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- ★ PEACE
- ★ EQUALITY
- ★ SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY
- ★ ALL POWER TO THE WORKING PEOPLE!



**AS IMPERIALIST RIVALRIES ESCALATE,
WORKERS DEMAND PEOPLE OVER PROFIT!**



ON THE RECENT SUPREME COURT RULINGS



The Supreme Court as composed from June 30, 2022 to present. (Fred Schilling / Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States)

Keegan D., Illinois. July 2, 2023.

Every year liberal bourgeois think tanks and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) release reports that claim to rank and determine the levels of democracy within countries around the globe. Somehow the US ranks near the top consistently, with only a few of these democracy ratings being bold enough to knock off points for Trump's attempted coup in January of 2021. As citizens, we see these reports praise our democracy. But simultaneously we have watched an unelected, unrepresentative, and anti-democratic judicial body revoke the rights of Americans consistently over the past several years.

The largest setback in women's rights in decades was the repeal of Roe v. Wade, which protected the right to abortion nationwide, in June 2022. This was the first of several major repeals of American peoples' rights. Over the past week the Supreme Court has released several highly regressive rulings that will be detrimental to several minority communities as well as the proletarian class as a whole. These cases will be far from the end of this court's reactionary rulings as each case becomes a precedent to further the removal of rights and privileges of oppressed communities. A look inside three of the most recent rulings show just that.

STUDENT LOAN RELIEF RULING

The court's ruling on Biden's proposed bill to relieve student loan debt was 6-3 against, which blocked over 20,000 students from receiving relief. America is already one of the few developed nations without some form of universal or free college education, and this ruling sets the potential for this to happen back even farther. College education has become highly necessary for a majority of American workers who enter into the workforce, but the high cost of education in a profit-motivated system creates a major barrier for impoverished and minority communities. Education on a community-wide scale is absolutely key to ending cycles of poverty, but America's current college system perpetuates that cycle. Those few who do overcome the systemic disadvantages for impoverished people and get into college are often weighed down by student loans after graduation that limit their abilities to use their degrees to better their own economic situations, let alone their communities. Biden's proposal, while a step in the right direction, was only a reformist measure to provide minimal relief from large, unpayable student loans. The Court's decision against this "small step" from the administration not only prevents people from receiving relief, but can be used by the court as a precedent to stop further attempts to address the inherent flaws in America's higher education system.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RULING

The Court also attacked college students of the future by ruling 6-3 against affirmative action in the admissions process. Affirmative action is the often misunderstood policy where in assessing entry applications, colleges can consider the race of a student in order to maintain diversity on campus. All applicants still have to first meet the other required standards for admittance, before the applicant's identity is considered. This was to address the severe disparity between white populations and historically oppressed minority groups. Affirmative action first began to appear in the college admission process in the late 1960s when individual colleges developed programs to promote diversity on campuses. The move by these schools was in response to over a decade of protests centered around the end of segregation, racial discrimination, and poverty. People of oppressed races and nationalities, workers, and students had begun to develop more political and revolutionary attitudes throughout the decade with groups like the Black Panther Party, American Indian Movement, Students for a Democratic Society, and politicized labor unions. Capitalist institutions reeled back in fear at this level of political organization among the toiling masses, and were quick to institute half-measures in an attempt to placate the radical sentiments of these groups. Affirmative action was a key response by universities to do just that. Affirmative action of course left a lot to be desired in terms of addressing systemic issues at the root of disparity between white students and minority groups in education. Issues of class and problems related to primary education still needed to be addressed to properly fix that. However, from a reform standpoint, affirmative action was a progressive measure. Overall, both of these decisions by the Court attacked the availability of necessary education. The rulings will further create a two-tier system of haves and have-nots. They will maintain the entrapment of a population of the working class in brutal and oppressive wage labor, much to the benefit of the American bourgeoisie. These decisions will also deepen the inequalities between racial groups that intersect with the class oppression of the proletariat as a whole.

THE REMOVAL OF LGBTQIA+ PROTECTIONS

The third recent ruling by the court determined that businesses could refuse service to LGBTQIA+ individuals on the grounds of "free speech." Again, the vote was 6-3 in favor. This ruling was made in response to a Colorado business owner who refused to make wedding websites for queer marriages, previously illegal under Colorado law. This comes following a sharp rise in anti-queer sentiment from conservatives and reactionaries. The rhetoric against LGBTQ+ peoples began with anti-transgender prejudices, with right-wingers arguing that transgender individuals were indoctrinating children. This delusion is often based on grossly misreported accounts of drag shows for kids. But in the first place, drag is not the same as being transgender. This reflects a fallacious assumption that homosexuality is linked to pedophilia, typically drawn from the unfortunate historical practice of pederasty. But in modern times this belief has evolved into thinking that the queer community as a whole are "groomers." As anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments grew, several lawmakers and judges began to pass bills and rule against protections for these communities. The Colorado case is no different. The right to refuse service based on sexual orientation also potentially re-opens previously solved issues of not allowing service based on race, ethnicity, religion, and political beliefs as well.

AN UNELECTED BODY WITH AUTHORITY FOR LIFE

Not a single person who has decided on any of these cases was elected by the American people, let alone the American working class. Three of these Justices

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were put in power by the most reactionary president in decades, to rule against the rights of the American working class until their death or voluntary retirement. You cannot reform a system that puts in place people whose power to revoke civil rights is life-long. As capitalism's contradictions become more untenable, reactionary ideologies become more aggressive to defend capital in its dying breaths. The supreme court is stacked with reactionary ideologues, and the court is used as a tool to defend capitalism.

While the removal of rights from different communities can seem unrelated to that core objective, all of these decisions work in tandem with one another. Together they diminish the power of the proletariat, and maintain bourgeois control. Instead of voting for Democrats, who chose to do absolutely nothing to stop the Court, or waiting for enough of these reactionary judges to drop dead

from old age –and foolishly counting on future bourgeois leaders to represent the proletariat's interest– a different type of action is required. Solidarity between various oppressed groups and the working class as a whole must come together on the basis of our shared oppression. All of these cases attack the most powerless members of the working class. Without proletarian solidarity and organization there is little in the way to stop further abuses against us. We have seen the power of the proletariat make the bourgeoisie tremble before, which has won concessions that unfortunately placate the class movement, such as affirmative action. We must not be satisfied by half measures. With political organization the bourgeoisie and their Supreme Court lackeys can do little but tremble in the face of a united proletariat. Without, they will continue to proudly and boldly strip our rights in service of the capitalist system. The choice is ours.

CENTRAL APPALACHIA: SACRIFICE ZONE OF CAPITALISM



Aerial photograph of a mountaintop removal site in Central Appalachia. (Stephen Crowley/The New York Times)

M. A. Booth, Kentucky. July 6, 2023.

The Central Appalachian region of the US has a long history of coal mining going back nearly two centuries. The region itself encompasses approximately 29,773 square miles of land in five states: Eastern Kentucky, West Virginia, Southwestern Virginia, East Tennessee, and Western North Carolina. Nicknamed the "coal basket" of America for its super-abundance of the raw material, Central Appalachia has provided its lion's share of the coal that built our nation since the Industrial Revolution. This is a fact many Appalachians and miners are proud of, but one that hasn't come without its consequences for the people and the land. For generations, capitalism has hyper-exploited the working people of Appalachia and deliberately underdeveloped the region as a whole. Massive profits were reaped for the owners of the coal companies while the working class was kept in perpetual poverty and suffering.

In the last few decades, a new form of mining has taken off in Central Appalachia called mountaintop removal, sometimes referred to as "strip mining on steroids." This "innovation" in mining cuts down on the amount of labor necessary to harvest coal from the Earth. With the old method of coal mining, a company had to hire hundreds of miners to go underground. Now they simply blow up the mountain with explosives, then move the dirt and coal away using bulldozers, excavators, and dump trucks, and later sort the extracted materials. This technique costs much less than traditional mining methods. This is a barbaric practice because it destroys the physical geography and any ecological balance. Under capitalism over 10% of the land in Appalachia has been turned into surface mines, or "reclaimed" surface mines. This adds up to over a total of well over 1.9 million acres of land!

This is a completely unsustainable practice that puts the entire ecosystem at risk of collapse. Streams and rivers are polluted, animals lose their habitats, and species go extinct. As horrible as this is for the environment, the problems don't end there. Human beings are inevitably affected as well. Serious health problems and conditions are directly linked to the activities of these mining ventures. As the coal barons buy up more land, more working people are displaced and forced to move from their homes. The people are dependent on the very same jobs that are destroying their land to eke out an existence for themselves and their families. This results in a situation where the working class people of Appalachia are forced to cannibalize their own homeland in order to survive. The entire region has been, and continues to be, one of the largest sacrifice zones in all of America.

Life under capitalism is increasingly untenable and ripe with contradictions. A large portion of the Appalachian working class knows they're being fleeced by the system, but their legitimate class grievances are minimized by the bourgeoisie and the capitalist press. They are constantly bombarded with all sorts of bourgeois narratives and propaganda, from the neo-fascist Trump and his lies about "bringing back coal," to the so-called "Green New Deal" of the Democrats; and from the anti-communist "Democratic Socialist" trend to Biden's pathetic calls to "Build Back Better." These are all political illusions crafted to misdirect, misguide, and keep the subjectivity of working class people in shackles. The proletariat is caught in the crossfire of bourgeois propaganda from every direction. It remains our job as Marxist-Leninists to reach out to the masses of working people to instill in them a firm understanding of class-consciousness, wherever they may be found. The rural and urban people of Appalachia are no exception to this rule. Until millions of workers understand class struggle, their relation to it, where their interests lie, and how their labor is fundamental to the relations of society, we will be stuck within the confines of the ruling class and their capitalist machinations indefinitely.

We live under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Simply put, capitalism serves the interests of the rich at the expense of the poor. There is no legislative or regulatory path out of the crisis we are facing in Appalachia, or in all of America. As soon as reforms are passed, the ruling class seeks to repeal them. With one hand concessions are given to the workers, and by the other they are taken away. Reformism, in all of its manifestations, is a dead end. Only an anti-revisionist, Marxist-Leninist vanguard party is capable of leading real revolutionary change in this country and internationally. It is only through the construction of socialism and communism, where workers are in control of their own destiny, that a path out of the crisis in Appalachia and every other sacrifice zone across this country can be found.

BOOK REVIEW: "RADICALS IN THE BARRIO"

Ian Ocx, Texas. August 13, 2023.

Radicals in the Barrio, originally published in June 2018, and written by Justin Akers Chacón, a labor rights activists and professor of Chicano History at San Diego City College, is a well researched and beautifully written history of labor radicalism within the Mexican-American community that spans from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century in its coverage. One of the best features of the work is its heavy reliance on direct primary sources and quotes from newspapers and labor activists from the periods discussed, which helps paint a vivid picture of the situations as they took place and the history as it evolved.

Radicals is broken down into four main sections. The first section deals with the early days of the labor rights movement in Mexico, the desire for the Mexican state to gain the support of US imperialism, the early days of worker organizing within the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), and the PLM's emergence as an organizing force within the Mexican-American communities in the US. Much of this section is dedicated to covering the emergence and development of Magonista ideology, a form of anarcho-syndicalism that developed out of Mexican and Mexican-American revolutionary political experience and was a prominent ideological faction within the PLM, both north and south of the US-Mexican border. This section also covers early Mexican and Mexican-American labor struggles like the formation of the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association in California, which was the state's first multiethnic labor union.

