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The smoke thickens

31 December 2022, by **Against the Current** Editors

The rightwing intention going into the November election was evident: to complete the abortive January 6, 2021 quasi-“insurrectionist” riot by more systematic political means. The objectives were not only to establish large Congressional and Senate Republican majorities, but to elect candidates in the “battleground” state governments with authority to overturn future election results.

That project mostly crashed and burned, due to voter turnout in places like Pennsylvania, Michigan and Arizona — sometimes by decisive but some by very narrow margins. Rearguard rightwing attempts to block routine certification of election results, e.g. in Arizona and Michigan, fizzled — this time. Although the setback of this phase of the far-right power grab marks an important moment, the threat that these maneuvers revealed is by no means ended.

Republicans will take over the House of Representatives by a much smaller majority than had been expected. Democrats may extend a word of thanks to one of the most despicable human beings on the planet — Samuel Alito, author of the unhinged Supreme Court ruling wiping out a half century of federal protection for abortion rights. Alito had been waiting in the weeds for that moment ever since his 2006 confirmation hearings, where he said that Roe “deserved respect.”

While the right wing celebrated its triumph, women-led popular revulsion over that decision spearheaded the voter turnout that held back the anticipated reactionary “red wave.”

Will the Republican Party cling to the soiled coattails of Donald Trump, or cast him aside as he’s outlived his usefulness? How bloody the party’s internal war might be, whether Trump will face prosecution for his astonishing list of criminal acts, or who will be running for president in 2024 for either of the two capitalist parties — all of this will provide full-employment opportunities for commentators.

How gridlocked Congress may be for the next two years is another open question. Certainly, however, serious progress on fundamental issues shaping people’s lives in this crisis-ridden society will be extremely unlikely — whether on access to health care, on inequality and child poverty, on racial injustice at every level, on a potential stagflation recession, and above all on the ever-escalating climate catastrophe.

One outcome emerges clearly: the polarization and crisis of U.S. politics continues. There should not be illusions that the election results mean a “re-normalization” of business-as-usual political stability. The appearance of return-to-normality may result from the receding of immediate

prospects of exploding post-election violence. But events like the Club Q mass shooting; a group of organized Proud Boys disrupting a drag storytime event in Columbus, Ohio; and the targeted attack on a North Carolina power system, possibly to cut power to a drag show — all illustrate the pervasive dangers facing especially vulnerable groups in society targeted by the far right.

The slim Republican control of Congress makes it now unlikely that they’d try to ram through a national abortion ban, or force a crisis over government funding. But the institutions of “stability” in this country remain frayed. As much as 40 percent of the population, and a majority of Republican voters, continue to inhabit the reality-free parallel ideological universe of 2020 election denial, “white replacement” theory, extreme transphobia and other symptoms of collective insanity.

This craftily manipulated psychosis is on display at local school board and library commission meetings where the far right, trading under names like “Mothers for Liberty,” turn out to force removal of books deemed “sexually explicit” in depicting the lives of gay, lesbian or transgender kids. These are vicious and cynical attacks on the humanity of some of this society’s most vulnerable youth. Equally awful, these reactionaries have reached out to minority

communities — in the case of Dearborn, Michigan for example, to Arab and Muslim residents — who are themselves menaced by white Christian nationalism.

The spirit of the Capitol riot lives in the shadows. Despite the Republicans' incipient internal civil war, or actually because of it, they can be expected to feed their base with road-to-nowhere Congressional "investigations" of everything from Hunter Biden's laptop to the Afghanistan debacle to nullifying the Congressional January 6 inquiry.

What the Election Meant

Voters' response to the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* obviously stood out. In every state with abortion rights referenda on the ballot, women's right to choose won. It shows the important role that these referenda can play in exercising the people's will — and the obstacles to democracy in states that don't allow them.

The outraged response of women, and of decent people in general, energized a voter turnout that blunted what was expected to be a wave of Republican victories. In Michigan where same-day voter registration exists, college students waited in line for hours to register, then cast their vote.

That turnout contributed to the passage of an expansive reproductive rights Michigan state constitutional amendment (Proposal 3). It won handily, as did the three women holding the top state offices — governor, attorney general and secretary of state — aided by the circumstance that the Republican challengers were rabid anti-choice, election-denial MAGA fanatics. All three incumbents (Gretchen Whitmer, Dana Nessel and Jocelyn Benson) ran on pro-choice platforms, including the governor's court challenge to the state's (now-dead) 1931 abortion ban and attorney-general Nessel's vow not to enforce it.

