messages are welcomed and can be sent to UAW Local 9, 740 Michigan St., South Bend, IN 46601.

(Photo) Locked-out Honeywell workers greet a van full of scabs as it drives through the plant gates.

Anti-racist fighters mobilize against killer cops

By JEFF MACKLER

Jeff Mackler is the 2016 presidential candidate of Socialist Action.

Five hundred and seventy one and counting have been killed by U.S. cops this past year, an all-time high in recent decades, according to figures posted in the U.S. edition of the British-based *Guardian* newspaper.* The majority murdered were Black, Latino/Hispanic, and Native American. One hundred thirty eight were Black. For the year 2012, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement's research put the figure of Blacks murdered by cops and vigilantes at 313, averaging one every 28 hours.

These are curious facts, which need elucidation. In only a handful of these murders was a cop convicted or even charged. "Self defense" was the time-honored defense of the police. They were said to have feared for their lives when "confronted" by Black people who were almost always unarmed.

In the few instances when charges were brought against these institutionally sanctioned killers, compliant racist judges and consciously hapless prosecutors conspired to convince carefully selected juries, usually stricken of Black members, to find the killer cops innocent. This is the same scenario that is unfolding in Baltimore today, as Freddie Grey's murderers are acquitted one by one. The unspoken conclusion in all these "legal" proceedings was that the Blacks got what they deserved.

This is the rule, not the exception, in racist America. In many respects, it is not much different than in the days when lynching Blacks was unofficially sanctioned, or in slavery times when vigilante slave catchers were legally assigned the role of cops to capture, kidnap, and return the slave master's "property." As in the epoch when tens of millions were sacrificed aboard the slave ships and on the slave plantations, the ruling one percent today subordinates anything human to their lust for profits. Their greed is epitomized by the school-to-privatized-for-profit, virtually slave-labor, prison-industrial complex.

Oscar Grant, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Walter Scott, Kajieme Powell, Michael Brown, and now Baton Rouge's Alton Sterling and Minnesota's Philando Castile have been added to this endless list of capitalism's near-daily executed victims. In the old days only the eyes of the Klan killers and sometimes cheering racist crowds, amongst whom were elected police officials and politicians, witnessed the murders in mass orchestrated public lynching rallies. Today, however, the murders of Sterling and Castile have been caught on video for the world to see.



These horrors have stirred a new generation into action, marching down the streets to the applause and approval of millions. They march to mark the victims of police violence and to demand a new society. Increasing numbers—especially young people—doubt that the present capitalist minority-controlled order can ever be reformed. The previously forbidden word, *socialism*, is on the lips of millions.

Today, protesters march in the hundreds and thousands, at times courageously facing lines of police in battle gear. Tomorrow, as the protesters gain in experience and political clarity, they will be the critical organizers of millions in massive actions that are capable of engaging the broad working class and of closing down the nation's factories and cities. The movement that they lead will challenge the capitalist system at its roots, and will embark on the construction of a new social order free from the inherent horrors of minority ruling-class domination.

Meanwhile, President Obama, undoubtedly aware of the revealing three-year Center for Policing Equity study of 18,000 use-of-force incidents that has just been released, was compelled to note the "racial disparities in the criminal justice system." This think tank's investigation found that "the use of force was disproportionately high for African-Americans," almost quadruple the use of force against whites.

But Obama's Warsaw speech on July 8 focused on the "vicious, calculated, despicable attack on law enforcement" in Dallas. Within minutes of the Dallas shooting

murder of five Dallas cops and the wounding of seven others by a deranged Black Afghan War veteran, few were shocked at the police-fabricated story that was almost immediately broadcast across the country. We were told that this had been an orchestrated "triangulated" assassination, initiated as a revenge killing by several individuals.

Indeed, four "suspects" were almost immediately arrested, including Mark Hughes, whose brother was scheduled to speak at the mass anti-police violence march of thousands of predominately Black protesters. Hughes' photo was broadcast front and center in newscasts worldwide.

Within days the police conspiracy lie evaporated and all suspects were released. The sole Black shooter, Micah Johnson, who tragically and mistakenly believed that racist murders in America could be avenged by killing cops, was murdered by a remote-control military-grade 500 pound guided robot that ignited a bomb that ended his life—the first robot ever deployed in the U.S. and yet another example of the ongoing militarization of U.S. police and other repressive forces.

The Socialist Action 2016 Campaign joins the protesters in the streets in demanding: Jail killer cops! Police out of the Black community! No to racial profiling! End stop and frisk! Black lives matter! ■

*The *Guardian* based its report on partial records of U.S. police departments across the country. The vast majority don't report figures to federal agencies.

Chicago teachers, parents demand school funding

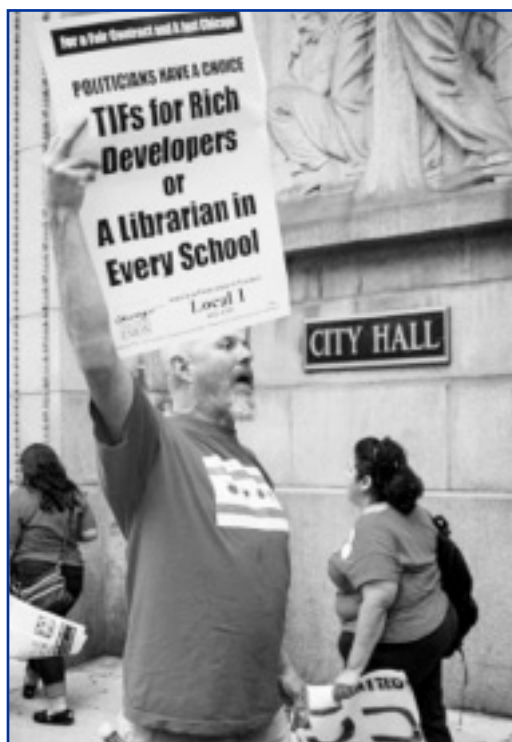
By MARK UGOLINI

CHICAGO – On July 20 over 200 Chicago teachers, students and parents gathered at City Hall to demand full funding for public schools and an elected school board. Protesters crowded inside City Hall's second-floor lobby for a press conference with a host of local media. Later, they formed a militant picket line outside the entrance, chanting slogans opposing recent budget decisions that further limit school funding.

Earlier in the week, the Chicago School Board announced budgets for individual schools, and funding is just over \$4000 per student, an amount the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) and community representatives consider grossly inadequate.

Parents 4 Teachers representative Chirag Mehta said his organization, the CTU, and others "are calling on [Mayor] Rahm Emanuel to immediately release the hundreds of millions of dollars in the TIF accounts and send it to the schools where it belongs." Tax increment financing (TIF) accounts, funded from local property taxes, are a tool used by the city of Chicago to promote business investment.

The Cook County clerk announced a day earlier that it would release \$461 million in TIF revenue to the city of Chicago, a 24% increase over the previous year. CTU and community supporters want these



funds immediately allocated to financially strapped public schools, but Rahm Emanuel and local politicians of both capitalist parties have other priorities.

Mollison Elementary's school council president Jeanette Taylor pointed to the need for an elected representative school board. A parent organizer for the Kenwood Oakland Community Organiza-

tion on Chicago's south side, Taylor stressed the critical importance of community-based decision making.

"The people who sit at 42 W. Madison St. [office of the appointed school board] don't have a clue what's going on at 44th Street and King Drive." Taylor told the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Taylor's 12-year-old son attends Mollison. A special needs student, his education suffers because the school can't afford a specially designed classroom. "It's overcrowded" said Taylor. "We don't even have a parent room. I feel like a voiceless mother." According to the *Sun-Times*, Taylor estimates that budget cuts will result in reduction of four teachers and two support staff at Mollison.

Meanwhile, negotiations with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) on a new contract with the CTU have made little progress since they began over 20 months ago. The union has been without a contract since June 30, 2015, and its membership has already authorized a strike, which could take place at the start of the fall term in September.