The second and third sections of the book deal primarily with the struggles of organization and unionization of the Mexican-American working class, especially the anti-racist and immigrant struggles that had to be waged within the unionization movement. Professor Chacón invests lots of time into these sections to demonstrate the uphill battles Mexican-American workers faced in unionization as larger national labor unions, like the American Federation of Labor, were at times heavily racist and reactionary when it came to organizing immigrant and Mexican-American labor. Professor Chacón also does an incredible job throughout these two sections in discussing the vast multitude of strikes and revolts organized and led by Mexican-American workers in collusion with members of both the IWW and the Socialist Party of America. It is also worth noting that *Radicals in the Barrio* takes the time to discuss anti-racist movements

that had to take place within the Socialist Party itself during the early 20th century since much of its national leadership was opposed to organizing non-white workers, fearing that a multiracial and multiethnic party might ostracize them from the perceived nominally "white" working class within the US.

The fourth and final section of *Radicals in the Barrio* deals with the labor struggles of Mexican-American workers after the formation of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) through the Cold War period. It is here where Chacón sadly begins to take an anti-communist turn in his writing. The work does continue to discuss the strong and open connections that the Mexican-American working class had to the CPUSA, especially throughout the 1930s and 1940s, including the leadership role that the CPUSA played in organizing multiracial and multiethnic unions, women's unions, massive strikes and victories won by the Mexican-American workers under the leadership of the CPUSA and its mass organizations, and the severe state repression faced by Mexican-American communists. However, it is throughout this section that Professor Chacón does not miss a chance to heavily criticize the Communist International and CPUSA political line on the anti-fascist movement, going so far as to use quotes from American communist and anti-revisionist William Z. Foster as proof that the CPUSA had lost its revolutionary potential in the struggle against fascism, and the author engages in anti-communist propaganda in regards to the leadership period of Joseph Stalin and its supposed "undemocratic" nature, and attacks the CPUSA's labeling of the Socialist Party and Trotskyite elements as reformist and social-fascist in nature.

Overall, while the final section of *Radicals* begins to take on an anti-communist nature in its analysis, the history and information contained within its pages is indispensable to revolutionaries wanting to learn about the struggles and conditions faced by Mexican-American workers within the US over the last 150 years. As a final note, Chacón does use language throughout the work that is ambiguous to its actual meaning. Many of these terms verge on accepting a Sakaist and anti-Marxist nature, but I do not personally believe that to be the purposeful intent of the author. However, the history, direct source material, and wonderful historiography of the first several sections makes *Radicals in the Barrio* worth the read.

TRIBUTE TO TOMÁS MARTÍNEZ PINACHO, COMMUNIST JOURNALIST SLAIN IN MEXICO

Red Nesbitt, Maryland. August 26, 2023.

On August 25, 2020, activist, journalist and organizer Tomás Martínez was assassinated at a restaurant in the town of Miahuatlán de Porfirio Díaz, in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. Martínez was a member of the Revolutionary Popular Front (FPR) of Mexico, a founding leader of the Union of Poor Farmers, and a member of the Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist). That very day, Martínez participated in a protest condemning the social-democratic government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) for its austerity in economic and food subsidies for the people, the lack of health clinics in working class neighborhoods -at that time in the full swing of the COVID-19 pandemic- and the lack of technical support for the peasantry to increase employment and the production of food. Martínez was also critical of the

assassination of fellow journalists and organizers. The state of Oaxaca immediately cautioned the FPR against violent action but, true to their social democratic cowardice, the state politicians "encouraged" the FPR to express their democratic liberties.

Let there be no mistake, comrade Martínez was assassinated for his advocacy of the working masses of Mexico, his exposure of the systematic suppression of activists and journalists, and his agitation amongst peasants and proletarians in the very revolutionary summer of 2020. The American Party of Labor likewise remembers the dialogue shared with the PCM(ML). As we protested the murder of George Floyd and the countless other Black Americans slain or harassed by the police, our Mexican comrades were similarly involved in protesting the murders of Giovanni Lopez and Alexander Gomez, young people senselessly

victimized by a militaristic and unaccountable police force, not too dissimilar from our own American violence. We shared their outrage and declared our solidarity and support in those times as they had done the same for us amid such harrowing days of organizing.

As the years pass, our parties grow, and our movements develop, we will never forget the comrades we have lost along the way, especially those who gave everything for the struggle. The APL echoes the calls of the PCM(ML) for Truth, Memory, and Justice. The names of all fallen comrades, supporters, and innocent human beings, will drive us forward to a new world without senseless and reactionary violence, with economic and political justice and a true democracy.

**Never forget Tomás Martínez!
¡Nunca mas! Say their names!**

TRUMP BOOKED, COMMANDS FOLLOWERS, "NEVER SURRENDER!"

Leon V., Florida. Aug. 25, 2023.

Attempted putschist Donald Trump surrendered and was booked at Fulton County Jail in Georgia yesterday for a criminal racketeering and conspiracy charge, and although he was immediately released, the outrage and fervor of his fanbase must not be underestimated. This comes after his fourth case this year, as he and 18 of his associates face are being charged for crimes under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) for their attempts to overthrow the 2020 election in Georgia. While this case is only for a state felony in Georgia, the other charges against Trump and his team in New York are under federal jurisdiction.

Trump's processing throughout various courthouses has been peaceful on his part, but that has not applied to his followers. Mobs of his fascist supporters swarmed the Fulton County Jail yesterday to protest against the "unfair treatment" of Trump. With the multitude of charges levied towards Trump across four indictments, it's possible that at least one of them will stick. Should Trump be imprisoned it could ruin his ticket as the Republican candidate, which would be a disaster for the Republicans and their business overlords.

However, being in prison doesn't disqualify a candidate from running for president. Eugene Debbs, of the Socialist Party USA, ran for president from jail in 1920 and gained nearly a million votes. As we move further into speculation, it is possible that Trump, fueled by his own ego, could run as an independent or third party. This would spell almost certain defeat for the Republicans and would secure another four years for Biden.

However, a win for the Democrats is not necessarily a win for the working class. The ruling class behind the Republican Party are the same capitalists who control the Democrats. While a Democrat victory might delay the rise of fascism in the executive branch, it only slows the momentum for four more years, while doing nothing to stop the progression of fascism and legislative bigotry from the Supreme Court and on individual state levels. It is naive to expect the Democratic Party to fully capitalize on this moment for the betterment of the people, even when the cards are stacked in their favor. Shortly after his release, Trump returned to Twitter after the expiration of his 18-month exclusivity contract with Truth Social to share his own mugshot with the slogans, "Election interference," and "Never surrender!" This is ominously reminiscent

of when he ordered the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by" in a tweet on Sep. 29, 2020 – less than four months before the Jan. 6, 2021 storming of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

During this time, we Marxist-Leninists must keep agitating and educating the exploited and oppressed. Labor and national liberation movements are gripping the country and we have a duty to expand our efforts in these movements and imbue them with the vital life-blood of Marxism-Leninism. As the contradictions of capitalist society increase, the force and threat of fascism becomes ever more present.

Around the country, fascists and right-wing extremists have begun to launch legal and physical attacks on women, people of color, LGBTQIA+ people, and the working class as a whole. With their idol's criminal charges and his candidacy threatened, we cannot predict what the fascists will do. Above all else, stay safe and keep organizing. On a final note to all: be vigilant.

ALL POWER TO THE WORKING PEOPLE!

NO TRUMP! NO KKK! NO FASCIST USA!

NIGER: THE FRENCH ARMY MUST LEAVE

Published by the Workers' Communist Party of France (PCOF), July 31, 2023. Translated by Leonard Zorfass for the Red Phoenix.

In Niger, a military coup has overthrown President Bazoum. High-ranking officials from the armed forces, including General Tchiani, head of the Presidential Guard, have suspended the constitution, closed the borders, and established a National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP).

A significant opposition to the regime of Issoufou (2011-2021) and his successor Bazoum have rallied behind the CNSP. Supportive demonstrations have taken place in the capital, Niamey, and other cities, but the majority of the population is "waiting to see."

The population is fed up with the extreme poverty in a country rich in various minerals, exploited by multinational corporations, including Orano (formerly Areva), which has been mining uranium in Niger for decades. They can no longer tolerate the presence of French military troops from the Barkhane force redeployed to Niger after the forced withdrawal of French troops from Mali and Burkina Faso. The "security situation," meaning the presence and actions of jihadist groups, remains significant,

despite the presence of 1,500 French soldiers, French bases, US special units with their drones, and German and Italian instructors. Hence, one of the slogans during the demonstrations is, "French soldiers, get out, Barkhane, get out."

French imperialism and its allies in the EU refuse to meet with their "ally" in Niger, the "privileged partner of the EU in Sahel," distancing itself. They demand the reinstatement of the removed head of state and have organized an economic, financial, and commercial blockade of this landlocked country to "apply pressure" on the junta. However, the first and primary victims of this blockade are the people, both in urban and rural areas.

Macron has declared that he "will not tolerate any attack against France and its interests and will respond immediately and firmly." However, he knows that direct military intervention would provoke a popular response in Niger, increase opposition to French imperialism in other countries in the region, and potentially face opposition within France itself. That's why Macron has mobilized the heads of state and governments of the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States –Ed.) countries, at least those who remain allies of French imperialism, to organize

not only the criminal blockade of Niger but also to prepare for a joint military intervention. The origins of such intervention was discussed in early July during an ECOWAS summit, currently presided over by Nigeria, aiming to "put an end to coups d'état" in the region of Africa.

Similar to Mali and Burkina Faso, Russian flags have been raised in the demonstrations. French leaders and those of EU countries engaged in the Sahel region (Germany and Italy) see this as evidence that the demonstrators have been manipulated by Russia. It is evident that Russia is trying to capitalize on the difficulties faced by French imperialism to expand its influence and control over the wealth of Niger, as it has in other African countries. This is a concrete production of the imperialist power struggle taking place among various imperialist forces, notably in Africa. The peoples have nothing to gain by lining up behind one or the other of these imperialist powers and, for us, this means denouncing "our" imperialism and demanding the withdrawal of its troops.

No to the criminal blockade threatening the people of Niger!

Withdrawal of French troops from Niger!

No to imperialist interference in Niger!

THE ELECTRICITY MARKET AND THE LIE OF "GREEN" CAPITAL

S. Argun, Washington. July 14, 2023.

The critical transition to renewable energy sources has been set up to fail by the economic restructuring of the electricity sector, which prioritizes market profits over anything else. The plummeting costs and rising profits of renewable sources have led much of the media to believe that the long awaited market solution to climate change is just around the corner. The various multinational firms such as BP, Exxon, and Shell all announced their new commitments to investment in green energy and capital. However, those promises are either outright falsehoods or undelivered promises as the oil giants recede from these pledges in the face of changing market conditions. Concessions like these in the face of pressure from the market is by now a regular habit of the energy firms. While the market's quarterly and yearly movements disincentivize socially and environmentally necessary actions, the market structure itself prevents full renewable adoption, particularly in the sub-field of the electricity market. Here the market is not merely a weak incentive, but an active impediment to the complete adoption of renewables.

To briefly explain how most markets function in the United States, we must first understand the concept of marginal cost and merit order. While there are many different market mechanisms for trading electricity, a recurring structure is through the merit order of each generator's marginal costs. In a centralized market (the structure implemented in most of the US), the owners calculate their bids based on their generator's marginal cost, which is defined as the cost to produce another unit of energy given some existing production in the unit. This can more simply be thought of as the cost of running the generator without the cost of building the plant, starting it, or running it without any demand. These bids are sent to a system operator, a regulatory organ that then organizes the bids from lowest to highest cost and dispatches them to produce power until the demand is met. The cost of electricity is set at the price of the most expensive unit required to supply demand, which in theory incentivizes each owner to make their production as cheap as possible to ensure they bid in and to ensure that they are maximizing profits.