Michigan voters also adopted proposals to ensure expanded voter access and candidate financial

disclosures. For the first time in decades, thanks to nonpartisan redistricting, Republicans lost control of both houses of the state legislature. Rightwing gerrymandering had enabled all kinds of rightwing malicious mischief, including the noxious Emergency Manager laws that imposed bankruptcy on majority-Black Detroit and poisoned the water of Flint.

The national picture, as always, was a mixed pattern as the two U.S. parties of corporate capital battle for domination. The uninspiring Joe Biden did not drag down the Democratic vote, nor did the malignant magnetism of Donald Trump elevate the Republicans in critical battleground races. And it's refreshing to note that money doesn't rule everything: For example, the targeted assault on Summer Lee (in Pennsylvania District 12) by AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) failed spectacularly.

On the whole, the vaguely-defined "progressive" Democratic party wing appears to have held its own. Contrary to some left illusions, however, it represents no challenge to the firm control of the corporate-loyal party establishment. Regrettably, the independent left was not a factor in this election except for some on-the-ground presence — as in the exemplary case of Michigan in activist canvassing for ballot access signatures and then voter turnout for Proposal 3.

Clouded Prospects

That a feared wave of reactionary legislative onslaughts now seems less likely is the most positive and hopeful outcome of this nasty, brutish and long electoral cycle.

After the powerful pro-choice voter turnout, we'll have to see whether anti-abortion state legislatures seek to criminalize women's travel to states where abortion can be legally obtained, whether prosecutors will pursue doctors providing abortion medications, and other atrocities that will further inflame the national crisis of women's access to abortion.

Deeper issues remain, and here are a few of them:

1) Factors long regarded as pillars of guaranteed "stability" — such as the domination of two capitalist parties rhythmically and routinely alternating in power, the decentralization of much authority to the states, and the Supreme Court as a check on legislative "extremism" — have now become agents of destabilization. With or without Trump, the dominant wing of the formerly traditional-conservative Republican Party is now an essentially far-right purveyor of unrestrained plutocracy, Christian nationalism and white supremacy with a stranglehold on highly gerrymandered state legislatures.

2) As for the Supreme Court, even though its atrocious ruling on abortion has been slapped in the face by voters, its majority remains firmly a far-right White Supremacy Court of the United States (WSCOTUS). It will not necessarily sacrifice what remains of its legitimacy by protecting Donald Trump, precisely because it has bigger fish to fry. It has already destroyed the Voting Rights Act, is poised in this term to wipe out affirmative action, and will seriously consider an incredible doctrine enabling "independent state legislatures" to overturn future election results.

3) The stagflation recession (economic downturn coupled with persistent inflation, last seen in the mid-1970s) that is possible in 2023 will only exacerbate the profound ongoing dysfunctions in the United States, from health care and labor rights to housing, the social safety net and gun violence. Neither party has a serious response to the economic situation — since the Republican policy consists of tax cuts for the rich and vicious budget cuts for everyone else, while Democrats can't confront corporate price-gouging or take other measures against the wishes of their own mega-donor base.

4) The authoritarian and racist trend in U.S. politics is very much part of an international one. We can cite not only Viktor Orban in Hungary, the darling of U.S. white nationalists, and the now mercifully defeated Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, but also the new Israeli

coalition government including parties that explicitly advocate ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and stripping their citizenship rights. There's also a pro-Putin wing of the U.S. Republican Party that's likely to become increasingly vocal as the war in Ukraine drags into a bitter winter.

In this connection we should note sadly that in this as in every U.S. election, and in every international upheaval — right now, the war resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and its consequences for the global economy and food supplies — Palestine and its people are collateral damage. Even as the likes of AIPAC strive to crush any Congressional voices for Palestinian rights, Israel's daily raids and murders in occupied

Palestine barely register in U.S. media. This can change only with a critical upsurge in grassroots pro-Palestinian activism.