In a letter to the *Chicago Tribune* on July 17, Karen Lewis, CTU president, outlined the current situation facing teachers: "Since 2010, CTU has given up more than

\$2 billion in lost pay raises, employer contributions to our pension fund and thousands of teacher layoffs. Our contributions this year, through the loss of pay, benefits and laid-off teachers and paraprofessionals, stretch well into nine figures...

"CTU's Big Bargaining Team was prepared to agree to a contract in July 2015. Forrest Claypool [appointed CPS "CEO"] torpedoed that agreement.

"CTU's Big Bargaining Team continues to have major concerns about the district's refusal to limit class sizes (Chicago has some of the largest in the state), and its inability to enforce provisions that would limit unnecessary charter school proliferation.

"We remain steadfast in our pursuit of the schools Chicago's students deserve and equity for students across Illinois. We reserve the right to use whatever tools are required for that job."

Jeff Mackler, Socialist Action candidate for U.S. president, commented in a statement last week: "Teachers, parents, and students are in the cross-hairs of a vicious austerity offensive and a manufactured 'budget crisis.' We support immediate and full funding for Chicago public schools. Balance the budget on the backs of local billionaires like Ken Griffin and his friends, their big corporations, their tax-advantaged hedge funds, and their tax-free off-shore accounts." ■

Is Hillary Clinton a fascist?



By JEFF MACKLER

Jeff Mackler is Socialist Action's candidate for U.S. president.

Let's assume for the moment that a fascist is an extremely evil person. Indeed, in the muck and mire of U.S. politics today the term fascist has been used quite often, but virtually always to describe the "extremely evil" candidates of the Republican Party. Recall Richard Nixon and Barry Goldwater or the Bush family candidates, or Republican right-wingers Pat Buchanan and Newt Gingrich. Very evil men to be sure! All warmongers, mostly racist, anti-union, witch hunters, anti-immigrant, some (like Buchanan) even flirting with more overt neo-fascist and anti-Semitic rhetorical outbursts.

With regard to all these "fascists," or "neo-fascists," or "wannabe fascists," liberals and many progressives sternly warned that we had to vote Democrat to keep them from running the country. They invariably and dutifully marched in line, or better, rushed to the front of the line to support capitalism's latest "lesser evils," sometimes vehemently denouncing all who refused to tow the line.

The liberals' "lesser evils" included the 1960 Kennedy/Johnson ticket, with the millionaire cum billionaire JFK clan of Papa Joseph Kennedy Sr., the eighth richest man in the country, backing his son John F. Kennedy. Kennedy Sr.'s resume included service in the FDR administration as the U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom, from which position he had to be recalled because of his steadfast preference for Hitler, with whom he tried to organize personal and unapproved meetings while Hitler was slaughtering Jews and bombing British cities. Said Kennedy Sr. at the time, "Democracy is finished in England. It may be here" (*Boston Globe*, Nov. 10, 1940).

JFK's running mate was LBJ (Lyndon Baines Johnson), the Texas segregationist who was added to the Northern Democratic Party-led slate to balance JFK's liberal image with one more familiar to the racist Democrats in the Southern states, almost all of whose top elected officials were KKK and White Citizens Council supporters. But again, they were also and always touted as lesser evil than the Republicans.

Next came the 1964 LBJ vs. Barry Goldwater election context, when liberals were told that they had to vote for LBJ because Goldwater was a fascist who threatened to use nuclear weapons. LBJ, whose pre-election promise was that "American boys would never be sent to Vietnam," proceeded to send over and maintain, on average, 500,000 troops per year to pursue the U.S. genocidal war that killed four million Vietnamese and

On the critical issues of racism, prisons, and the police, Clinton's record of support to racist laws is as reactionary as that of any Republican.

58,000 American young men.

Then we were told that the anti-fascist cause required us to vote for Southern segregationist stock like Jimmy Carter (Georgia) and Al Gore (Tennessee). Carter's racist history was recast as that of a liberal small farmer. He was perhaps the last holdout, almost to the end, urging the disgraced President Nixon to never resign over the Watergate scandal.

In all these cases and others, when it came to running the country, election time rhetoric aside, the twin parties of capitalism followed their ruling-class one-percent patrons in implementing whatever the multi-billionaires and near-trillionaires desired.

Such is the case under the reign of the Great Deporter, warmonger, world's leading shale gas fracker, and National Security State top dog, President Obama, who oversees the all-pervasive government surveillance monstrosity.

Clinton's reactionary record

With this in mind, let us return to my admittedly provocative opening statement or question implying that Hillary Clinton is a fascist. Her record as a warmonger is undisputed, having been among the top leaders of the central government agencies and institutions that approve, if not administer, all the wars waged by imperialist America in recent years and decades, including overt and covert wars, privatized death-squad wars, sanction and embargo wars, and all the Middle East wars as well as the secret wars waged in Latin and Central America. This was seen with Clinton's role in the military coup that removed the elected president in Honduras, and Clinton's support for the U.S.-backed Egyptian military coup that removed the elected president of that country.

I might add here that with perhaps a single exception, Bernie Sanders' support for U.S. imperialist wars parallels Clinton's, as does Sanders' support for the election of Obama, John Kerry, and Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996—not to mention Sanders' 98 percent

Democratic Party voting record.

On the critical issues of racism, prisons, and the police, Clinton's record of support to most of the major racist laws proposed and implemented by the Democratic Party ranks her as reactionary as any Republican. Clinton's record of support to such laws ranges from those that aimed at filling the prisons with Blacks and Latinos to work at near slave labor "wages" (the average prison wage in the U.S. is 50 cents per hour) to the elimination of "welfare as we know it" legislation proposed and implemented by Bill Clinton.

Hillary Clinton lobbied for passage of the notorious Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, signed by Bill Clinton in 1994. Addressing the "Women in Policing" awards that year, she lauded the act, arguing for more police, more prisons, and tougher prison sentences: "We will be able to say, loudly and clearly, that for repeat, violent, criminal offenders—three strikes and you're out. We are tired of putting you back through the revolving door."

Hillary Clinton has never disassociated herself from support to AEDPA (Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act), a bipartisan law signed by Bill Clinton in 1996, which gutted basic civil liberties and obliterated the historic presumption of innocence that previously guided, or was supposed to guide, all legal proceedings. The AEDPA, for the first time in the modern era, compelled federal judges to grant a "presumption of correctness" to the factual findings of state court judges in death penalty and related cases.

The law was enacted because, prior to it, a full 40 percent of state court convictions in murder cases were reversed on appeal to federal courts, usually based on findings of police and prosecution planting of evidence, intimidation of witnesses, outright corruption, racist practices, and more. Today, the new law requires that in appeal proceedings the "facts" used by racist state courts must be presumed to be correct.

Today, few doubt that Hillary Clinton is the ruling class/Wall Street candidate that has dutifully served a capitalist class in major crisis due to the inherent contradictions in this profit over people inhumane capitalist system itself. Clinton's near historic high negative approval ratings are close to Trump's. That's why the ruling class decided to give Bernie Sanders a shot at shepherding the unwary and questioning back into the Democratic Party fold, Sanders' "political revolution" and "socialist" proclamations notwithstanding.

Inevitably, when the dust cleared, Sanders, dutifully leaped on board the Clinton bandwagon. His Democratic Party convention speech pathetically burnished Clinton's standing by attributing his own "left-sounding" rhetoric and platform promises to Clinton, as if she had adopted them. The same with "left-wing" Democrat and former Republican, Elizabeth Warren, the darling of the liberal apologists for capitalism. For both of them, their criticism of Clinton as Wall Street's nominee evaporated instantly after their shepherding assignment was completed.