This is a massive simplification of electricity markets, which in reality are frequently subject to external conditions like fluctuations in predicted demand and failures of generating units, as well as a great deal of variance in the specific structure of the market, some of which allow bilateral trading between two private parties, or allow the generators to self-dispatch. Nonetheless, the basic



People march along Las Americas Highway to protest the LUMA Energy company in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on Oct. 15, 2021. (Carlos Giusti/AP Photo)

"logic" of the market persists between them all: the cost of electricity is set by the most expensive unit required to supply demand.

How does this affect renewables? The key feature of renewables – as far as the market is concerned – is their near-zero marginal cost. This means that a seller can potentially enter a market serviced by non-renewables and make out like bandits, producing the energy for next to no cost once the renewable plant is built, but get paid the cost of producing with coal or natural gas. This hasn't been lost on the energy firms of the world, hence the continuing pledges and occasional actual investment in renewable resources. So why have our brave entrepreneurs not led us yet into the green future? Again, this relates to the market's structure. As renewables enter the market, they will slowly "outbid" the natural gas and coal plants and drive them out of the market, driving down the price of electricity. The profits of the renewable plants will decline in proportion to their share of the electricity production, until the approximately zero marginal cost of renewables is reflected in the price and any opportunities for profit is fully destroyed. In reality, the market will never reach this point as the projected return on investment of building a renewable plant will likewise decline and put a stop to further integration. This is the essence of the self-cannibalization problem. As Marx said in the *Manifesto*:

"The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere."

Can we honestly then expect the owners of power plants to sabotage their own market, even for the sake of the planet? They will make enough solar farms and wind turbines to collect their pay, and pump out carbon dioxide and methane to produce all the rest.

The extent of this problem is a matter of some debate amongst economists. The maximal power production share that could be assigned to renewables without the investments keeling into the negative is modeled at 80%. This relies first on the economic absurdity that any capitalist would invest in a "zero-profit" project, and furthermore relies on the political absurdity of a carbon tax, which has been exposed by former Exxon lobbyist Keith McCoy as a red herring set loose by the gas companies (in addition to a litany of other crimes, lies, and bribes committed and dispensed) to slow the climate response. As is typical of political discourse, all potential solutions are "incentives" a la the aforementioned carbon tax, but even other "incentives" seem unlikely, as they would at the outset require a governing body committed to combating climate change. Recent developments such as the approval of the extraction of the Willow oil reserves in Alaska's North Slope and the ousting of former Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chairman Richard Glick over his desire to more thoroughly review the necessity and environmental effect of natural gas projects all took place under the Democratic Party, widely aggrandized as the "greener" of the two American blocs. Whatever the Democrats may believe of themselves or want others to believe of them, their actions demonstrate that they intend to carry on much as

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they have been, and are not interested in making any proactive, drastic, or indeed necessary moves to combat climate change. Even if they were, any of their proposed measures would be fought tooth and nail, first by the sellers of all forms of electric power to either keep themselves in the market or to ensure their profits remain as high as possible, and then by the gas and oil lobby to prevent one of the largest markets for their product from drying up.

What then is the solution? If the market poses a problem, then the simplest solution is to remove the market. This is not as drastic or artificial a measure as it might seem, as monopoly (either private or public) was the most prominent form of electricity distribution in the entire world. Mexico, the US, and much of continental Europe used vertically integrated, closely regulated municipal monopolies and utilities, and the UK, Australia, and Chile along with most of South America had nationalized grids. Chile is a country of special interest, because the waves of marketization and privatization that overtook all the previously mentioned countries began there. After Augusto Pinochet overthrew the social democratic Allende government in 1973, with the aid of the UK and the US, Chile embarked on a project of mass privatization of previously government-owned enterprises under the advisement of the "Chicago Boys," a group of neoliberal economists trained at the University of Chicago under Milton Friedman. Among those industries was the nation's electricity generation and transmission, which was promptly marketized via the 1982 Electricity Act. The market quickly devolved into oligarchic monopoly, in effect creating very large private firms that stood in the way of changing any regulations to their detriment, to say nothing of outages and wild price swings. However, to the rest of the world and the economists in charge of the project, the key goal of making money off power generation had been achieved, and other countries soon followed suit. The United Kingdom and Australia fully privatized their generation over the course of the 90s, along with much of the US, though this process was and is incomplete given the decentralized management of utilities in this country.

Despite the lessons learned during the Chilean experiment, these market measures were by no means clean or gentle, then or now. The placement of the electrical grid in the hands of private corporations is a risky business, as these corporations don't see electricity as a common good necessary for the functioning of modern society, but as a source of profit to be exploited. A recurring theme is the emergence of "market power" wherein private firms with large shares of the market can influence supply and demand and create huge price spikes and rake in massive profits. Despite nearly twenty years of market creation and

regulation, one such exercise in market power unfolded in the California energy crisis, in which Enron coordinated their plants to shut down during peak demand, causing outages while nonetheless allowing them to "rake in" premiums for the power they continued to provide. Enron had carried out the same activities in Canada, though with less disastrous results.

In the present, the price of electricity in the UK and Texas has skyrocketed in response to various political and environmental conditions. Over the winter of 2022–2023 the price of electricity in the UK soared into the price caps, as it did in Texas in 2021–2022, and the companies providing power were only too happy to charge these prices that in no way reflected the capabilities of people, or indeed most businesses, to pay. This necessitated either a lowering of the price cap in the UK's case or a wave of loans for firms to cover the costs of electricity in the case of Texas. Nor has the fun stopped: this summer, Texas' energy prices doubled over a projected heatwave, and investors were helpfully directed to the stocks through which they may best profit from this reversal of fortune. This will likely be a recurring theme through the next decade – the energy marketeers profiting off the climate crisis they had a pivotal role in creating.

Why did most of the capitalist world elect to pursue this market form, given how easy it is to abuse? While much of the process unfolded out of view of the public eye, a typical claim is that markets will tend to increase efficiency and lower costs overall, minus a few incidences of obvious price gouging, of course. In the US, this has been proven false, with consumer prices rising and customer welfare declining, and any efficiency gains going directly into the pockets of generation owners. This is topically demonstrated in the occupied territory of Puerto Rico, which recently had their grid transferred into private hands. Instead of taking seriously their mandate to update and maintain the (admittedly aged and nonfunctional) grid, the company has elected to continue reaping the profits while the outages worsen. The real reason for the adoption of markets and deregulation is the ability to make money. This comes to us from a leading analyst of the United States electricity market, Paul Joskow, speaking on the eve of widespread deregulation and marketization about the concerned parties pushing for markets:

"[The reform efforts] have been led by large industrial customers interested in lower electricity prices and by the independent power providers and new electricity marketers who can profit if reforms allow them to sell directly to end-use customers at prevailing wholesale market prices..."

The goal of all this was not efficiency or price reduction. It was to free up the billions of dollars of revenue to go out and seek profits, which were found at a greater human and environmental cost than we can afford. The market can not save us. We will not "naturally" uncover a market solution to the climate crisis, in the energy sector or anywhere else. This infrastructure is a social good, a product that serves the whole of society, not the piggy bank of a select few companies. As Stalin writes in *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*:

"An instance in which the relations of production do not correspond to the character of the productive forces, conflict with them, is the economic crises in capitalist countries, where private capitalist ownership of the means of production is in glaring incongruity with the social character of the process of production, with the character of the productive forces. This results in economic crises, which lead to the destruction of productive forces. Furthermore, this incongruity itself constitutes the economic basis of social revolution, the purpose of which IS to destroy the existing relations of production and to create new relations of production corresponding to the character of the productive forces."

The generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity must be taken from private enterprise and placed into the hands of the working class and a socialist state. Nationalization, under capitalist social relations, will still see electrical systems operated on the law of value and will only serve as a minor band-aid to the overall contradictions inherent to capitalism. To truly solve the issue, a new economic model that puts human needs at its center must be built.



VILNIUS: A SUMMIT OF WAR AND REARMAMENT



U.S. President Biden looks to Ukraine President Zelenskyy as he speaks during a meeting on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, July 12, 2023. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

Communist Platform of the Proletariat of Italy, *Scintilla* #135, July/August 2023.

The annual summit of NATO took place on July 11 and 12, 2023 in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, practically on the borders of the Russian Federation – a clear sign of the escalation of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

During the summit the heads of state and government of the imperialist and capitalist countries that are at war with Russian imperialism approved plans to:

- Further prolong the ongoing war, an imperialist proxy war that is the continuation of a decades-long policy of expansion, provocations and threats of NATO, paid mainly by the Ukrainian and Russian working masses. This is without providing for any negotiation other than Zelenskyy's "10-point peace formula" (achievable only with Russia's unlikely defeat on the ground) and thus supporting a protracted war.

- Intensify the war by providing the corrupt Ukrainian regime with cluster bombs, F16s, advanced tanks, long-range missiles, and depleted uranium munitions, and to consider the use of "tactical" nuclear weapons, in addition to the huge financial support (a fund of another \$20 billion) without which Kiev would collapse.

- Prepare for the expansion of the theater of war in the Baltic, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Arctic, regions where Russian imperialism is present, as well as in Belarus and Russia itself. This is while military interventions are being prepared in other regions: in the Middle East, in North Africa and in the Sahel, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Asia-Pacific region.

At the last summit in Madrid it was decided to strengthen the "battle groups" positioned on NATO's eastern flank and to expand the "NATO Response Force" from 40,000 to more than 300,000 soldiers. In Vilnius it was decided to put these troops in a position of high readiness, adding others until they reached the level of combat brigades and including air and naval forces. In addition, an Allied Response Force has been set up to respond quickly to crisis situations in every direction.

The bandits gathered in Vilnius also discussed the further enlargement of NATO: after Finland, Sweden (it will be the 32nd member, twice as many as in 1990), Georgia, Bosnia, Moldova, etc. The process of integration of Ukraine that will be concluded after the war is advancing. So said Biden, demonstrating how cynical he is using Kiev as its pawn.

This is while NATO's Asian partners (Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea), as well as the EU itself, are increasingly integrated into the US-led war policy to maintain its world hegemony, which is threatened by the rise of imperialist China, which Washington wants to strategically detach from Russia.

The NATO summit in Vilnius has very high costs, so NATO members will have to devote at least 2% of their GDP to NATO spending on a lasting basis. At the same time, it was decided to modernize the war apparatus on the basis of a more developed military industry, this also in Europe (imperialist Germany is particularly interested), with supply chains that cannot be blocked by imperialist rivals.

As the war is becoming more and more "industrial," the member states are called upon to contribute

to exercises (especially on the eastern flank) and military missions with trained and equipped troops, armaments, logistics, and growing economic resources, at the expense of the economic and social needs of the workers and peoples.

At the Vilnius Summit, NATO reiterated that strategic nuclear weapons, particularly those possessed by the USA and also stationed in Europe, are the foundation of its war policy, as they are capable of imposing unacceptable costs on the adversary.

This means that the Atlantic Alliance is preparing for war with a nuclear dimension, modernizing and strengthening its atomic terror apparatus.

As a result, the NATO members will increase exercises to prepare to use nuclear weapons simultaneously with conventional weapons. NATO's willingness to use nuclear weapons also emerges from the criticism of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which would undermine NATO's ability to threaten other states.

The arms race of the Western imperialists is therefore continuing. Obviously, imperialist Russia, like imperialist China, will not sit idly by.