5) Speaking of thickening smoke and rising floodwaters — the environmental collapse hangs over the future not only of U.S. politics but humanity. We don't know who will be running for president in 2024, or what the economy will look like, or whether the war in Ukraine will be over, or many other things — but we do know that wildfires, floods and droughts, species extinctions and habitat collapses will be even worse than they already are now.

6) Another sure thing: the estimated

seventeen billion dollar expenditure on this election sets an all-time high, which will last all the way until the next one. Campaign spending records in U.S. politics fall faster than home-run marks during baseball's steroid era. That's both a symptom and a cause of systemic dysfunction.

The partial defeat of far-right misogynist and racist politics in the 2022 election is a reason for some relief, but not reassurance about the depths of the USA's political, social and racial crises. The biggest missing element is an independent left capable of addressing them at the roots. That issue requires urgent and collaborative discussion and action.

[Against the current](#)

Election Results in Israel: Full-steam Right

30 December 2022, by **Yacov Ben Efrat**

To complicate this picture even more, let's recall that the capital Jerusalem, al-Quds in Arabic, includes occupied territory that was officially annexed to Israel. On the other hand, its Palestinian residents, about 40% of the city's total, have been granted resident status but are deprived of civil status. Most importantly, the Temple Mount or Haram al-Sharif is divided between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan. Even that is not the full picture, and experts in political science, sociology, archaeology, anthropology and even psychology can go on and on in definitions and explanations for this anomaly, which defines itself as a "miracle." Indeed, it is a miracle that Israel not only receives world recognition but has recently been blessed with a chain of peace agreements throughout the Middle East reaching as far as North Africa.

The internal tensions in Israel between Arabs and Jews, secular and religious, and Palestinians and Israelis have created delicately balanced systems, which force successive

governments to juggle. For example, Israel has never had a "full-steam" left-wing government. Even when Mapai ruled completely, as a way to anchor the state's Jewish image it created an alliance with the religious parties. It invented the concept of the "liberal occupation," the "Jordanian option" and engineered the Oslo Accords. The right-wing is also wary of realizing its ideology "full steam." Netanyahu, as well as Begin and Shamir before him, understood that governance requires compromises so as not to unravel the thread connecting the pieces of this impossible puzzle.

However, Netanyahu fell into great personal distress when the trial against him on charges of bribery rendered him a leper in the eyes of the secular and liberal half of the public. Like a fish trying to get out of a net, he flopped his way through four rounds of elections. In the fifth round he decided to remove the gloves and legitimize an extreme group that views his plight as a golden opportunity to fulfil its desires. He

gathered and united Bezalel Smotrich, Itamar Ben Gvir and Avi Maoz, leaders of three parties representing different shades of the Messianic extreme Right; in return, they threw him a lifeline, which will soon become his noose.

So far, Netanyahu has proved to be a political master craftsman, successfully dispatching all opponents with empty promises and tricks. Everyone who was his partner has become a political corpse over the years - the Labor Party, Gantz's party and recently the right-wing party of Naftali Bennett. Aware of this, his three new partners want to collect the full price of partnership here and now. They know very well that if Netanyahu succeeds in tricking them as well, their fate will be like that of their predecessors.

And thus, we witness today the formation of a full-steam-ahead right-wing government, whose goal is nothing less than elimination of all the balances that allowed the very existence of the Zionist "miracle." After Netanyahu brought his three

partners together to help them pass the electoral threshold, they divided amongst themselves the different fronts of the revolution they want to implement: Avi Maoz will work against the secular camp, Ben Gvir against the Arab sector and Smotrich against the Palestinians. Maoz will head the "Jewish National Identity Authority" in the Prime Minister's Office, which will be established especially for him. He will see to it that all traces of tolerance and liberalism are removed from the Ministry of Education curriculum; he will work for gender separation, allowing conversion therapy for homosexuals, non-recognition of mixed marriages and other measures that will strengthen the country's fundamentalist identity.

Ben Gvir will serve in the cabinet and as Minister of National Security, which includes the police, the Green Patrol, the Land Enforcement Authority and the Border Police. His role will include chasing down any Bedouin who walks around at night in Be'er Sheva, steals agricultural equipment or builds himself a hut in the middle of the desert. Ben Gvir also wants to exercise Israeli sovereignty over Haram al-Sharif, even at the cost of starting a regional religious war.