Clinton's "credentials"

Let's be frank here and explain why Hillary Clinton is not really a fascist, despite the fact that her deeds—her support to every key ruling-class policy during her lifetime of "service" to capitalist America, demonstrates that she is and has always been the compliant ruling-class and Council on Foreign Relations think tank-approved choice of imperialist U.S. capitalism.

And Clinton's lesser-evil credentials today?—the reasons daily put forward by her kept corporate media pundits and paid advocates? Could it be because she has a better smile than the crooked looking Trump? Pardon my subjectivity! A better haircut? A nicer family?

Or that she now states, as opposed to yesterday, that she is for free state college and university tuition? Or that she is for improving the very health-care system that she previously tried to gut when she headed her husband's corrupt and failed 1992 attempted health-care revision? (See "Clinton's Health Care Fraud: A corporate cure at workers' expense," 1993, by this author.) Or maybe that she is supported by Michelle

(continued on page 7)

(continued from page 6)

Obama and a host of other African-American apologists for racist capitalism?

Indeed, Clinton's most precious "credential" is that she is running against a man who verbalizes what Clinton has actually put into practice. In this regard, rarely a day passes when the front page of *The New York Times*, and multiple inside pages as well, coupled with related corporate liberal media propagandists across the country, bash Trump with abandon, while trumpeting Clinton's sanity and earnestness.

Trump's racist, sexist, misogynist, xenophobic, and moronic remarks about women, Blacks, immigrants, and Muslims, his alleged draft-dodging, his spurious gambling casino bankruptcies, his rip-off real estate university scams, his advocacy of violence against protesters, his claims that he can re-negotiate ruling-class trade pacts by making better "deals," his delays in repudiating support from open racists and neo-fascists like former Klan leader David Duke, his climate crisis denials, etc. are exposed for all to see. Clinton's record is essentially ignored or her poll-watching advisers caution her to apologize for past transgressions and pledge fealty to a better future performance.

One "important difference" between Clinton and Trump is that Clinton listens to her pollster advisers and *appears* to be a relatively enlightened person, in fact, making a habit of nodding agreement with Sanders' "progressive" rhetoric, while the bombastic Trump, almost as if he has accepted the assignment to lose the election, is presented as a man who almost literally seeks out new bear traps to stick his foot in.

Indeed, Trump's poll figures are in rapid decline, with the average of the most recent 10 election opinion polls of registered voters showing him behind Clinton by seven points and declining. Perhaps to the past credit of the American people or in homage to their refrain from participating in this year's election fraud, close to half of the eligible voters decline to register, and another half of those who do resist don't vote. It appears that this year's figures might provide evidence of an even greater disgust with what is posited as "American democracy."

Clinton's latest campaign effort, supported by Obama, is the accusation or suggestion that a unstable or volatile president like Trump, with his finger on the nuclear button, might just start a nuclear war that could destroy the world. Most media pundits neglect to "research" the facts that demonstrate that almost all U.S. wars, including the atomic bombing of Japan, were conducted under the "sane" Democratic Party president's auspices.

In this periodically orchestrated election-time charade, Donald Trump says what Hillary Clinton does. But the blood of millions, the misery of millions, the lives of millions, are on Clinton's hands and all her capitalist associates. There are no pure hearts in ruling-class circles.

And, to be absolutely clear, should Trump be elected, he can be expected to be the same servant for capitalist America, no less and no more, because like all "elected" officials, he will become the willing prisoner of the real policy makers in the U.S., the elite .01 or less who decide how best to advance their interests and not their elected mouthpieces, whether their tongues are tempered and polite like Clinton's or brutally ugly like Trump's.

What is fascism?

Now comes the "fascist question." Fascism is not just an ugly and despicable term—a word to throw at all kinds of bigots, murderers, racists, and even dictators.

Fascism, as with the real thing in Nazi Germany un-



der Adolph Hitler, is a specific form of capitalist rule that the capitalist class brings forth when it can no longer rule with the consent of the vast majority. Fascist rule is implemented by the capitalist ruling class itself when the working-class struggle and working-class consciousness are approaching their zenith, and massive revolutionary working-class parties and powerful unions are fully capable of posing a direct and immediate threat to the tiny minority ruling class.

Fascism is the deadly weapon implemented by a crisis-ridden capitalist class whose very existence is in question given the mass forces arrayed against it and its associated incapacity to continue to profit at the expense of the working class and with regard to the ceaseless competition for markets posed by its international competitors.

Fascism, above all, has a mass and armed social base in society, almost always consisting of alienated middle-class elements whose lives have been ruined by the larger economic superiority of corporate monopolies that drive the "little guy" out of business, either back into the working class or into abject poverty. In short, fascism is the political form of rule instituted by the capitalist elite when only brute force and the massive physical extermination of the opposing and organized working-class leadership and its organizations becomes a necessity to keep the capitalist system alive.

This was the situation in Germany, Italy, and Spain, when the ruling classes turned to the fascist option. In Germany, in 1933, "democratic" President Paul Von Hindenburg appointed Hitler, the leader or "Führer" of the Nazis Party (National Socialist German Workers Party) as the German chancellor. The fascists of yesteryear, like today's would-be fascists, posed as populists. In Nazi Germany they went so far as to employ the very name of "socialism" to win popular support. But yesterday is not today, at least not now.

In contrast, when capitalist society is relatively stable, the ruling rich actually prefer a semblance of "democratic" or parliamentary rule rather than rule by force and violence. This is based on the simple idea that workers tend to be more efficient or comfortable at the workplace when they believe that are free to sell their labor to the bosses rather than be forced to endure each and every imposition on their lives under fascist and overt dictatorial rule. The latter includes the systematic murder of oppositionists if they pose the slightest obstacle to the boss's extraction of profits and the absolute rule of the Führer.

In the U.S. today the ruling rich face no immediate and serious obstacles to the relatively smooth functioning of their system. Indeed, today's unions and socialist and communist parties are smaller and weaker than at any time in the modern era. In addition, the ruling class has gone to great lengths to establish formidable firewalls to absorb social discontent, beginning with the Democratic Party and including the present often corrupt labor bureaucracy, an unprecedented number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). All these consciously function to channel discontent into safe ruling-class politics and

many other well-established institutions aimed at thwarting the development of independent and anti-capitalist organization of the working class to fight for their own interest.

In politics, in capitalist elections in particular, the constant refinement and pursuit of "lesser evilism" is among the most powerful and well-honed ruling-class instruments, promoted by tens of thousands of professional media pundits, newspapers, television and radio shows, and the vast educational system itself. With regard to all of these, the objective is to drill into the heads of the vast majority that they live in a democratic society where an elected government operating under the rule of law and all its institutions treat all equally.

Today, this fundamental myth is under scrutiny as never before, with the growing majority coming to realize from their direct experiences that in truth they live in a society governed by the one percent and that Wall Street, the major symbol of this one percent, (actually closer to .01 percent or less) makes most of society's critical decisions. Increasing majorities have come to understand that this one percent essentially pays no taxes, steals some 90 percent, (according to the official statistics today) of all new wealth and otherwise organizes society to advance its own interests against all others.

The same one percent organizes wars for profit and plunder around the world that today the great majority oppose. This same one percent presides over a society where institutional racism in all its manifestations, is the real "rule of law" and that the horrors approaching with regard to environmental destruction and global warming proceed unchecked because capitalists profit from the continued, if not increased use of fossil fuels, no matter the cost to life on earth itself.

To conclude, neither Clinton nor Trump are fascists. Neither is driven by the immediate need to crush a mass working-class and revolutionary-led resistance, which has yet to emerge. Both, however, in the name of "national security" see the need to put in place the future instruments of mass repression for when they are needed. This includes the massive government surveillance operations that reach into every household in the country and beyond. Both capitalist parties foster the militarization of the police, the National Guard, and other repressive institutions, to ready them for action should the ruling class feel threatened by an insurgent working-class opposition.

Contrary to their belief and expectation that the inevitable and massive working-class risings of the future can be defeated by brute force and massive repression of the fascist type, history has demonstrated that the opposite outcome is the more likely.