The militarist process to which NATO is giving a strong impetus is seeing internal disputes. The imperialist states behind the scenes are fighting over the division of spheres of influence and the spoils of war, for trade agreements and investments, for energy sources and routes, in the face of the "cohesion of solidarity" proclaimed at the summit.

Faced with the USA that wants to bring its allies into line and unload on them (that is, on the working masses of these countries) the costs of ever wider military involvement, the European bourgeoisie are hesitating.

Even behind the reluctance of European governments on cluster bombs, it is not difficult to see the fear of a more massive commitment in a conflict that is also directed against their economies, which are already suffering from energy supply difficulties, the consequences of sanctions, with the now imminent recession.

Europe's warmongers also fear the response of the working masses, who are increasingly tired of suffering the costs of war. The divergences are therefore bound to widen.

But what is the position of Italian imperialism in this process?

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

It undoubtedly plays a leading role in the ongoing war.

For the US, Meloni [Italian Prime Minister] was a "positive surprise," having followed the line dictated by Washington without breathing (even more so will it have to do so with regard to China).

However, the Italian bourgeoisie must not be reduced to the role of mere servant of the USA. It participates in the war for the interests of its war and energy monopolies, of the big "re/construction" companies that are competing with other monopolies to expand all over the world, dragging behind it the medium and small capitalists.

The ruling class, by participating in the war and the plundering of dependent peoples, is trying to find abroad the solution to its serious internal problems. Therefore, military spending is growing, taken

from social spending. But every euro of military spending means an extra euro for oppression and violence against the working masses.

Today the struggle against war and the warmongering government of Meloni, against sending weapons and funds to Ukraine, for the withdrawal of troops sent abroad, for the withdrawal from NATO and all imperialist alliances, for the closure of US and NATO bases, against the increase in military spending at the expense of social programs, for the banning of nuclear weapons, is presented as an item on the agenda. Let us therefore prepare ourselves for an autumn of struggle, without siding with any of the imperialist parties in conflict, but by developing proletarian internationalism which means in the first place a struggle against "our own" imperialism.

As decided in the Milan assembly of June 11, the

imperative is to join forces to start a mass struggle that will frustrate the war plans of the Meloni government and NATO. The commitments are clear: to work for the success of the national mobilization of October 21 with demonstrations in front of the military bases of Coltano and Ghedi (in the latter airport there are atomic bombs).

To this end, it is necessary to work for the success of the strike of the conflicting unions on October 20, involving in its preparation the delegates and combative workers of all the unions, intervening in the other deadlines of struggle that are being prepared, closely linking the question of peace to that of the bread and freedom of the workers, raising the flag of international solidarity of the proletarians, of the brotherhood of peoples, which can triumph only with socialism.

HOLLYWOOD SHUTS DOWN, ACTORS JOIN WRITERS ON STRIKE

V. Valentino, California. July 15, 2023.

In what can be seen as an act of camaraderie, members of the Screen Actors Guild will join striking Writers Guild of America members on picket lines throughout Los Angeles and across the country. The last time both the writers' and actors' unions were on strike simultaneously was in 1960 during the Eisenhower administration. Fran Drescher, president of the actors' union stated, "SAG-AFTRA negotiated in good faith and was eager to reach a deal that sufficiently addressed performer needs, but the AMPTP's (Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers -Ed.) responses to the union's most important proposals have been insulting and disrespectful of our massive contributions to this industry." The failure to reach a deal has further halted production due to the Writers Guild of America Strike that began on May 2.

The endgame according to the bosses is to "allow things to drag on until union members start losing their homes." Yet they maintain that the decision to walk away from negotiations was the union's choice and not theirs. The union is seeking a residual formula that would account for the success of shows, yet the studios have been unwilling to acquiesce to the demands for full disclosure of viewership data. In response, SAG-AFTRA has proposed using metrics from Parrot Analytics, a third party data firm. Furthermore, they are also seeking regulations on the use of artificial intelligence which would require that actors would be paid for any AI-generated use of their likeness.

The union addressed its members stating, "As you know, over the past decade, your compensation has been severely eroded by the rise of the streaming ecosystem. Furthermore, artificial intelligence poses



WGA workers strike outside of Paramount Pictures studios in Los Angeles. (Mario Tama/Getty)

an existential threat to creative professions, and all actors and performers deserve contract language that protects them from having their identity and talent exploited without consent and pay." Talks began on June 7. Drescher, who is also the chair of the negotiating committee, posted a video to members on June 24 expressing that talks had been "extremely productive."

However, negotiations have recently been marred by rancorous sentiments being held between studio executives and all others involved. So much so, that all parties agreed to a proposal to bring in federal mediators to resolve the dispute. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service dispatched a mediator on Wednesday who was in attendance for the final day of talks. The membership of the union has been urging the leadership to assume an unwavering

stance to ensure that their demands are fully met. In a letter signed 2 weeks ago by more than 2,000 actors, the leadership was encouraged to accept nothing less than a "transformative" deal.

SAG-AFTRA members have already displayed solidarity with their colleagues in the Writers Guild, joining them on the picket lines in front of major studios. As of last week, many actors were present at WGA pickets to get training on the logistics of strike operations from WGA strike captains. 98% of the actors union voted in support of a strike authorization which has given leadership to call an industry wide strike if no agreement is reached.

CLEARING THE AIR ON INFANTILE U.S. GUN CULTURE: MARX REVISITED



Ian Ocx and June Vass. August 18, 2023.

In the wake of the unprecedented increase in deadly mass shootings across the United States over the last decade we in the American Party of Labor found it necessary to put forward a dialectical materialist analysis of the ongoing gun violence problem within the US, demonstrating the connections between the social alienation intrinsic to capitalism, right-wing extremism, and the fetishized gun culture that predominates within our society. After the publication of this analysis the APL put forward two more articles on the issue, an editorial on sensible gun reform regulations and another analyzing the history and relevance of the Second Amendment to the US Constitution. There is one more subject concerning firearms that we as a Party would like to address at this time: a specific quote from Karl Marx which many people within US socialist and communist circles use to justify lax gun regulations across the country. If you have been around the socialist and communist movement for some time you have probably seen or heard people use the phrase "under no pretext" in opposition to the idea of instituting regulations on the sales and purchases of firearms within the US. This slogan, "under no pretext," which is itself **not an analysis** of the firearm crisis faced in the US, is a shorthand version of an excerpt from Karl Marx's *Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League*, written in 1850, the full passage of which reads:

"To be able forcefully and threateningly to oppose this party [bourgeois-democrats], whose betrayal of the workers will begin with the very first hour of victory, the workers must be armed and organized. The whole proletariat must be armed at once with muskets, rifles, cannon and ammunition, and the revival of the old-style citizens' militia, directed against the workers, must be opposed. Where the formation of this militia cannot be prevented, the workers must try to organize themselves independently as a proletarian guard, with elected leaders and with their own elected general staff; they must try to place themselves not under the orders of the state authority but of the revolutionary local councils set up by the workers. **Where the workers are employed by the state, they must arm and organize themselves into special corps with elected leaders, or as a part of the proletarian guard. Under no pretext should arms and ammunition be surrendered; any attempt to disarm the workers must be frustrated, by force if necessary.** The destruction of the bourgeois democrats' influence over the workers, and the enforcement of conditions which will compromise the rule of bourgeois democracy, which is for the moment inevitable, and make it as difficult as possible – these are the main points which the proletariat and therefore the League must keep in mind during and after the approaching uprising."

It is important to note that the context in which Marx wrote the above quote is always alienated from the shorthand version of the excerpt when used as a slogan by people on the US left who oppose firearm regulations. The entirety of the *Address* sourced above was written in 1850, two years into the ongoing revolutionary struggles across Europe, and particularly referenced the then-ongoing class struggle in the German states between the bourgeoisie (the "party" Marx refers to) and the proletariat. This passage was deliberately prefaced with the context, "In the coming revolutionary struggle..." as the middle segment of a three-part chronology of events, separating the tactics Marx deemed necessary before, during, and after the revolutionary struggle. To be clear, the above-quoted passage falls into the second of the three categories – that period of open,

"bloody conflicts," **after** "the creation of an independent organization of the workers' party" with "every one of its communes a center and nucleus of workers' associations." Thus, Marx's later insistence to frustrate "any attempt to disarm the workers" is not a universal or immutable decree that every member of the working class should have full and open access to any firearm at all times, but a realization that during the violent rupture of open revolutionary insurrection the proletariat must be able to defend itself from its class enemies, assuming that by that time we will have already organized ourselves and built the necessary structural foundation to do so.

"Where the formation of this militia cannot be prevented, the workers must try to organize themselves independently as a proletarian guard, with elected leaders and with their own elected general staff; they must try to place themselves not under the orders of the state authority but of the revolutionary local councils set up by the workers."

The United States today is suffering from a rampant growth in far-right extremist and neo-fascist politics. This rise in neo-fascist extremism has also sadly led to an increase in the instances of right-wing violence within the US. Between the years 2016 and 2017 right-wing extremist attacks nearly quadrupled, and in 2018 the national average of violent right-wing extremist attacks jumped to 31 instances per year. As was stated in the article the published in *The Red Phoenix* on May 13, 2023, "The Continued Danger and Tragedy of America's Gun Violence," research shows that firearms are used by such extremists because they are "simple to acquire [and] easy to use."

It is worth noting here that most violent attacks committed by these fanatics are overwhelmingly aimed at oppressed minorities such as Black Americans, Latinos, and various Asian communities, as well as women, LGBTQIA+ people, and people with disabilities. It is also important to note that these populations who are most victimized by firearms also tend to be the most numerous proponents of increased regulations. According to recent data from the Pew Research Center, Black adults – who die from firearm violence at 2.4 times the rate of their white counterparts – show the highest support for stricter laws at 77%, followed by Asian adults (74%) and Hispanic adults (68%), compared to 58% of Americans overall. As of 2023 gun violence has become a more frequent household fear with 51% of Americans surveyed saying that they "worry that their loved ones could be victims of gun violence." Overwhelmingly, the majority of the US working class wants to see change and reform to the inadequate system of gun regulations that enable this targeted violence to occur on such a scale.

The APL holds that **it is necessary** to support stronger gun regulations within the United States **at this time**, especially relating to semi-automatic firearms (legally referred to as "assault rifles") and large magazines, including more thorough background checks and longer waiting periods for gun purchases. We, in the US, **are not** in an active insurrectionist situation like the one Marx referenced when he used that often-abstracted phrase "under no pretext" and, as research shows, right-wing extremists, empowered by the intentional inaction of petty-bourgeois legislators, are using the careless gun regulations within the US to inflict their violent and reactionary views on the oppressed and exploited. Marx writes:

"As in the past, so in the coming struggle also, **the petty bourgeoisie, to a man, will hesitate as long as possible and remain fearful, irresolute and inactive**; but when victory is certain it will claim it for itself and will call upon the workers to behave in an orderly fashion, to return to work and to prevent so-called excesses, and it will exclude the proletariat from the fruits of victory. It does not lie within the power of the workers to prevent the petty-bourgeois democrats from

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doing this; **but it does lie within their power to make it as difficult as possible for the petty bourgeoisie to use its power** against the armed proletariat, and to dictate such conditions to them that the rule of the bourgeois democrats, from the very first, **will carry within it the seeds of its own destruction**, and its subsequent displacement by the proletariat will be made considerably easier.”