Smotrich aspires even higher. He understands that chasing Bedouins, or children in the alleys of the Nablus Kasbah, are headline-grabbing acts that will not lead to significant structural change. He aspires to cancel de facto what is left of the Oslo Accords and to annex Area C, including all the settlements and outposts there. For this purpose, he has requested that the Finance Ministry, of which he is slated to minister, be given the powers granted to the Civil Administration in Area C, which, by virtue of the Oslo Accords, is under Israeli rule. That is, he intends to nationalize the Civil Administration and all the settlers who, until now, at least officially, were subject to military authority. This is how Smotrich hopes to whitewash illegal construction in the settlements and destroy any future Palestinian

construction.

The negotiations between Smotrich and Netanyahu have been fraught. Bibi knows that if he gives Smotrich what he wants, the result is likely to be dire for Israel internationally. Until now, Israel has been careful to claim that the Palestinian territories are not annexed and are under temporary military control. The transfer of responsibility for the settlers to a civilian office such as the Treasury will have far-reaching implications, putting in Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning conquered territory and showing anyone who is not yet convinced that Israel has become an apartheid state. Such a step would hasten the end of the shaky Palestinian Authority, and it is unclear what would happen to its security partnership with Israel, which to date has primarily benefited the settlers. Nor does Smotrich stop there. As Finance Minister he wants to promote an orthodox neoliberal policy, legally preventing the right to strike in essential services such as the electric company, ports, teachers and other government offices, which will lead to a head-on collision with the Histadrut.

While the three extremist partners fulfil the desires of the messianic militants, "saner" partners worry about more prosaic issues. Just as Bibi must escape the threat of going to prison, his senior partner and Shas leader, Aryeh Deri, is trying in every possible way to be appointed minister. Yet Deri too has legal woes. To escape imprisonment after being convicted of tax evasion in February 2022, he expressed remorse and assured the court he did not intend to engage in politics. The court credited his promise, fined him and gave him a suspended sentence. The promise quickly evaporated and now Netanyahu must enact a personal law for Deri, allowing ministership to those who have been convicted and received a suspended sentence rather than actual imprisonment.

All of Netanyahu's partners, without exception, agree that the immediate

enemy of the right-wing government is the Supreme Court, which may thwart their attempts to twist the law to suit their needs. Therefore, the full-steam right intends to pass an "Override Law," by which the Knesset will be able to override any Supreme Court decisions nullifying laws that the Knesset passes. By a majority of 61 out of 120, the ruling coalition will be able to determine what is legal, no holds barred. Other changes will also be made in the judicial system, starting with the method of appointing judges. Another novelty: legal advisors in government ministries, who in the past could block a minister's action, will henceforth be chosen by the minister. These advisors will not be subordinate to the Attorney General but—you guessed it—to their respective ministers.

Reasonable persons will ask themselves: how did we get here? We are facing a real right-wing revolution, embracing all areas of life. The answer is not surprising, and this situation did not arise in a day. Ben Gvir's exploits have been known for 30 years, ever since he stole the hood ornament of Rabin's armored car on the day of his assassination. Thirty years of the Oslo Accords, thirty years of the apartheid regime, thirty years of concession after concession by the Zionist Left to the extreme Right, thirty years of refusing cooperation with Arab society, thirty years of maintaining the "national consensus" -- all of these paved the way for Ben Gvir. Helpless, frustrated and terrified, today the somewhat saner people of Israel face a vision of depravity, which will hurt everyone, Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians. It must be understood that the partnership with the Right has come to a bitter end. If we want to live, it is time to confront the Right with a democratic program, to search again for Palestinian allies who have despaired of the Israeli Left, to seek a solution based not on separation but on one democratic state between the Jordan and the Mediterranean. The alternative is fascism.

DAAM, December 4, 2022

Fifth Congress of the NPA: A door opened to hope

29 December 2022, by Josu Egireun

Although among the other six platforms presented at that congress the strongest stood at 17%, the majority/minority that had the responsibility of taking the party forward has been confronted over these years with a factional dynamic where the rest of currents, without political agreement among themselves offering an alternative to the majority, united to block its political orientation. And over time, each faction has been consolidating its own structure, autonomous from the organic structure of the NPA, with the aim of turning the NPA into a front of factions (or mini parties) in total contradiction with the original project of the NPA.