When tens of millions—the vast majority—reach the point when they can no longer tolerate capitalist injustice, exploitation and oppression, the 99 percent can and will prevail and usher in a new social order.

American citizens and their non-citizen allies have two revolutions to their credit to date—the revolutionary war that ended British colonial rule and the civil war that ended chattel slavery. Both of these momentous battles nevertheless left behind large sectors of the population that remained under the whip of capitalist oppression.

Today, these constitute the 99 percent. Their conscious organization and education now, and in the course of struggle, will bring forth a power fully capable of ending minority capitalist rule and bringing into being a socialist society that will change the face of the earth and free its peoples from the horrors of the present crisis ridden predatory capitalism. ■

Laws of political physics confirmed

\$33+ million and one year later, Bernie Sanders' orchestrated "political revolution" fell back to earth with a dull but expected and pitiful thump, as he endorsed Wall Street's corporate-funded Hillary Clinton with a resounding "The future will be shaped more on November 8 [Election Day] than by any event in the world."

Those who believed that Sanders was never a conscious shepherd for the ever-discredited Democrats will now march with him to the beat of the "lesser evil" Clinton drum, even as she pledges to find common ground with her Republican colleagues.

But those who are awakening to the inherent horrors of capitalism's racist, sexist, warmongering twin corporate duopoly will not be surprised. For them, the future will be shaped not by those who profit from climate catastrophe and endless wars against poor and working people abroad and at home, but by the millions who take their lives into their own hands and struggle on every front for humanity's cause and for the socialist future. — JEFF MACKLER

Spain: Podemos falters, right regaining control



By LAZARO MONTEVERDE

The political revolution has been postponed. For the second time in six months Spanish voters went to the polls to vote in national elections on June 26. The big winner was the hard right and the biggest loser was the new left-populist party Podemos.

An earlier election held on Dec. 20 resulted in the breakdown of the historic two-plus party system. In all, 350 seats were up for grabs in the parliament, 176 (half plus one) are needed to form a government.

The hard-right Popular Party (Partido Popular, or PP) won 137 seats. The Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE, in its Spanish abbreviation), a center-left social democratic party, won 85. Podemos (which means “we can” in Spanish), in coalition with the Communist Party of Spain, won only 71 seats. A fourth major party, the newly formed right-wing party Ciudadanos (which means “citizens” in Spanish), gained 32 seats.

Since the Dec. 20 elections Spain has been without a government. When negotiations broke down to form a coalition government, the king was required by the constitution to call new elections.

The big winner in the June 26 election was the hard-right PP, which increased its previous share of seats from 123 to 137. The PP and its head Mariano Rajoy continue as the acting government.

On Aug. 10 the PP and Ciudadanos reached a significant agreement. Ciudadanos agreed that if the PP adopted a six point reform package, Ciudadanos would support the PP in its bid to form a minority government—that is, Ciudadanos would not form a coalition with the PP but would vote for Rajoy in order to form a government. The agreement contains six conditions, including campaign finance reform and the expulsion from the government and PP of those leaders who have been convicted or charged with corruption. The agreement must now be submitted to the PP’s executive committee for approval.

Together the PP and Ciudadanos control 169 seats, seven short of the 176 needed to form a government. The PP could gain these votes from small regional parties. Alternatively, the formation of a government could take place with two rounds of voting. On the first round, if a party or coalition does not achieve 176 votes a second vote can take place. On the second round, a simple majority of those voting is needed to form a government.

The PP is pressuring the Socialists to abstain from the second vote. If the PSOE does abstain, the PP and Ciudadanos will have more than enough votes to form a minority government.

All political parties in Spain are feeling pressure from the EU to form a government and pass a budget. The EU has given Spain until Oct. 15 to adopt a budget that meets with the EU austerity policies. The Socialists announced on Aug. 11 in El Pais, one of the leading papers in Spain, that they would not give in to the PP pressure and would vote “no” on all votes. Acquiescing to the PP’s demands would be political suicide for the Socialists, who would lose a large number of activists and voters to Podemos.

Over all, the left and center-left are again on the de-

fensive, and the right, although weakened, is regaining control.

Podemos loses ground

The big losers were the left and center-left parties, especially the left-populist Podemos. Prior to the June 26 elections, Podemos formed a coalition political slate with the United Left (Izquierda Unida), made up of the Communist Party of Spain and several other tiny left parties and running under the name Unidos Podemos (“United we can” in Spanish). Unidos Podemos received 1 million fewer votes in this election than the combined Podemos/United Left vote in the December election and the number of seats they held dropped from 71 to 69. The Spanish Socialist Workers Party also lost seats, going from 90 seats in the December elections to 85 seats.

The loss was especially disappointing for Podemos. Early polls showed that Unidos Podemos was poised to replace the Spanish Socialist Workers Party as one of the two top parties in the country. Pablo Iglesias, the head of Podemos and one of its founding leaders, has called for a political revolution to replace the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, which in the last several decades has moved increasingly to the right, as one of the two major parties.

The capitalist press greeted the Podemos loss with relief. *The Economist* entitled their 2 July report “Revolution Cancelled.” *The New York Times* reported that Podemos “was stopped in its tracks in Sunday’s vote” (June 28, 2016, p. A8).

Since the transition to democracy from the Franco dictatorship in 1978, the Spanish Socialist Workers Party and the Popular Party have alternated in power, sometimes ruling by themselves and sometimes ruling in coalition with other smaller national or regional parties. The Socialists governed from 1982 to 1996 and from 2004 to 2008. The Popular Party governed from 1996 to 2004 and from 2008 to 2016. This two-plus party system, the PP and the Socialists, along with smaller regional parties and the United Left, broke in late 2015 with the emergence of two large rival national parties, Podemos and Ciudadanos.

Podemos was formed by a group of activists around Pablo Iglesias (most of whom were former members of the Communist Party) and members of the Anticapitalist Left (“Izquierda Anticapitalista” in Spanish), a revolutionary socialist group affiliated with the Fourth International. Podemos was formed officially in early 2014 and won a surprising 1.2 million votes and five seats in the European Parliament in the May 2014 elections.

In the general elections of Dec. 20, Podemos emerged as a third major party and a real competitor to the Socialists on the left. While Podemos is clearly led and founded by activists from the far left, much of its platform is based on a populist anti-austerity program.

Ciudadanos was originally formed as a small regional party but became a national party in 2015 as an alternative to the PP, which was mired in bribery and corruption scandals. Ciudadanos presented itself as an anti-corruption capitalist party that was slightly more liberal on social issues such as divorce and gay rights. In December 2016 Ciudadanos won 40 seats,

making it the fourth major party.

The political revolution that Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias hoped for is now off the table, at least for the foreseeable future. Immediately after the election, conflict broke out within Iglesias’ small inner circle over the strategy used in the campaign. Podemos is based on widespread consultation (often through on-line polls and consultation with the circles that form the base of the party, but has very little real democracy and is tightly controlled by the Iglesias group.

But all is not bleak for the party. Podemos-affiliated coalitions still control the mayor’s office in Spain’s two largest cities, Madrid and Barcelona, as well some of the other major cities, a victory that they achieved in the December elections. In addition, Podemos gained the plurality of votes in two regions, Catalonia and the Basque Country. Both of these regions have strong separatist movements, and Podemos supports holding binding referenda in both regions on the question of independence from the Spanish state.

The failure of Podemos is not just electoral, but political. Iglesias and his clique have rejected Marxism and revolution for a populist political revolution in which Podemos seeks to replace the PSOE as one of the two ruling parties in Spain. They have criticized the European Central Bank, the IMF, and the EU as an undemocratic Troika (their term) but have

adopted a Keynesian and populist political program little different from that of Obama or Hillary Clinton. There are some important differences, of course, such as the question of the right of self-determination for Catalonia, which Podemos currently supports, but here too they vacillate frequently.