Supporting stronger regulations on firearms within the US **at this time** is a twofold line. It (i) acts as a way to hamper the growing violent neo-fascist threat from arming itself even further, forcing those reactionary elements to bend to the will of the working class; and by extent of hampering the fascists by any degree, (ii) acts as a way to preserve and protect the lives of the multiethnic and multinational American working class. Opposition to strengthening regulations and restrictions concerning the sale of firearms has the potential to dangerously harm the working class within the US and thus impede our organizing efforts to prepare for the real overthrow of capital. In 2022 alone, 21 of the 25 extremist-related murders were committed by white supremacists, which again showcases the need to curtail the ability for the right-wing and neo-fascists to continuously arm themselves at the same rate as they already have been able to do.

Over the course of the coming years of class struggle in the US there will be phases that have strategic importance in relation to firearms depending on the developing material conditions in our society. **Right now the immediate and current phase** of the working class struggle demands, **in relation to firearms**, that the focus be on curtailing the prevalence of mass shootings and gun-related violence that disproportionately affects various minority communities within the US working class. The social trauma imposed on the American public by these attacks not only alienates the people at large from radical organizational solutions

to this terror due to negative associations with “extremism,” but also foments an aversion to politics in general. This phase, as previously stated, is concerned with combating the growing violent danger of right-wing extremism by fighting for stronger regulations on the sale of firearms (particularly semi-automatic weapons or “assault rifles”), increasing waiting periods for gun purchases, and limiting the sale of large and extended magazines. The US working class needs to win victories against the neo-fascist danger in various forms. However, as stated in our recent article, “The Continued Danger and Tragedy of America’s Gun Violence”:

“With capitalism’s inherent alienating nature, the threat of right-wing extremism and mass shootings will never be truly averted until capitalism itself is overthrown and replaced with a socialist system, where the working people have control over society and will not just limit the contradictions inherent to capitalism but will negate their existence altogether.”

Therefore, the long-term tasks of this struggle will over time enter a different phase, one in which the US working class is not simply in a state of defense, but a position of strategic offense. At such a stage, the relation of the working class to firearm regulations will take new tactical shape. However, until that phase in the revolutionary struggle is reached, the infantile response of abstractly sloganeering Marx’s “under no pretext” quote while alienating it from its intended usage and meaning, all while facing the growing threat of gun violence that undoubtedly affects the safety of the US working class, is a non-dialectical approach to the currently existing material conditions and social relations within US capitalist society, and has no place within the current tactics of a principled Marxist-Leninist movement.

KEEP YOUR GUARD UP, REDOUBLE YOUR WORK!



Proletarios de todos los países... ¡Uníos!

EN MARCHA



POR EL PODER POPULAR Y EL SOCIALISMO

Órgano Central del Partido Comunista Marxista Leninista del Ecuador

Editorial by the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador (PCMLE). Published in *En Marcha* #2060, Aug. 9-11, 2023. Translated by Red Nesbitt for the *Red Phoenix*.

Very few days remain until the finalization of the electoral campaign, and, far from the “odds being settled” there is still much to do for disputing the support of a section of the population that has not decided their vote as yet and represents a significant percentage of the population that could very well change the positions of the “two” presidential candidates.

Everywhere it has been heard that this has been an atypical process, for all the particularities it has had, given the unusualness of its convocation and the short

campaign proceeding to it. Except, it has not ceased to be a typical process in the conflicting positions and interests of opposed classes. We say this in the sense that the only political project that represents the interests of the workers and peoples of Ecuador (the Claro alliance which has received many votes high on the electoral lists), we think that the other presidential candidates respond to one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, without exception.

Yakú Perez and the candidates of lists, 2, 17, and 20 symbolize something new, a new hope of change that the people yearn for; González, Sonnenholzner, Topic, Villavicencio, Hervas and the rest, they embody the past. They are of the government that is responsible for our unemployment, poverty, the hundreds of thousands of the youth that have no access to higher

education; the government that has given support and service, to benefit big business, the banks, and foreign capitalists, be they American, Chinese, or European.

The enthusiasm gathered to the candidacy of Yakú Perez, provoked among the popular sectors of the whole country, is trying to be “diminished” by the false polls that talk about the alleged fall in the percentage that intends to vote in the second round of this election, which would put Perez out. That’s how they operated in the first moment of unity between the correístas (social-democrats) and lassistas (conservatives) in the previous presidential election and then later enjoyed the fraud that put Lasso on the ballot.

Correísmo has fear of being measured against Yakú in the second round, because they know they will be defeated, for this they will repeat the history of past elections. The final stretch of this campaign must not focus solely on our candidates, but we must also focus on organizing electoral control, in the designation of delegates to joint electoral boards, because to avoid this at the table, the capitalists will laugh at this popular declaration of struggle from the masses.

LOOSENING CHILD LABOR REGULATIONS, DEATHS OF TEEN WORKERS

Alan I., Ohio. August 31, 2023.

Child labor laws are being repealed in the United States in order to preserve profits, loosening previous restrictions in order to allow younger minors to work in dangerous settings. In a span of only five weeks this summer, three teens have died in industrial workplace accidents: Duvan Tomas Perez, 16, of Mississippi; Michael Schuls, 16, of Wisconsin; and Will Hampton, 16, of Missouri. Capitalist news outlets have discussed at length the so-called "labor shortage" in the world economy and particularly in the United States. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, there are 9.8 million job openings and 5.9 million unemployed workers, which would usually result in a situation where workers would have more power to demand better pay, a marginal victory in the class war. Indeed, this was the case among lower-income workers who won a modest rise in pay between March 2020 to March 2022. But even such a small gain is unacceptable to the capitalist class, who are now attempting to undercut the workers by exploiting children at an increasing rate by normalizing and legalizing dangerous child labor. There are currently seven states where legislation lowering the alcohol serving age has passed, and two more where it has been proposed, which places minors in jobs where they interact directly with intoxicated adults. Six bills have been introduced this year that would extend working hours for those under 18 years old. Most shockingly of all, Iowa has recently enacted a bill that would allow 14-year-olds to work in meat freezers and on assembly lines.

Despite the nearly 90-year history of federal regulations restricting child labor, beginning with the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, such abuses have continued illegally even before these recent legislative rollbacks. Children as young as 14 are permitted to work in "allowed occupations," including many service and non-agricultural industry positions, but between October 2022 and July 2023 the number of cases of illegally employed children rose by 44% compared to the previous year. Minors in general – and especially those under 16 – are engaged in longer hours in more dangerous industrial jobs, such as in garment factories, tobacco farms, meat packing plants, sawmills, and landfills. Now, the capitalists are working to make this the legal status quo.

Amid depressed wages and rising inflation, working-class families are struggling to survive under the looming threats of hunger and homelessness, and are susceptible to permitting their teenage children to work wherever they can legally earn a paycheck. Keeping that threat held above the heads of



Left to right: Duvan Tomas Perez, 16; Michael Schuls, 16; Will Hampton, 16. (HuffPost)

workers is how capitalists keep our wages low and their profits high. With the growing labor movement in the United States, and their greater bargaining power in this crisis, workers are finding it easier to demand what is due to them. This "labor shortage" is more a shortage of the capitalists' will to pay a living wage. The capitalists refuse to accept that the crisis would be resolved by simply raising wages and scaling back their enterprises.

These terrible bills must be campaigned against and repealed where necessary. Any attempt to bring back child labor must be met by coordinated political and economic action. This will take considerable effort but is absolutely vital, not only to advance the interests of the proletariat, but also to simply protect youths, imperiled as they are in a world deep in the throes of a climate crisis, rising reaction, growing gun violence, and other twisted machinations of the capitalist system. As Frederick Engels once said, "Bourgeois society stands at the crossroads, either transition to socialism or regression into barbarism." So let there be no mistake, when working parents have to decide between their child's safety, health, and happiness over putting food on the table, what can this be but barbarism? The communist movement that won the working class these precious reforms in the New Deal does not exist at present; its reforms have failed, as reforms always will. It stands to us, revolutionaries and progressive allies, to recover a movement that will finish the job. We have no time to spare, no promises to hide behind. The future foretells the most grotesque depravity not only for ourselves but for our children. The workers cannot afford to fail them. For the workers and our children, we WILL have socialism.



AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!

NEW OFFENSIVE, SAME STALEMATE IN UKRAINE

Ukraine forces advance in the south



Red Nesbitt, Maryland. August 20, 2023.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

From late July to early August, Ukrainian forces launched a new offensive in the Donbas and Zaporizhzhia region after months of a vicious stalemate in the surroundings of Bakhmut (Artemivsk), capturing the villages of Blahodatne, Makarivka, Neskuchne, Lobkove, and Levadne, among others. Trench warfare was even introduced in some modern, shabby recreation of the first World War. At the time of writing, some villages in the southern Kherson Oblast are hotly contested as the Russians struggle in an incredibly desperate position in Robotyne, Stepne and Stanislav. Further, the Ukrainians – with increased support from Denmark, the Baltic nations, Czechia, and others – have bombed the occupied port of Berdiansk. This is one of the chief long-term economic goals of the Russian imperialist expansion. But their ambitious “Crimean Bridge” connecting mainland Russia to Crimea was bombed several times up to August 13. Pro-Ukrainian “partisans” have also sabotaged the crucial Azovstal steel plant in occupied Mariupol.

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE UKRAINIAN WAR

These are relatively minor gains for the Ukrainians, although as sanctions deepen against Russia, and more support pours in from the NATO countries to the Zelenskyy regime, Russia cannot maintain its ground for long. On a visit to Belarus, Putin declared that the Ukrainian offensive has failed. However the recent intensification of Russia’s repeated nightly bombings of Zaporizhzhia, Lutsk,

Lviv, and Dnipro (Dnipropetrovsk) betray a desperation to divert the Ukrainian forces away from the Donbas before any more territory is lost.

On a global scale, the new conflict boiling up in West Africa between the military regimes of Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali on the one hand, and the ECOWAS countries on the other, helps Russia. It comes at the perfect time for Russia to divert American and French imperialism (as France is the largest military power in the EU) away from supporting Ukraine. These two historically colossal empires might hit this roadblock of a new “front” created among their neo-colonial interests. In that case Russia may very well compensate for the recent losses in the Donbas. For the time being, the world watches with baited breath as these once-fraternal nations drown each other in the mud at the altar of divergent imperialist blocs.

SUMMARY OF THE UKRAINIAN WAR AT PRESENT

We are forced to speculate on the strategic and political maneuvers of the main players. The fact remains that this war has been waged for a year and a half, with neither side decidedly holding the advantage. The citizens of both countries suffer above all others. The fear of unpopular drafts and the high casualties at the front compel Putin’s government to offer amnesty to criminals in exchange for military service. Several Russian cities have already been bombarded, including Moscow, Krasnodar, Kursk, and Belgorod.

WORKERS’ PERSPECTIVE

The fundamental lesson is that workers around the world must resist the multiple attempts of both capitalist powers, Russia and Ukraine, to try and extend their struggle to multiple nations. In November 2022, an explosion went off in the Polish border village of Przewodów, killing two. Blame was immediately placed on Russia, who denied the bombing, while American investigation and on the ground footage revealed no missile fired on the village from the direction of Russian forces. Ukrainian investigators were denied access by Polish authorities. This was a rushed attempt by the Ukrainian reaction to drag NATO more openly into the war against Putin. Zelenskyy also accused the Russians of a “false flag” attack in the Belarusian city of Mazyr as well as in the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant. Zelenskyy’s determination is likely renewed after the Vilnius NATO Summit did not give Ukraine a timeline for joining NATO. That would have automatically drawn the whole of NATO into armed conflict with Russia and its allies. Valuable missiles and funding were tendered to Kyiv however, including increased financial and logistical support from Finland and the Netherlands, among others.

