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USA

Harris and Trump Campaign Amidst strikes and Protests

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Former president Donald Trump and Vice-president Kamala Harris continue to campaign in a neck-and-neck race, both holding large rallies in swing states in an attempt to pull ahead. Trump continues his racist rants against immigrants, whom he calls “stone-cold killers,” and his vicious insults against Harris, now calling her “mentally disabled.” He has blamed immigrants, released from other countries’ prisons and mental hospitals, for an invasion of the country that has “poisoned our blood” and destroyed the economy, taking jobs from American Blacks and Latinos. “And if you think about it,” says Trump, “only a mentally disabled person could have allowed this to happen to our country.”

Harris, most vulnerable on the immigration issue, visited the southern border taking the hardest position ever put forward by a Democrat. “The United States is a sovereign nation, and I believe we have a duty to set rules at our border and to enforce them,” said Harris. She has called for more immigration judges, more border patrol agents, new inspection systems to detect fentanyl, a reform of the asylum system, and touts her record prosecuting drug cartels and human trafficking as California’s attorney general.

Yet her approach still remains far more humane than Trump’s. She has condemned him, saying that he, “ripped toddlers out of their mothers’ arms” and “put children in cages.” Harris says, “We must reform our immigration system to ensure that it works in an orderly way, that it is humane and that it makes our country stronger,”

Trump called Harris’ remarks on border security and immigration reform, “bullshit.”

Workers Strike, People Protest

While the presidential campaign goes on, so do strikes and protests against Israel. At Boeing in Washington State, 33,000 members of the International Association of Machinists remain on strike, demanding a 40% wage increase from the troubled corporation. The strike has so far cost the company one billion dollars and workers have not been paid since the walk-out began on September 13. The corporation has raised its wage offer from 25% to 30%, still far from the workers’ demand.

Meanwhile, 25,000 East Coast and Gulf Coast dockworkers, members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), prepare to strike for higher wages on October 1. If they walk out, it would be the first such strike since 1977. While the West Coast dockworkers belong to the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), once led by Communists, and have a long history of militant strikes the ILA is altogether different. The ILA was dominated by the Mafia and that legacy still survives, with one officer taking a salary of over \$500,000 per year.

ILA members currently earn \$39 an hour after six years on the job, while ILWU members on the West Coast, make \$54.85 an hour. Supposing a 40-hour work week, West Coast port workers are making more than \$116,000 a year, versus \$81,000 for those on the East and Gulf coasts. The ILA began by asking for a 77% raise. The U.S. government has the power to intervene in the strike, but Biden has said he will not.

Meanwhile protests against Israel’s wars on Gaza and now on Lebanon continue. Thousands demonstrated in New York, marching through Manhattan and protesting at the United Nations against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who had come to speak there. Organized by Jewish Voice for Peace and Not in Our name among other groups, they

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carried banners reading, “No Vote for Genocide.” Speaking at a rally in the rain one speaker said, “Stop killing children, end the war, sign the deal, bring the hostages home,” the speaker continued. “There is no military solution.”

Israel’s terrorism, setting off explosions of cell phones and walkie-talkies, its intense bombing of Lebanon, its assassination of Hassan Nasrallah will lead to more protests. All of this is a problem for Harris who continues to support Israel.

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