The relationship between the Iglesias group and Izquierda Anticapitalista (IA) is also instructive. Podemos was formed as a joint project of these two groups, and their first political campaign was announced at a press conference. The initial success of Podemos in the European Parliament elections in May 2014 in which Podemos earned 1.2 million votes and gained five seats (all on a budget of less than 150,000 euros) caused a crisis in IA, with some key activists leaving IA for the Iglesia group.

Then in October 2014, in Podemos’ first public “encounter-assembly,” the group adopted a program and structure based on the Iglesias group and rejected a proposal by leaders of IA. This program and structure created a top-down electoral campaign vehicle instead of a political party based on and controlled by mass movements.

This defeat deepened the crisis in IA, which now had to decide whether to leave Podemos or dissolve itself into a party that does not allow organized political currents. IA chose to dissolve itself as an organized political current, although it still maintains some organizational structure. IA also expelled those members who opposed the dissolution. The relationship between the Iglesias group and IA demonstrates how undemocratic Podemos is and how like a traditional capitalist political party it is. One consequence is that party membership, always loosely defined, seems to have dropped by 50% in the last year.

Repercussions from Brexit

The events in Spain were also shaped by the Brexit vote held in the United Kingdom three days earlier. Polls showed that a number of Ciudadanos voters switched back to the Popular Party after the vote, in part because of fears of a Podemos victory. In addition, the Popular Party has stated publicly that it opposes Scotland’s entry into the EU, for fear of setting a legal or historical precedent for Catalonia and the Basque Country. Decisions on admissions to the EU are based on consensus and one EU member can block the admission of a new member. If Scotland does vote for independence from the United Kingdom and seeks admission to the EU, it remains to be seen whether the Popular Party (assuming it is in control of the government) can resist pressure from Germany and France to allow Scotland to join.

If the PP cannot form a new government, the king will turn to the PSOE and ask them to try. Should they fail, Spain may soon face a third national election within one year.

But “it ain’t over till it’s over,” as the great Yogi Berra once said. Spain is still suffering from over 20 percent unemployment and harsh austerity imposed by the Popular Party and the EU. At the same time, strong social movements and unions are struggling for a better world. ■

By WILLIAM WOOD

CHICAGO—On July 28, 75 people gathered in the Albany Park neighborhood of Chicago to Celebrate Cuba's July 26 holiday and to demand that the U.S. government "End the Blockade of Cuba" and "Return Guantánamo."

As the most important revolutionary holiday in Cuba, the Day of National Rebellion commemorates the assault of Fidel Castro's revolutionary forces on Moncado garrison in Santiago de Cuba on July 26, 1953.

The meeting was held at El Centro Autónomo, which co-sponsored the event along with the Chicago Cuba Coalition. El Centro, a popular community center located in the heart of one of the city's predominantly Latino communities, is active in Chicago's immigration rights movement.

Speakers at the meeting included Dr. Tom Hansen, director of El Centro Autónomo, who recently returned from one of his many trips to Cuba; Jose E. López, executive director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center; Rixio Barrios, deputy, Consulate of Venezuela; and Mary Johnson, a longtime community activist and founder of Families of the Wrongfully Convicted.

Chicago Cuba Coalition Co-Coordinator Steve Eckardt chaired the event and opened the meeting: "Washington's new Big Lie—after 50 years of propaganda—is that U.S. relations with the island are now 'normalized.' But Washington's boot is still on Cuba's throat. For instance, it denies Cuba use of U.S. dollars in international commerce, and continues its illegal occupation of Cuban territory at Guantánamo."

Jose E. López, brother of Oscar López Rivera, the longest-held Puerto Rican political prisoner, spoke of the 35-year campaign to free his brother and the most recent developments in the movement for independence of Puerto Rico. He emphasized the long history of solidarity between the Cuban and Puerto Rican people. "Relations between Puerto Rico and Cuba are a relationship deeply rooted in the struggle against colonialism," he said

López then spoke of U.S. imperialism's austerity

Cuba supporters stand with Puerto Rican, U.S. prisoners



Mark Ugolini / Socialist Action

(Left to right) Mary Johnson, Jose E. Lopez, Steve Eckardt, and Dr. Tom Hansen speak at Cuba event.

of her son Michael, who was railroaded into prison in the 1970s on a trumped-up charge of murder. Michael refused four plea bargains, from 15 years down to 10. Finally, the judge asked him, "Is there any number of years that you would accept in your case?" Michael responded that he wouldn't accept a plea bargain for 15 minutes if it meant confessing to something he didn't do. At trial, he was given a life sentence.

Closing the event for the Chicago Cuba Coalition, Steve Eckardt noted that the theme of solidarity with political prisoners like Oscar López Rivera and Michael Johnson was one and the same with solidarity with Cuba, under continued attack from U.S. imperialism. "Why? Because the U.S. rulers consider the Cuban people's revolution—and its enormous accomplishments of free health care, education, housing, and environmental protection—a 'bad example.'

"Even 'worse,' Cuba's revolutionary government has uniquely extended international solidarity: sending 350,000 volunteer soldiers to defend Angola against racist South Africa, a key factor in the overthrow of apartheid, rescuing some 25,000 children from the Chernobyl disaster, responding with more doctors than any country to the Ebola crisis, and currently having over 50,000 doctors and teachers serving in more than 100 countries.

"Cuba is an inspiring example of what workers, farmers, and dispossessed can do when we come together. When we defend Cuba, we defend ourselves." ■

offensive against the Puerto Rican people. On June 30, Barack Obama signed a bill into law that sets up a colonial-style, federally-appointed "fiscal control board." This board is to "restructure" over \$50 billion in Puerto Rico's total debt, "manage payments," and implement austerity measures to ensure that capitalist bond-holders receive massive profits.

"Seven people will be on this board, and only one is allowed to be from Puerto Rico! ... And four will be assigned by the Democratic Party," said López. "This is colonialism at its worst!"

From Chicago's Families of the Wrongfully Convicted, Mary Johnson expressed solidarity with Cuba and support for the immediate release of Oscar López Rivera.

She then described her lifelong fight to win the re-

Movement for Black Lives platform

Over 2000 people, representing a coalition of over 50 Black activist organizations, met in Cleveland last year to form the Movement for Black Lives.

The coalition recently issued a position platform, together with a number of demands on the issues of police violence, economic justice, reparations, Black self-determination, and much more.

For more information, see <https://policy.m4bl.org/>. The platform follows below:

Black humanity and dignity requires Black political will and power. Despite constant exploitation and perpetual oppression, Black people have bravely and brilliantly been the driving force pushing the U.S. towards the ideals it articulates but has never achieved. In recent years we have taken to the streets, launched massive campaigns, and impacted elections, but our elected leaders have failed to address the legitimate demands of our Movement. We can no longer wait.

In response to the sustained and increasingly visible violence against Black communities in the U.S. and globally, a collective of more than 50 organizations representing thousands of Black people from across the country have come together with renewed energy and purpose to articulate a common vision and agenda. We are a collective that centers and is rooted in Black communities, but we recognize we have a shared struggle with all oppressed people; collective liberation will be a product of all of our work.

We believe in elevating the experiences and leadership of the most marginalized Black people, including but not limited to those who are women, queer, trans, femmes, gender nonconforming, Muslim, formerly and currently incarcerated, cash poor and working class, differently-abled, undocumented, and

immigrant. We are intentional about amplifying the particular experience of state and gendered violence that Black queer, trans, gender nonconforming, women and intersex people face.

There can be no liberation for all Black people if we do not center and fight for those who have been marginalized. It is our hope that by working together to create and amplify a shared agenda, we can continue to move towards a world in which the full humanity and dignity of all people is recognized.

While this platform is focused on domestic policies, we know that patriarchy, exploitative capitalism, militarism, and white supremacy know no borders. We stand in solidarity with our international family against the ravages of global capitalism and anti-Black racism, human-made climate change, war, and exploitation.