In the final analysis, both Russia and Ukraine launch their paltry offensives and grotesque bombing strikes that reduce civilians to collateral damage. With all of the recent developments, including the potential for war in West Africa, global conflict is the sword of Damocles that hangs over the heads of the workers and the peoples. It remains of the utmost importance for workers, east and west, in Europe, North America, West Africa, Russia, etc., to prepare opposition to a new manufactured world war. The American Party of Labor will continue exposing these maneuvers to the best of our ability, and work with our allies in preparing the field for popular resistance if this imperialist horror comes to pass. To you, workers, remain vigilant! Do not be deceived by the claims of either Russian or NATO capitalism. ANY imperialist war is to our detriment and the benefit of the capitalists.

No war among the peoples! No peace among the classes!

THE COMMUNISTS AND THE BOLIVARIAN PROCESS



Venezuelan poet Pío Tamayo.



Editorial by the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Venezuela (PCMLV). August 24, 2023.

Translated by Camilo Lazo for the Red Phoenix.

In this edition we want to address a topical problem, which is of great interest to the international and national communist movement. We want to start by saying that since the arrival of Marxist ideas in Venezuela around the 1920s, with the first attempts to build a Party of the proletariat, there have been clashes over the strategy and tactics to follow.

This ideological struggle between tendencies has led, since that distant time, to the existence of several tactics and not just one, as the revisionists would have one believe, which has always had legality and patronage in the state, and which they assume is the only manner of existence for those pretending to be the representatives of the communists of Venezuela.

Since 1928, with the actions led by Pío Tamayo, representative of the Communist International, the difference has been between those who worked to build a Party with the incipient proletariat and the national peasantry and those who considered going to the tail of the democratic bourgeoisie through of invasions and adventures of strongmen.

After assessing the initial historical process, we must now address the situation that is experienced worldwide today to locate the framework of what is happening, which is undoubtedly a sharpening of the fundamental contradictions of the time. This must be the first element to take into account to address the current situation and define the correct revolutionary tactic, either from the national or international perspective, since, as we have analyzed on several occasions, taking as reference

some works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism and the Communist International, we live in the superior phase of capitalism, called imperialism by Lenin. Imperialism is not just the military expansionism of a nation, but is defined by the presence of some fundamental features such as: the imposition of monopolies, the dominance of finance capital, the export of capital, the struggle for the distribution of markets, and a new distribution of the world already distributed.

From these definitions we can then orient ourselves on firm bases to define what happens in the world, which countries meet these traits and which can be defined as imperialist, as opposed to the definition of dependent countries, which are the two main Marxist-Leninist categories with which to locate nations in today's world: imperialist nations and dependent nations.

Based on these definitions, knowing the characteristics of imperialism and the current struggle between two large blocs at the international level, we can firmly assess the national problem:

We define the country (Venezuela) as dependent capitalist, historically subjected to the domination of powers in Europe and the United States, which is why we understand, without any doubt, that breaking imperialist oppression is the first-order task in advancing towards national liberation and socialism.

It is also important to make clear the heterogeneous composition of the Bolivarian process in which various tendencies struggle, some democratic and revolutionary-based, others corrupt and authoritarian, but in general forced to make agreements or alliances among themselves and with the popular forces to confront the common enemy.

The main opposition to the Bolivarian process, and the most dangerous due to its global ties, is led by Yankee imperialism and its puppets, who, even though they were born in Venezuelan territory, such as Guaido, María Corina Machado or Lorenzo Mendoza, are its direct representatives, and therefore our immediate enemies.

After evaluating all these elements, we can place ourselves more clearly in the current situation, where the TSJ (*Supreme Tribunal of Justice, the head of the judicial branch of government -Ed.*) has handed over the administration of the red rooster card to the former Secretary General of the state of Táchira, after the request for constitutional protection, which places before us, from the perspective of tactics, the existence of three lines:

1. The line of the Marxist-Leninists of Venezuela stands firmly on the premises of the anti-imperialist struggle for popular democracy and socialism, with a revolutionary policy which understands bourgeois legality as something secondary and fights mainly for legitimacy among the masses, assuming the unity of the revolutionary movement in the Popular Front. This line focuses on developing the class struggle against the representatives of the bourgeoisie, together with the working class, the peasantry, and the revolutionary communes, taking advantage of the cracks of bourgeois democracy to consolidate a link with the broad masses, a way to advance towards national liberation and socialism, applying a policy of **critical support with demands** in the face of a Bolivarian process, of a bourgeois democratic nature, attacked by the US-EU imperialist bloc.

2. The line of reformists who at all times have seen the Party as an instrument to negotiate quotas of power and, even in times of arduous armed struggle in our country and the world, have already been classified as traitors in the OLAS (Organization of Latin American Solidarity) for having placed the negotiation of their electoral legality with the pro-Yankee right-wing governments in exchange for abandoning their own peasant and guerrilla base. This opportunistic policy led them to support the reactionary Rafael Caldera and now to leave as advocates for the most rancid representative of the pro-Yankee bourgeoisie: María Corina Machado, going from unconditional support to **opposition to the Bolivarian process** in a struggle for handouts, which then leads to coincide with the most reactionary native right, the same line deviated from Red Flag.

3. The line of revisionists who in practice deny the independent Party of the proletariat and move behind the social democratic parties, dissolve in them, and assume their leadership. In reality, revisionists apply **unconditional support** and now legally take control of the rooster card in an expression of the struggle between elements of the old party, being favored by the institutionality of the State.

The revolutionary movement of Venezuela moves in these three main options. Of these, without a doubt, **critical support with demands** is the one that, from the point of view of theory and practice, represents the true Marxist-Leninist Communists of Venezuela. The others represent opportunism and petty-bourgeois tailists whose tactics are for negotiation and the fight for perks.

DISABILITY PRIDE, SOLIDARITY, JUSTICE

July is Disability Pride Month, which commemorates the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. It is a celebration of people with disabilities, our struggles, our identities and cultures, and our contributions to society.

Disabled people make up the largest and most diverse minority, of between 12-26% of the American population (depending on how it is counted). Additionally, it is the only minority which any person may join at any time. Despite the advances of the ADA, disabled people face many challenges over able-bodied people. Disabled people are three times less likely to be employed, more than twice as likely to be unemployed searching for work, and twice as likely to only have part time work. In addition, disabled people make up 40% of prison inmates and are imprisoned at 2.5 times the rate of non-disabled people.

Disabled people come from every walk of life and are perhaps the most diverse minority with a wide variety of needs and struggles, but united by common factors of disability. These are the stories of two disabled comrades in the American Party of Labor.



Ahoj, my name is Allison. I have been a member of the APL for around a year and a half. I have schizophrenia, PTSD, and conversion disorder which causes a mobility impairment. I have struggled with schizophrenia for around 5 or 6 years. I was completing my master's program when I first got sick and struggled very much to complete my program, though at the time I really didn't know what was wrong. Sometime after completing my master's program, I ended up going through the mental health system and being put into a mental hospital for some period. It was terrible and affected me quite badly and I still deal with after effects from it each day. The system has itself a very narrow definition of success focusing mostly on making a person able to work and be useful. It also focuses very heavily on outward struggles over internal struggles. When I was sitting being interviewed to go into the mental hospital I myself was mostly concerned over my anxiety and fear, while the doctors and my parents were focused almost entirely on the crutches I use to walk from the conversion disorder.

Despite the system's intense focus on attempting to make someone able to work, only 10-25% of schizophrenics have jobs and developing countries without access to antipsychotics can have significantly high 5-year positive outcome rates

compared to developed countries. The mental health system can for many people be deeply terrible, scarring, and dehumanizing. When I was first diagnosed with schizophrenia, I remember I wasn't ready to hear it, wasn't ready to accept that. I believed my life was essentially over, and I spent quite a bit of time in denial of it. Schizophrenia is a heavily stigmatized disease, and schizophrenics can face a lot of discrimination. Even among certain online mental health advocacy movements, schizophrenia and other "scary" disorders are often excluded in favor of more "sanitized" disabilities like anxiety, depression, autism, or bipolar disorder. I had an immense amount of difficulty getting to the point I could work a job, and I faced very much discrimination putting down that I was disabled on job applications. But eventually with a lot of perseverance I did manage to get a job teaching. For a long time I felt that I would not be able to have my own life, or be able to have a future, but now I don't feel that way and that I can have my own life and a future.

It was ultimately my struggles with disability that made me a communist. Understanding why I was having problems, the struggles of fellow disabled people, and why the system treated me as it did, made it clear that capitalism is a system which does not serve me, nor does it serve the vast majority of people. And I joined the APL in particular because of their addressing of disability in their program, something other parties have failed to address and seem to have forgotten about.

Allison P. (she/her)



My name is June and I am a member of the American Party of Labor. I have several chronic illnesses, physical disabilities, and mental health conditions. Managing my health and my disabilities is my full-time job, one which left me with no income for the duration of my grueling 8-year battle to qualify for SSI (Supplemental Security Income) benefits due to my inability to acquire gainful employment. I choose to celebrate Disability Pride Month instead of Disability Awareness Month (in March) because I feel that we, as a minority group, are far beyond the need for "awareness." People are clearly aware of us when they mock us, pray for us, and infantilize us just for daring to exist publicly in our bodies. Their willful ignorance of our existence when we are out of sight is their problem, not mine. Non-disabled people need to understand the struggles we face, not only from our disabilities themselves but from living in a society that casts us aside for not being "productive." The SSI program in particular – which

is the only disability income benefit available for people who became disabled before they were able to work enough to qualify for SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) – is in dire need of an overhaul. The asset limits, the penalties that prevent us from being able to marry or to even "live as if married," the penalties we receive if we do somehow find a way to earn our own money, and the abysmal dollar amount of the benefit (\$914/month as of 2023), are inherently oppressive to those of us who struggle for basic survival in a society where we cannot be employed.

Among my several disabling conditions, I am a type 1 diabetic. This is the insulin-dependent autoimmune disorder which accounts for only 5% of all diabetics, and is impossible to cure, with no alternative treatments to the constant, 24/7, need for insulin. I have seen too many of my fellow T1D's develop permanent complications like blindness, kidney failure, limb loss, stomach paralysis, and even death, because of the lack of affordable access to this cheaply produced hormone that we cannot live without. How could anyone not be radicalized by this? I also have impaired mobility and need to use leg braces with forearm crutches, or a wheelchair, to get around. I've had so many issues accessing the tools I need to be able to leave my home, even with thorough coverage through Medicaid, because of our severely fractured medical insurance system. My doctor will prescribe the equipment, my insurance will approve the authorization, but then none of the in-network vendors will carry what I need, so I have to choose between paying hundreds to thousands of dollars out of pocket (money which I do not have and cannot possibly acquire as an SSI recipient), or to change my insurance plan and start over with all new doctors in hopes that a different network will have a vendor with my needed equipment in their catalog. How could anyone not be radicalized by this?

Although I am proud to be disabled, to continue to live my life with all these challenges and to be part of a vibrant and diverse community (with an often morbid sense of humor), I am tired. I am tired of asking for "awareness." Disability struggles are class struggles, and what I want is genuine solidarity for disability justice.

June V. (she/her)



WORKERS, MIGRANTS, WOMEN JOIN FORCES TO OPPOSE A.P.E.C.

Isabelle B., Oregon. August 9, 2023.

On the weekend of July 29–30, members of the John Reed Division of the American Party of Labor attended the Peoples' Summit against APEC in Seattle, WA. The Peoples' Summit was organized by the Pacific Northwest People Over Profit Coalition, of which the APL is a sponsoring member. The goal of the Summit was to oppose the APEC Ministerial meetings held in Seattle by uplifting the voices of migrants, workers, and women.