In this context, for nearly five years the NPA has nonetheless been able to move forward, with a leadership that, despite the obstacles, has managed to keep the party alive, guarantee its public appearance, sectoral intervention and participation in unitary dynamics and electoral campaigns (whose orientation has always been defined in a National Conference, where the leadership always won the majority). At the last (26-27 June 2021), the departure of the CCR-Permanent Revolution faction modified the situation somewhat, giving more room for manoeuvre to the leadership, allowing the development of a campaign with a radical and unitary identity that, although it did not translate into votes, attracted sympathy from broad sectors of activists who, during the parliamentary elections, demanded that Jean-Luc Mélenchon's la France insoumise (LFI) party prioritize an agreement with the NPA instead of the Socialist Party. A sympathy that also translated into an influx of new activists.

Thus, after the fourth congress the

situation was open, it is true, but it was heavily burdened by the sectarian dynamics of the factions, in permanent competition with the majority of the NPA, blocking debate and political reflection and undermining the dynamics of the party (with their own funds, websites and structures, as well as public appearances in demonstrations differentiated from the NPA although always using the logo of the NPA, and so on).

Hence, at this congress, in addition to the political orientation, the fundamental problem posed to the NPA was to get out of the quagmire to which the different factions had led it: to break with a factional dynamic, which the different currents justified in the name of plurality and internal democracy, and to reaffirm the initial project of the NPA. Not an easy task in a party where respect for plurality and internal democracy is part of its DNA. And because, for a good part of the activists and those who supported Platform B, the possibility of excluding anyone due to political differences was inconceivable. Hence, the majority chose to hold out until the critical point of the congress so that the group of delegates could appreciate *in situ* the seriousness of the internal fracture and the impossibility of continuing with the factions integrated in Platform C.

How to put an end to this situation? The majority of the outgoing leadership (Platform B (Christine Poupin, Philippe Poutou, Pauline Salingue and Olivier Besancenot): 48.5% of votes) stated from its initial document that above and beyond the political orientation, continuing in the same group required agreement on the type of party to be built and the rules of functioning. In a word, to put an end to the system of *taifas* (fiefdoms) [1] that the party had

become, which the text of the platform summed up as follows:

A party useful to its militants and to the exploited class must be a place of elaboration, of balance sheets of common experiences, a collective intellectual force capable of developing analyses and developing interventions in synch with the real dynamics of the class struggle.

We need a political tool capable of elaborating, of reflecting freely, we need tactical flexibility, experimentation, but also the sharing of our experiences to learn from them collectively.

We must resist the temptation to preserve the apparatus as an end in itself, for it is illusory to think that the NPA can continue to exist as before.

Without radical change, it can die little by little, demoralizing some, making others believe that they are taking small steps on the road to the constitution of a revolutionary party.

In fact, the factions push towards sectarian isolation and identity, seeing in the other non-revolutionary organizations of the workers' movement only political adversaries to fight at all times and places, and extending this vision to internal disagreements. Any attempt to update our programmatic achievements to respond to new questions is thus dismissed as reformism or even treason.

Organizational issues are a concentration of political choices. We must realize that the existence

on the criteria that should govern the life of the NPA. In the five meetings that took place, the different factions that made up platform C did not at any point give up continuing to act as independent micro parties within the NPA.

In view of this, on the second day of the congress, after a debate plagued by accusations, lies and unprecedented verbal violence on the part of the factions towards the majority in the debate on the political situation and on the party model, before starting the voting session [2], Platform B requested a suspension to decide in a platform meeting on the critical situation of the congress and its future. The conclusion, a resolution adopted by 100 of the 102 delegates (one abstention and one non-vote), was that under these conditions it was not possible to continue in the same organization with Platform C, which was communicated to the other two Platforms who, for their part, continued the congress in separate meetings. In summary, the resolution reads as follows;

Undoubtedly, this strong will to recover a situation of normality in the party, already announced during the summer university of the NPA, was what led the rest of the factions, except for the minority platform A (6.1%), to create a joint opposition grouping in Platform C (45.6% of votes, whose most representative figures are Gaël Quirantes and Damien Scali) in order to try to force a relationship of forces that would block the situation in Congress and, in this way, ensure that it continue as before. An outcome that Platform B ruled out in all circumstances.