We also stand with descendants of African people all over the world in an ongoing call and struggle for reparations for the historic and continuing harms of colonialism and slavery. We also recognize and honor the rights and struggle of our Indigenous family for land and self-determination.

We have created this platform to articulate and support the ambitions and work of Black people. We also seek to intervene in the current political climate and assert a clear vision, particularly for those who claim to be our allies, of the world we want them to help us create. We reject false solutions and believe we can achieve a complete transformation of the current systems, which place profit over people and make it impossible for many of us to breathe.

Together, we demand an end to the wars against Black people. We demand that the government repair the harms that have been done to Black communities in the form of reparations and targeted long-term investments. We also

demand a defunding of the systems and institutions that criminalize and cage us. This document articulates our vision of a fundamentally different world. However, we recognize the need to include policies that address the immediate suffering of Black people. These policies, while less transformational, are necessary to address the current material conditions of our people and will better equip us to win the world we demand and deserve.

We recognize that not all of our collective needs and visions can be translated into policy, but we understand that policy change is one of many tactics neces-

sary to move us towards the world we envision. We have come together now because we believe it is time to forge a new covenant. We are dreamers and doers and this platform is meant to articulate some of our vision.

The links throughout the document provide the stepping-stones and roadmaps of how to get there. The policy briefs also elevate the brave and transformative work our people are already engaged in, and build on some of the best thinking in our history of struggle.

This agenda continues the legacy of our ancestors who pushed for reparations, Black self-determination and community control; and also propels new iterations of movements such as efforts for reproductive justice, holistic healing and reconciliation, and ending violence against Black cis, queer, and trans people. ■

Solidarity to solitary strikers!

By LUCAS ALAN DIETSCH

On Aug. 13, a rally and march took place in solidarity with the hunger strikers protesting solitary confinement in Waupun, Wis. The rally met in front of the notorious maximum-security Waupun Correctional Institution, which has been around since the 1850s.

(Quite a few prisoner protests and strikes have taken place at WCI over the years. In 1969, about 250 prisoners protested low wages, filthy work conditions, and brutality of the guards. In 1976, 88 prisoners seized hostages and held them for 13 hours. Another rebellion took place in 1983.)

The Aug. 13 rally included about 50 people from different backgrounds, including Ex-Prisoners Organization, Industrial Workers of the World, a small delegation from Socialist Action, and a variety of other groups.

At the beginning of the rally, an ex-

convict talked about life in the prison. The demonstrators then marched around the prison, shouting slogans and accompanied by drums. One banner read, "Dying to 167 days," the period that the hunger strike has been going on. The protest was "escorted" by patrols of the Waupun police, the Fond du Lac County sheriff's office, and other units.

The march stopped at various locales around the prison to shout slogans. At one point, the marchers yelled over the wall to give support to Cesar Deleon and the rest of the hunger strikers. They also shouted that demonstrators would be back for the National Prisoner Work Strike, on Sept. 9. Prisoners in at least 20 states are planning to take part in the action, making it the largest coordinated prison strike in U.S. history.

The protest ended with a speech by a mother of a person in solidarity confinement. ■

Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada

website: <http://socialistaction.ca>

The Canadian Press



BLM sit-in stuns Toronto Pride parade

By JOHN WILSON

The intervention by Black Lives Matter at the annual Toronto LGBTQ Pride march held on July 3 exploded into massive media coverage that blew past everything else related to Pride Week. BLM's 25-minute sit-in protest at a major intersection, at the head of the parade, and in support of nine demands presented to Mathieu Chantelois, Pride's Executive Director, will continue to resonate for a long time.

The nine demands relate to strengthening material support and real participation in decision-making in Pride for Blacks and other marginalized communities. Only one demand—to stop police floats in the march—was sensationalized by the corporate media. The rest were largely ignored.

BLM asked additionally for solid financial support for the Blackness Yes group, who staged Blockorama, and for a central and fully supported stage for Black Queer Youth. They also want Indigenous, Black, trans people, and those with disabilities to have better access to paid Pride positions, plus the return of the South Asian stage.

The response by the LGBT "establishment" was sadly predictable.

Chantelois accepted BLM's demands, in writing, but immediately repudiated them once the march resumed. He said that he signed only to end the protest. Although there was significant support for BLM in the media and the social media brouhaha that followed, there was a tsunami of outrage that "they" delayed "our" march. This kind of response went from stunningly ignorant expressions of white privilege to outright racism.

BLM co-founder Janaya Khan reported receiving a large volume of hate mail. Despite its largely queer and trans, predominantly female leadership, BLM was viewed as an outsider and intruder, despite having been given the symbolic status of "honoured group." Apparently, if a group is designated "honoured" it is expected to shut up and behave.

Even though BLM was recognized for its fight against police racism and brutality (including an ongoing series of wanton cop killings of Black people), the assimilationists can't grasp why minority communities would feel intimidated by a massive, privileged police

presence in the march.

And this is despite the fact that a month before the march, Pride sponsored a standing-room-only panel discussion on the massive, violent 1981 police bathhouse raid, the response to which was pivotal to the growth and development of the movement in Toronto and elsewhere. As veteran gay activist Tim McCaskell pointed out, the raid brought together the gay and Black communities in opposition to police oppression.

Lemona Johnson, widow of killer cop victim Albert Johnson, spoke at the second of the mass rallies organized by the Right to Privacy Committee (RTPC) in 1981. McCaskell said, "Often forgotten is the RTPC's involvement, along with Black and South Asian groups and the Law Union of Ontario, in the establishment of CIRPA, the Citizens Independent Review of Police Actions, Toronto's first citizen watchdog of police."

Unfortunately, these alliances withered because of the emergence of a largely white, privileged LGBT self-appointed "leadership," more interested in being assimilated into the dominant society than in fighting oppression.

As Rinaldo Walcott wrote in NOW magazine, "Police presence in the parade obscures the work that still needs to be accomplished and whitewashes our history with them," and "To remove police floats is not to act against inclusion, but rather, to say that inclusion matters and must be earned."

Walcott's piece demolishes the reconciliation-and-accommodation line of the Pride bureaucracy. Toronto Police Chief Saunders' supposedly historic "apology" for 1981 is nothing of the sort. He expressed "regret"—the word apology was missing in action.

No such regret was expressed for the multitude of actions taken by cops since then, not only against the queer population, but against racialized minorities, residents of low-income ghettos, street people, and sex workers, all groups that are inevitably interrelated and should seek alliances against their oppressors. The myth that the police leopard has changed its spots is destroyed by the cops' arrogant refusal to stop defending the blatantly racist practice of "carding."

It is past time for queer activists to ignore the class role of the police. When the first force was established, in not-so-merrie England, its role was explicitly to protect the privileged. That remains its core function in contemporary capitalist society—to "serve and protect" the rule of the tiny, obscenely rich minority, and their state institutions.

BLM-TO's Pride protest should open a discussion about serious issues that have been bypassed by the cravenly assimilationist elites that dominate expression among LGBT people, and renew interest in the queer liberationist perspective from which Pride originated. ■

Panama Papers: How Ottawa made corporate tax evasion easier

By BARRY WEISLEDER

Question: When does a law against tax cheating become a huge loophole that legalizes giant corporate tax avoidance?

Answer: When a capitalist government is involved.

Does that seem a tad cynical? Well, consider this. For decades big businesses and rich individuals have been hiding their "earnings" in overseas tax havens

and dummy corporations. As a result, the Canada Revenue Agency has been deprived of billions of dollars of tax revenue—and that becomes a convenient government argument for cutting social and infrastructure spending, for freezing public sector workers' wages, slashing pensions, and reducing workplace health, safety, and environmental protection.