The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, or APEC, is a series of meetings of trade ministers, corporate lobbyists, heads of state, and CEOs where the groundwork for free trade agreements is set. Each year, a different "member economy" of APEC hosts the meetings, and this year the host is the US. These meetings are closed-door, meaning the only press about the goings-on of the meetings comes from APEC itself. APEC was founded in 1989 with the mission of "lowering barriers for free trade"—in other words, implementing neoliberal policies that give corporations increased access to the markets of the Asia Pacific region. Since then, the imperial powers of APEC have not held back from exploiting the workers of nations such as Peru, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

As the US hosts the APEC meetings this year, a new free trade agreement is being written and negotiated: the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity, or IPEF. Little has been published pertaining to the details of this "framework." This is largely due to the confidentiality rules of the negotiation period, in which even members of the US Congress are excluded. IPEF would impact roughly 40% of the global population if passed, yet a very small handful of ruling class representatives are involved in the decision making process. The undemocratic nature of IPEF makes it easy for corporations to codify deregulation and to skirt environmental laws of member countries. The millions of workers affected by IPEF policies have no say in the negotiations by design.

Previous free trade agreements born out of APEC have led to the creation of "Special Economic Zones," which are areas of countries designed specifically to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). Special Economic Zones often lack labor rights and environmental regulations, and are considered to have some of the harshest working conditions globally. Examples of Special Economic Zones are maquiladoras set up in Mexico by mostly American corporations and the over 400 Philippine Economic Zones (ecozones), many of which are former US military bases. Special Economic Zones have widely been criticized for their unsafe



Member organizations of the PNW People Over Profit Coalition gathered in Seattle, WA.

working conditions, low pay, and tax incentives for corporations to continue investing in them.

"Lowering barriers for free trade" often leads to trade agreements which include the expansion of Special Economic Zones. Special Economic Zones are just one example of the indirect material results of APEC meetings. The US publicly touts leading foreign direct investment in the Indo-Pacific region, with American corporations leading the charge for cheap exports into the region. "U.S. foreign direct investment in the region totaled more than \$969 billion in 2020 and has nearly doubled in the last decade, and we are the leading exporter of services to the region, helping fuel regional growth," reads a statement released by the White House last year for the launch of IPEF. Contrary to the positive-sounding language of the White House statement, unequal trade agreements that allow for increased exportation of American multinational corporations' goods have had disastrous effects for the domestic industries of economies in the Asia Pacific. For example, the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) of 2007 pushed South Korean healthcare towards privatization due to new terms regarding the import of American pharmaceuticals. The KORUS FTA introduced increased "intellectual property rights" to big pharmaceutical corporations, increasing patent protections on medications, and preventing production of cheaper, generic medications. The terms of KORUS FTA also "give stakeholders a meaningful opportunity to participate in the development of rules and regulations in the pharmaceutical sector" (United States International Trade Commission Report, p. 119), with those "stakeholders" being American pharmaceutical companies, not South Korean healthcare professionals or patients. The result

of these provisions is that South Korean prescription drug prices have tripled since the passing of KORUS FTA. This is no surprise, as the United States International Trade Commission Report admits that pharmaceutical companies will have a say in setting the prices of drugs—not just the South Korean government, which supposedly runs a nationalized healthcare system:

"With respect to transparency, the chapter provisions would require both parties to ensure that their laws, regulations, and general procedures related to pricing, reimbursement, and regulation are promptly published or otherwise made available so that interested persons and the other party may become familiar with them. Further, each party would be required to publish in advance any such measures it proposes to adopt and provide interested persons and the other party a reasonable opportunity to comment on them and to have their comments taken into account in the final regulations. The transparency provisions would also require each party's central government health authorities to have procedures in place, within a reasonable and specified time, to allow consideration of all formal requests for pricing and reimbursement of pharmaceutical products and medical devices, to disclose to applicants all rules and criteria used to determine their pricing or reimbursement, and to provide applicants with detailed written information regarding the basis for their determinations. Further, the authorities are to afford applicants meaningful opportunities to comment at relevant points in the pricing and reimbursement decision-making processes; to make all reimbursement decision-making bodies open to

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all stakeholders, including manufacturers of both innovative (patented) and generic products; and to establish an independent review process that may be invoked at the request of an applicant directly affected by a reimbursement decision or recommendation."

KORUS FTA brought economic relations between the US and South Korea closer than ever before, bringing the economy of South Korea in line with neoliberal principles and US strategic interest. Following the KORUS FTA, South Korea promotes pledges in agreement with US goals for imperialist domination over the whole region. Now, when the US advocates for deregulation and increased intellectual property rights in APEC, South Korea is on board, supporting US hegemony.

On Saturday, July 29, the Pacific Northwest People Over Profit Coalition hosted a counter-summit, protesting the APEC ministerial meetings where pledges of liberalization and privatization are made by trade ministers. The counter-summit included speeches by the International Migrants Alliance and the International Women's Alliance, with a full schedule of workshops to attend, mostly from groups organizing for worker, women, and migrant rights. A common theme throughout the counter-summit was the material conditions of workers in nations on the unfavorable end of free trade agreements—the largest mass of people APEC affects. Policies leading to forced migration were discussed in some workshops, with a focus on the experience of those who have been forcibly displaced. One of APEC's and IPEF's alleged priorities is bringing women into the economy (IPEF's Upskilling Initiative). According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, "Fourteen U.S. companies—Amazon Web Services, American Tower, Apple, Cisco, Dell, Edelman, Google, HP, IBM, Mastercard, Microsoft, PayPal, Salesforce, and Visa—will each provide 500,000 or more upskilling opportunities that use digital tools for women and girls in IPEF emerging economies and middle-income partners by 2032." The history of the free trade agreements that come out of APEC, and the history of the companies listed shows that in reality, American multinational corporations are looking to further capitalize on and exploit the women of Southeast Asia. As free trade agreements deregulate labor and environmental outputs globally, more women will be subject to harsh working conditions, low wages, and climate change-induced disasters. The trade ministers of APEC and the policies of IPEF are working to proletarianize the women currently not generating profits for the capitalist class, treating women (more aptly, their labor power) as another commodity to be bought and sold.

The official APEC statements from the US ministerial meetings and the language of official US government reports obscure the true nature of American trade dealings in the Asia Pacific, which the Peoples' Summit

carefully uncovered by focusing on the workers most affected. The Peoples' Summit also provided analysis as to the inter-imperialist rivalries playing out in the Asia Pacific—the United States and China are both APEC member economies. Rapid militarization is underway in the whole region as the imperialist powers try to gain control of more and more markets. The United States has a clear military advantage in the region, with bases creeping closer to China and more being built each year. In early 2023, the governments of the United States and the Philippines came to an agreement which allows for the building of nine more US military bases in the Philippines. China's military influence is also growing in the region, with a reactive military expansion into the South China Sea, just west of the Philippines. These military tensions will only increase with the passage of IPEF, a trade framework designed specifically to exclude China and allow for more US control over economies in the Asia Pacific, over which China is gaining a larger influence.

The anti-imperialist presentations of the Peoples' Summit covered the impacts of liberalization, deregulation, and militarization on the international working class. While the presentations of the summit were very informative and connected to the struggles of the working class here in the United States, there was also space to discuss American anti-imperialist organizing and next steps. Eni Lestari, Chairperson of the International Migrants Alliance, discussed with the audience of the Peoples' Summit how they could support the migrants in their economic and political struggles. "That's the reason why IMA takes it seriously, to study global capitalism. Because that's the only way for us to understand the root causes of our suffering. The next question is what to do. One, within the migrants platform, we have to fight like the workers: step by step... Maybe for you all, you want to save migrants and refugees. But from the eyes of migrants, it is not about rescuing them from all these conditions. Maybe just a little relief, because their intention is to earn money so they can send money back home. So if you 'rescue' them and send them back home, you actually fail them to get their target, to get livelihood... So very important to communicate, 'How do you want us to help?' If they just need water, maybe that's the problem, help them with water. But beyond that I think what as a community, as a movement can do is really expose the system," Lestari said.

An issue facing migrant workers is contractualization, or "temporary" work. When migrants are forced to leave their home countries due to internal capitalist crises and their governments' commodification of workers on the global market, they are often kept in temporary contractual worker status overseas. This status, coupled with poor working conditions, makes it extremely difficult for migrant workers to get help or access resources supposedly designed to help them. "The restrictions imposed on temporary

migrant statuses create a situation where many easily fall out of status, sometimes despite their best efforts to stay within the restrictions of their visa," IMA wrote in a submission to the UN Secretary-General on Migrants' Human Rights Conditions. "Canada has the Temporary Foreign Workers Program and the student visa program that are temporary statuses with closed work permits creating conditions for migrants to fail to meet their visa conditions, end up in detention, and get deported while Canada gets new migrants to exploit."

How does this tie into APEC? Many of the corporations that serve on the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC, "the private sector arm of APEC") employ migrant labor directly, or contract migrant labor to serve their businesses. Corporations will take advantage of, and even create, economic conditions in different countries favorable to migration. Insufficient labor protections of migrants in richer countries, such as the US and Canada, make migrant labor more attractive to corporations trying to increase their profits. Exploited countries, especially those with puppet regimes of imperialist powers—such as the Philippines—work in collusion with multinational corporations and use the labor export of migrants to boost their own economy. The Philippines alone has millions of migrant workers in other APEC member countries, yet migrant workers themselves, migrant alliances such as IMA, or the general population of the Philippines are not allowed to be represented at APEC meetings or know about the negotiations until after the fact. Additionally, the policies agreed to by APEC member economies only sharpen the contradictions inherent to capitalism, leading to crises of overproduction, unemployment, and climate catastrophe. These crises culminate in conditions leading to forced migration and more opportunities for labor trafficking.

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Members of the Pacific Northwest Division of the APL.

The Peoples' Summit worked to educate migrant workers and their allies on these connections to the APEC meeting taking place in Seattle. After a full day of education at the University of Washington on Saturday, the Pacific Northwest People Over Profit coalition hosted a rally in the early afternoon on Sunday. Organizations who signed on to the coalition and oppose APEC tabled prior to and during the rally. The Pacific Northwest Division of the American Party of Labor tabled, where our members were able to inform Seattle residents passing through the area about APEC and why we oppose it. We were also able to communicate and build stronger connections with other organizations of the coalition, making commitments to work together on future practical endeavors. As APEC meetings continue in Seattle throughout the months of August, the APL will work with the International Women's Alliance (IWA), the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), and others to mobilize in opposition.

Following the rally and tabling, the march began from the rally site in a public park, to the convention center in downtown Seattle where the APEC meetings were held. Hundreds of people joined the mobilization.

Signs and banners read, "APEC Out of Seattle!", "End Forced Migration!", and "Defend & Fight for the Rights of Workers, Women, and Migrants." As the march closed down the street in front of the convention center, flyers were handed out to pedestrians and drivers in stopped traffic with information on APEC. Response from the Seattle public was overwhelmingly positive in support of the protest.

At the Seattle Convention Center, another rally was held with speakers from the Washington Fair Trade Coalition, ILPS, and BAYAN USA. Chants were repeatedly called from protestors in the street to the APEC ministers inside the building. "Come on out, face the people," was repeatedly called by hundreds, while staff and volunteers inside the convention center filmed the crowd below. The Washington Fair Trade Coalition attempted to deliver a petition with over 10,000 signatures to the doors of the Convention Center for the APEC ministers to consider, with demands of allowing workers a seat at the table during future meetings. The petition was refused.

After several hours, the mobilization came to a close and returned to the park. Organizers are

continuing to work to oppose APEC, with plans for more mobilizations in the near future to confront the ongoing meetings in Seattle. Further, the APEC Summit will take place in San Francisco in November. There will be a meeting of heads of state of APEC member economies, and a meeting of CEOs of multinational corporations taking place between November 11-18. Pacific Northwest People Over Profit coalition will be joining the national No to APEC Coalition to prepare new mobilizations in the San Francisco Bay Area later this year. The American Party of Labor resolutely endorses the No to APEC Coalition as we continue to fight against APEC and imperialism everywhere, in any form it takes.



(Twitter/ @GuyOron)

OHIO RESIDENTS CELEBRATE VICTORY, MUST CONTINUE TO ORGANIZE

Alan I., Ohio. August 15, 2023.

The Ohio State Constitution presently allows citizen referendums to take place with the assent of at least half (44) of Ohio counties, allows a ten-day period for correcting errors in collecting these signatures, and permits a simple majority in the popular vote to pass any citizen or legislative-initiated referendum. In the face of wildly unpopular judicial attacks on reproductive rights, the desire to raise the minimum wage, and opposition to gerrymandering and immunity for crimes committed by elected officials, the state Republican Party admitted that they "must stop a whole host of referendum initiatives coming down the pike." The anti-democratic Issue 1, which would have arbitrarily raised the threshold of initiating, voting and passing amendments to the state constitution from a simple majority (>50%) to a supermajority (60%), has failed in Ohio. After a comprehensive and frenzied campaign, the interests of the working class have prevailed, but it remains to be seen for how long, given that the respective referendums will not take place until November.

Issue 1 was a blatant attempt to move the goalposts ahead of the citizens' ballot initiative to codify abortion access and increase the minimum wage. Late Tuesday, August 8, as the results became clear, pro-choice advocates took to social media to jubilantly celebrate the victory. Mere hours later, the president of the Ohio Senate told reporters that they would simply pass the issue at some other time.

To be sure, this win is significant. We should not lessen the fact that the people of Ohio protected their rights that Tuesday.

That being said, this victory actually does nothing to legalize the rights that used to be assured to Ohioans through Roe v. Wade. To regain the rights that the capitalists have stripped away, the pro-choice groups in Ohio must maintain their momentum until November when the pro-choice ballot initiative will be voted on. This success is far from guaranteed. The opposition to Issue 1 was fairly bipartisan, with many leading state Republicans opposed. The abortion ballot initiative, though it is polling quite favorably, is a much more divisive issue.

This fight is part of the nation-wide offensive on reproductive rights. Some are pointing to victory in Ohio as a sign that, even in so-called "red" states, the conservative attack on reproductive and workers' rights has no chance of victory. They make the claim that reproductive rights are too popular and that this will spur people to the polls. Yet, the capitalist ruling class has no need to completely obliterate these rights of the Ohioan worker in this particular election. They can simply do it next year, or the year after that. Any concessions won by the people will always be at risk while we live under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. We also should not forget that the whole reason the working class must now fight for their lost rights is not because they were repealed by a vote, but because the unelected

Supreme Court decided to legislate from the bench. Indeed, if the Republican Party and their judicial hawks in the SCOTUS cared so much for supermajorities as they claimed in Issue 1's campaign, they would not deny the 62% of Americans who support easy access to reproductive rights.

It is important for the working class to remember, especially in a time of victory such as this, that electoral wins are ephemeral. They require constant effort to keep in place. In order for the will of the working class to truly be enshrined in law, the tool of the state must firmly lay in the hands of the proletariat. Anything less is a bandage that stops the bleeding, but does not actually heal the wound. Until then, we will be constantly locked in a battle for justice. Popular forces should take a precious few moments to celebrate their victory and rally to future struggles. Continue paying attention to these issues. Vote early, vote often, and intensify organization and mobilization. **Not one step back!**

"The task is to enable the vast masses to realise from their own experience the inevitability of the overthrow of the old regime, to promote such methods of struggle and forms of organisation as will make it easier for the masses to realise from experience the correctness of the revolutionary slogans."

J. V. Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism*.

THE BRICS MEETING AND THE INTER-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLES



Left to right: Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, China's President Xi Jinping, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

The Central Organ of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador (PCMLE). *En Marcha* #2062, Aug. 30 – Sep. 5, 2023.

Between August 22 and 24, the XV BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, a bloc made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

This association of countries that emerged in 2008 as a parallel structure to the G7 (Germany, Canada, United States, France, Italy, Japan and United Kingdom) has been trying to consolidate itself and, at this meeting, the incorporation of six new members was approved: Argentina, Egypt, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia; whose participation will begin on January 1, 2024.

This meeting cannot be analyzed without taking a political position on the stage in which humanity is living today. Imperialism is highly developed and concentrated capitalism, whose essence is the emergence of monopolies, cartels and economic groups that concentrate capital and commodities. This confrontation leads the imperialist powers to contest influence over markets, which leads to strong trade wars, and which in several cases even converge into great conflagrations.

The resolutions taken by the BRICS show the strengthening of the bloc within the framework of the contest between the imperialist powers. It is not the emergence of a counter-power to the hegemony of the North, as many revisionists, Trotskyists and "progressive governments" point out. It is not a model for independent development of the peoples, it is an anchor of several countries to the imperialist powers such as China and Russia.

Among the main elements identified in the final declaration are: (a) Strengthening of the coordinated macroeconomic measures and promoting local instruments of payment as opposed to the dollar; b) Reform of multilateral institutions such as the UN Security Council, as well as reform of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank; (c) Strengthening of

the New Bank of Development, joined by Bangladesh, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates; (d) Reiteration of their national positions on the war in Ukraine and taking note of proposals for mediation for the peaceful settlement of the conflict. From this summary, it is worth highlighting the incentive to local currencies for the payment of international commercial transactions, an option that aims to build a BRICS currency that is not tied to the interest rates of the Federal Reserve of the United States.

The BRICS resolutions show the strengthening of the partnership at a time when China is beginning a process of economic slowdown and requires a market to increase its investments. The same is happening with India and Russia, which is why this meeting allows for the strengthening of these mechanisms in the contest for the markets that these imperialist powers (China and Russia), have been carrying out with the United States. Therefore, they [the United States] do not like the idea of de-dollarizing the world economy so that the yuan and the ruble can become more broadly means of circulation and they do not need to depend on Washington's fiscal policies.

While it is true that the new additions can mean an advance in Chinese influence, they also aggravate the management of agreements because the heterogeneity of the bloc can create contradictions, since countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are clearly subordinate to the United States.

It must be clearly seen that this association does not represent an alternative for the workers and peoples of the world. On the contrary, we must put an end to imperialism and capitalism, sweep away their institutions and, on their ashes, build a society without exploited and exploiters.



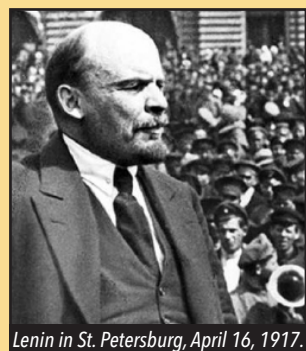
About the Red Phoenix

The Red Phoenix is the mass voice of the American Party of Labor, published and printed bi-monthly. It is a newspaper dedicated to providing a creative and original insight on what is happening in the United States of America and around the world. Along with analysis of important news, events, reviews, and commentary, the paper also includes interviews and letters from workers across the country. The goal of the Red Phoenix is to provide a platform for working people of all kinds, without the biases and mitigation of corporate media.

The Red Phoenix is aimed at revolutionary and progressive-minded people, activists, workers, and others who are fighting in firm opposition to the war against the poor and the oppressed. Our political stands are taken from a revolutionary perspective and our writing serves as a medium of expressing that sentiment.

The Red Phoenix was founded in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash, as a way to give a platform and voice for working class people left outside popular media narratives. During the Trump presidential campaign and the George Floyd Movement, the Red Phoenix grew to have correspondents across the country seeking to interview workers, analyze the resurgent labor movement, and agitate for a true workers' democracy. In our era of misinformation and rising fascism and union-busting, the need for true working class stories, under the "blue and red" mythology, has never been greater.

To help us with our work by subscribing, donating, or submitting your own articles for publication, please visit us online at RedPhoenixNews.com



"There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is—working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) this struggle, this, and only this, line, in every country without exception."

V. I. Lenin (1870–1924)

The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution, 1917

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**PEACE,
EQUALITY,
SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY**

About the American Party of Labor

The APL is a revolutionary working class organization. Our aim is to abolish the capitalist system and replace it with a socialist, working democracy, a system based on the principle laid out by Marx, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." There can be no true freedom or democracy when billionaires have more wealth than the bottom 90% of Americans.

★ **An Anti-Revisionist, Internationalist Party:** The American Party of Labor is a dedicated anti-revisionist party, opposed to concessions to capitalists, and critical of all imperialist actions by the US, Russia, and China. The APL is an observer member in the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations (ICMLPO), and participates in the international anti-revisionist struggle.

★ **A Party of Working Class People:** The American Party of Labor is made up of workers fighting for workers' rights. Many of our members are in active union and unionization struggles, and we all do our political work after clocking out.

★ **A Party of Equals:** The APL is active in the fight for the rights of women, oppressed nations, the LGBTQIA+ community, and immigrants, and for the community control of police departments. In 2019, the APL was a founding member in the National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression.

★ **Forever Anti-Fascist:** We uphold the anti-fascist legacy of the Marxist-Leninist movement. Members of the American Party of Labor are active in movements against the Far-Right on college campuses, and the barbaric treatment of immigrants at the border.

Who can join? How do I get involved?

Every working person who is open to our plan for change, agrees with our Program and Platform, and is over the age of 18 is welcome to apply.

To look at our joining procedure, activity, membership FAQ, and more, please visit:

AmericanPartyofLabor.com

You can find everything that you should know about us here, and you can contact us and connect to members in your area.

If we don't have a presence in your city, we'll get to know you and help you establish one.

Why are we Marxist-Leninists in the USA in the 21st century?

There is an important fundamental difference between Marxism and other so-called anti-capitalist or "third way" theories. Marx, unlike many thinkers of his day, did not see a problem with capitalism that could just be mitigated. Instead, he and his compatriots analyzed capitalism itself to understand how the system worked. Marx's ideas for revolution are based on that analysis, and the experiences of the struggles in Europe of 1848. Solutions to the problems of capitalism can only be reached by understanding and observing the system itself, textured with the political reality of the country and historical struggles. This is why we think revolutionary history is worth talking about, and making part of our platform.

Regarding the regulation of capitalism and emergent social democratic reform movements, it is not uncommon that capitalist states restrict the private sector for various reasons. The problem is that political power is still stacked in favor of the ruling class; they have every avenue and all the resources necessary undo reforms and regulations. What truly led to the collapse of the socialist bloc was not that these countries pursued communism, which was ultimately too radical, but rather that these nations pursued market style reforms until they had more or less become capitalist countries. As we have seen in the US, liberal victories are short-lived.

Today, social democratic movements would have us do much the same, if not less – regulate capitalism, nationalize some industry, and try to maintain a welfare state – without expropriating the ruling class, without giving the nation a clear direction for the future, and worst of all, without putting the working class in power. We cannot face climate change, resurgent fascism, police brutality, the exploitation of oppressed nations, and the threat of American imperialism around the world without a revolutionary, centrally organized movement.

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