In 2010, Ottawa joined an initiative of the Organization of Economic Co-opera-

tion and Development to force tax havens to be more transparent. They started signing Tax Information Exchange Agreements (TIEAs) with notorious tax havens such as the Cayman Islands, Jersey, the Isle of Man and the British Virgin Islands, where tax rates are close to zero.

But at the same time, Ottawa's tax code was altered to allow any Canadian multinational corporation doing business in a TIEA partner country to bring profits home tax-free. American multinationals have to pay tax when they repatriate international profits. But, in Canada, the TIEAs mean that profits can be declared in a tax haven, where there is little or no tax, and brought back without paying a penny more.

Many of the biggest firms on the Toronto Stock Exchange now have a presence in tax havens and use Canada's treaties to reduce their tax bill dramatically at home. One company, Gildan Activewear (the world's largest T-shirt maker), reduced its taxes by more than 90 per cent in 2015.

While it seems "there is no money" to ensure there is clean water in many indigenous communities, or to improve public transit, or for youth employment, money stashed in tax havens is piling up rapidly. The storehouse of stacked cash is up by more than 50 per cent in the Cayman Islands and in the Bahamas since 2011, when their TIEAs came into force.

It rose a staggering 600 per cent in Panama since 2013 when its TIEA became law.

Canada has now signed 23 TIEAs, with seven more under negotiation. And so far, no disclosure of the names of those guilty of tax fraud.

The new Justin Trudeau Liberal government pledged to end the Stephen Harper Conservative regime's "tax unfairness," and to beef up CRA enforcement. When asked about this loophole, Finance Minister Bill Morneau, a former Bay Street CEO, said only that the agreements would be evaluated as part of a planned overall review of tax policy.

No hurry there. And likely, no real action. Not if it involves biting the hand that feeds a government of, by, and for the 0.1 per cent.

Postscript: Since this article was written in June, a Federal Court judge ordered the Royal Bank of Canada and Citibank, N.A. to hand over all transaction information for accounts held by Cayman National Bank Ltd. between 2009 and 2015. This is to determine whether Canadian residents used these banks to transfer money home without reporting it.

In another development, the Canada Revenue Agency revealed that between 2010 and 2015, 662 people were convicted for tax evasion or tax fraud overall, but only 49 had "money and other assets located offshore," according to documents obtained by the Toronto Star. The CRA issued fines totalling \$13.4 million since 2010—less than half the \$35.7 million in taxes the cheats were caught evading.

In terms of all the banks and all the avoided taxes involved, the description "tip of the iceberg" would be an understatement of the case. ■

Race for NDP Leader a vacuum after socialist withdraws

The search for a socialist candidate for NDP Leader intensifies, in the wake of Ontario MPP Cheri DiNovo's withdrawal due to health reasons.

An Aug. 5 *Globe and Mail* article, "NDP needs a strong leader to return wind to its sails" by John Ibbitson, shows that the NDP establishment has no ready or obvious contender able to recover its poise and restore total bureaucratic control. The brass is still reeling from the Tom Mulcair electoral disaster, and the repudiation it suffered at the NDP federal convention last April.

In an Aug. 2 statement, Cheri DiNovo said: "The dream of a national party that embraces both democratic socialism, climate justice, anti-racism, the UN declaration on indigenous peoples, LG-

BTQ2S rights, child care now, pharmacare, free tuition and a truly progressive tax structure is still very much alive. Those who represent the grass roots of the NDP and those progressives who want the NDP to represent them from across the country will not be silenced.

"I am confident a candidate will step forward who will be up to the task. That candidate, the one who puts principles and values at the forefront, will have me and my supporters' full backing.

"I am so sorry that it cannot be me but this was never about me anyway. It is about the principles and values of the brave souls who penned the Regina Manifesto and their legacy that so many still share."

— BARRY WEISLEDER

To save the climate, it's 'Time to Choose'

By GAETANA CALDWELL-SMITH

"Time to Choose," a documentary film by Charles Ferguson, narrated by Oscar Isaacs.

Charles Ferguson's documentary, "Time to Choose," should scare the bejesus out of you. Unfortunately, it will probably only be seen by people who acknowledge climate change. The trick is to get "deniers" to see it and hopefully change some minds.

"Time to Choose" makes it abundantly clear that if the oil conglomerates and other corporations promoting fossil-fuel mining and drilling operations, as well as those behind large-scale commercial farming and livestock production, do not cease their operations NOW, many coastal cities, if not countries (island states) will literally cease to be by mid-century, if not sooner. Millions of people will be forced to migrate.

Politicians who deny the reality of climate change use fear tactics to ensure the continuation of the fossil-fuel economy, along with the confidence of corporate shareholders.

What they fail to acknowledge are the facts—and there are plenty of them. Alternative energy sources are on the rise. Clips from the film illustrate former fossil-fuel workers being trained in production and installation of wind



turbines and solar panels.

Tom Randall of Bloomberg News wrote: "The shift occurred in 2013, when the world added 143 gigawatts of renewable electricity capacity, compared with 141 gigawatts in new plants that burn fossil fuels, according to an analysis presented Tuesday at the Bloomberg New Energy Finance annual summit in New York. The shift will continue to accelerate, and by 2030 more than four times as much renewable ca-

capacity will be added.

"The race for renewable energy has passed a turning point. The world is now adding more capacity for renewable power each year than coal, natural gas, and oil combined. And there's no going back."

The film showed ghastly images of mountaintop removal by mining companies in the U.S., accompanied by devastating interviews with locals about how they were bamboozled by their

reps into believing that there would be jobs, and money for health and education. Instead, they got polluted water and air, cancer, and general degradation of the entire area.

There were scenes of enormous "ponds" of livestock waste that leaches into the groundwater and soil; acres and acres of feedlots for cattle and pigs fed corn and soy (greatly subsidized by the government), because of the growing worldwide demand for meat. Not a blade of grass or a tree as far as one can see.

Other contributors to climate change were illustrated, such as clear cutting of rainforests to grow oil palms and for cattle raising in Central and South America, all of which cause increases in violent weather, widespread flooding, and extreme years-long drought, leading to a rise in wildfires throughout the South and West of the United States.

The film stated that there is no denying that renewable energy production is fast out-pacing that of fossil fuel. It's certainly time for governments to choose—and as far as the future of humanity is concerned, they are far overdue in their decision. ■

... Clean Energy Revolution

(continued from page 1)

circumstances to live amidst the drilling pads despoiling large swaths of the U.S.

Labor organizers who have stepped up to help combat the climate crisis very visibly built the demonstration. Joe Uhlein of the Labor Sustainability Network and the convener of the Labor Climate Convergence in January of this year, urged trade unionists to attend. "It is time for those of us in the labor movement to rise to the challenge and become a central player in the movement to build a sustainable future for the planet and its people—not only for the survival and wellbeing of all, but also for organized labor's own self-interest," he wrote in a blog post called "Why Trade Unionists Should March for a Clean Energy Revolution."

The labor contingent at the march, which included groups from AFSCME and the postal workers union was modestly impressive and reflected the patient and systematic outreach and education being carried out in labor councils, union locals, and other labor bodies from one coast to another.

A Peace and Climate Justice contingent, initiated by Peace Action and built by Code Pink, organized its members under the demands: Slash the Pentagon and world military budgets, provide strong aid to climate refugees, and fund green energy, targeting 100% clean by 2030. The adoption by the peace community of the latter demand is reflective of the now broad acceptance of the real science of climate change, a science that is unanimous in concluding that we must

have an emergency transition that begins today and is extremely advanced just 14 years from now.

Fortunately, Mark Jacobson and his team at Stanford have made it crystal clear that current technology will allow us to complete a transition to a 100% renewable energy grid by 2050. The only obstacle is the political elite who refuses to take responsibility for organizing this transition.

Front-line marchers included participants in the "Indigenous Leaders Protect Our Public Lands Caravan," a group of youth activists and elders from Colorado, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona who traveled to Philadelphia on a nickel and hope. The 17 spokespeople for the Native American victims of extreme extraction by the fuel industry also anchored the impressive Summit for a Clean Energy Revolution, held the day before the march at the Friends Center in Philadelphia.

Other contingents included those organized by the faith community, by elders, by advocates of a nuclear-free transition from carbon, for those leading the drive to popularize local 100% renewable solutions, by SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice), and students. The success of

this march, organized effectively despite the tremendous negative pressures of the bourgeois electoral season—bodes well for the next steps in our efforts to build a massive movement independent of the Democratic and Republican parties and reliant on its own power in the streets. ■



Oct. 22: A one-day conference

**Central Connecticut State University
New Britain, Conn.**

Sponsored by CCSU Youth for Socialist Action

Information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/211030272631856/>

Speakers include: David Farrell (YSA), Hannah A. Holleman (Ecological Marxism), Charles Post (Origins of U.S. Capitalism), Alan Sears (Marxism and LGBTQI Liberation), Wendy Z. Goldman (Women, the State, and Revolution), Edmond Caldwell (Culture of the Paris Commune), Johnny E. Williams (State as a Social Control), Juan Cruz Ferre (Electoral Strategy in Argentina), Jeff Mackler, Socialist Action candidate for President.

... Coup in Turkey

(continued from page 12)

U.S. because they are bearers of moderate Islam. Gulenists are also allies of Israel and its Zionist politics. But so is Erdogan, though with a difference: he's an adamant supporter of a strategy that is losing its relevance.

Erdogan claims the leadership of all Sunnis in the Middle East. He supported the Muslim Brotherhood against General Sisi in Egypt. He armed Sunni militias against Assad in Syria. He favoured El Nusra and ISIS in their operations against Kurdish inhabitants. For this reason, he didn't refrain from souring relations with Russia and Israel.

But his dreams were not realized. His Syrian offensive failed. The U.S. now allies with the Kurds in fighting ISIS. To reclaim his position, he made a U-turn

from his confrontational foreign policy and restored bilateral ties with Israel and Russia.

Evidently, he follows a strategic line that is subservient to U.S. foreign policy. But with so many conflicts and regime changes in the region, more twists and turns in U.S.-Turkish relations in the coming months should not be surprising.

Although we cannot be certain of the level of U.S. assistance to the coup, looking at the initially neutral remarks of American top officials, and based on our knowledge of U.S. imperialism's modus operandi, we conclude that the United States would have supported the coup if it had been successful.

What is to be done?

A key task facing the workers' movement in Turkey and internationally is to disseminate the truth about President Erdogan's crackdown on dissidents and civil liberties. It's time to organize mass actions to de-

mand the following:

- End the state of emergency!
- Free the political prisoners who had nothing to do with the attempted coup.
- Restore and uphold freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly. Hands off the unions and the Left. Defend the independence of labour organizations.
- Form a workers' united front against U.S. imperialism and its allies. Organize mass actions against domestic repression and foreign intervention.
- Turkey out of NATO now! Close all U.S. military bases, including Incirlik military base.
- End the siege of Kurdish areas. Halt the repression against the Kurds. Free the Kurdish political prisoners. Self-determination for the Kurdish people, now!
- Build a revolutionary workers' party, independent of all pro-capitalist factions, and fight for a workers' government. ■

Turkey: From failed coup to authoritarian purge



Huffington Post

By Y. FIKRET KAYALI

A significant section of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) attempted to overthrow President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his AKP (Justice and Development Party) government on the night of July 15-16. Over 265 people died in fighting.

It was a serious putsch attempt, which came very close to success, but was thwarted. Erdogan responded with an unprecedented purge and declared a state of emergency, which allows the president and cabinet to bypass parliament when drafting new laws, and to restrict or suspend rights and freedoms.

The view that the coup was staged was prevalent in its early aftermath as the seemingly amateurish plans of the putschists fell apart, and pictures of hapless soldiers being pushed back by civilians circulated on social media. Proponents of the view that the coup was staged by Erdogan cited his ludicrous comment that “this uprising is a gift from God to us because this will be a reason to cleanse our army.”

The gravity of the situation is hardly in dispute now. A lesson learned, however, is the necessity of a sober analysis of the cracks within Turkey’s ruling elite. Seeing Erdogan as an omnipotent dictator, one who can even fake a coup against himself, is a manifestation of a widespread misconception among leftists in Turkey and abroad. It shows a failure to see the conflicts and contractions that Erdogan strives to manage in order to stay in power.

Erdogan’s dictatorship will continue to rest on unstable tectonic plates, despite his current consolidation of power by means of a purge of tens of thousands of soldiers and public service workers.

Who is behind the coup?

Erdogan quickly blamed Fethullah Gulen, his former ally and the self-exiled preacher who leads an Islamic movement from his residence in Pennsylvania. Gulen immediately and vehemently denied the charges. There are good reasons not to believe either one of

Erdogan’s dictatorship rests on unstable tectonic plates, despite his current stabilization of power by means of a purge of tens of thousands of workers.

those wicked charlatans.

The strongholds of the Gulenists within the police, judiciary, and media had been destroyed in a series of purges, beginning in 2013. Also, rumours of plans to purge the Gulenists in the military were widespread. Gulenists had the motive, and Gulenist officers were likely involved in the coup. But were the Gulenists capable of this large-scale operation?

Almost one-third of the generals who headed combat units were allegedly involved in the coup. The coup junta had operations not only in major cities, but also in smaller cities. It included top-level generals from all army, navy, and air forces, plus commanders of the police. Although Gulenists prefer to organize and operate behind the scenes, and hence their real power is hard to pin point, the scope of the uprising extends well beyond the reach of Gulenists by any calculation. Rather, it is very likely that the coup included a much wider array of forces within the army.

We don’t have all the facts—and don’t imagine that we will get them any time soon. Erdogan has control over the judiciary, as well as the media, which could reveal the truth about the coup. Those who claim that Gulenists were very powerful in the army, however, cannot explain why Gulenists had not attempted a coup earlier, perhaps while they were still strong within the police. Similarly, if Gulenists were that strong in the army, one wonders, why didn’t Erdogan act to dismiss them or reduce their power?

The coup attempt was a manifestation of a temporary coalition of a wider array of forces within the

(Above) Turkish soldiers at July 16 protest in Istanbul’s Taksim Square against the coup.

army. Leading the putsch, as Sungur Savran, a Turkish socialist writes, was “an alliance of the pro-U.S. seculars and the adepts of a religious fraternity under the protection of the U.S.”

Anti-Erdogan and pro-NATO secularist military officers, to the surprise of many analysts, continued to be strong within the TSK, although they were not in leadership positions, unlike when the TSK was used by NATO as a vehicle against the Soviet Union and later against fundamentalist Islam.

All in all, one thing is clear: Erdogan is not as strong as many assume.

What was Washington’s role in this?

Tensions between Turkey and the U.S. escalated following the attempted coup. Erdogan demands the extradition of Gulen, whom he calls a terrorist. The Labour minister directly blamed the United States. Many Turks, according to *The New York Times*, believe that “The U.S. was Behind Failed Coup.”

Turkey is a key U.S. ally, possessing the second largest army in NATO. Washington pays close attention to Turkish domestic politics. Most of the putschists were NATO soldiers. They had close relations with the U.S. and sought its support. This is confirmed by Joseph Votel, head of U.S. Central Command, which leads the ISIS fight, when he said, “We’ve certainly had relationships with a lot of Turkish leaders, and military leaders in particular. ... Some of them are in jail now.”

Now reports show that those who held Turkey’s top general hostage phoned Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and sought U.S. support. Incirlik, the southern Turkey base of U.S. forces, was employed in the operation. It refuelled F-16s that went into action in support of the attempted coup. Its base commander and several military personnel, working alongside U.S. soldiers, were quickly arrested for their alleged involvement.

Gulen and his supporters had been supported by the

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