Therefore, given the probability of a split, a local NPA committee, that of Tarn, proposed creating a parity commission in order to reach an agreement between all the platforms

This has put an end to an unsustainable situation for the NPA in a context of acute social, political, democratic and environmental crisis, of an authoritarian drift of the political regime and of a reactionary and xenophobic wave in ascent crystallized in the electoral advance of the extreme right, posing more than ever the urgency of building a revolutionary alternative from the perspective of recomposing the social and organizational fabric of the popular sectors, the mass organizations and of the left through a unitary policy to reverse the current unfavourable relationship of forces. A policy totally opposed to the sectarian self-affirmation proposed by Platform C.

Fundamental political divergences

The core of the political divergences of Platform B with Platform C at this congress can be summarized on two levels. The first is understanding the crisis. While for Platform B the crisis occurs in a disadvantageous situation - of unfavourable relationship of forces - for the popular sectors and can lead to the worst possible scenario, for Platform C, the crisis in which the capitalist system is immersed [the objective factors] "could converge and lead to real social revolutions".

Hence, in terms of tasks, for Platform B the fundamental task is to work to recompose the structures of the workers', associative, feminist, LGBTI, environmental and other movements; and to do so with an independent and unitary politics with both the mass organizations and the political forces of the left, while for Platform C, to ensure that the anger caused by the crisis in the popular sectors becomes political consciousness, the way forward is political campaigns by the party to set our class in motion, promoting the construction of a front of revolutionaries grouped around a project of self-affirmation and dogmatic denunciation of reformism.

Beyond that, the divergences with Platform C range from international politics (denouncing the unitary campaign of solidarity with the Ukrainian resistance under the slogan "Putin's troops out of Ukraine", which demonstrated on 10 December in Paris [3]), to the decision to participate in the unitary base structures Nupes inherited from the parliamentary elections, to the building of social movements such as feminist, ecologist or LGBTI; but above all it should be made clear that the unitary policy in relation to the Nupes does not represent in any case - as was proven during the discussions for an electoral agreement for the parliamentary elections - envisaging either in the short or long term the dissolution of the NPA in Nupes, but quite the opposite: starting from the conviction that these structures can evolve in the right direction and not fall prey to the ups and downs and electoral interests of la France Insoumise, the more recognition the militant activity of the NPA obtains in them. [4]

Moving forward

As the above-mentioned resolution points out, for a time and until the separation is resolved, two separate sectors will coexist in the NPA. Platform B concluded the congress alone and approved both the guidance documents and the various motions submitted to the congress, electing a new leadership that includes 19 new members (45%) and 24 women (56%), with four spokespersons (Christine

Poupin, Pauline Salingue, Philippe Poutou and Olivier Besancenot), guaranteeing the NPA website and publications and announcing a rally in Paris for 17 January 2023. Platform C continued its sectarian discourse and extensive smear campaign. It remains to be seen whether the common shell within which the different factions were gathered will be able to coexist now the rules of the game that all of them wanted to impose on the NPA have disappeared.

In the short term, we will probably see two processes from now on. On the one hand, the result of the talks on the separation with platform C and the attitude adopted by platform A (which in principle is inclined to continue in the NPA with platform B); on the other hand, the congress is the starting point - and not the conclusion - of a process of separation with the currents-factions-groups. Depending on local realities, everyone will have to choose whether, at the level of their respective committee or locality, they can continue to work - or even meet - with the comrades who, having voted for Platform C, are not part of sectors organized in the current groups-factions which compose it. From what we know, there are already committees in which activists who supported different platforms in the run-up to the congress have decided to continue together.

But regardless of how the situation is resolved internally, the importance of the congress is that putting an end to factional dynamics gives the NPA a new breath to deal with the current political situation.

A complex political situation in which the full-fledged offensive of the Macron government (with the pension reform as its standard), but also with an increasingly active violent extreme right, as seen this December, requires being free of internal ties to be able to act with the capacity for initiative.

The turning point that this congress represents in the history of the NPA also comes at a political moment in which the terrain on the French left is moving and which demands political reflection, tactical flexibility and capacity for dialogue with the other political forces. Undoubtedly, in the

coming weeks and months, the NPA will have to resume in a more serene and constructive atmosphere debates on aspects of strategy, tactics and party building that due to the need to respond to factional pressure were impossible to develop until now. More so in a context in which the left camp is in continuous development, as shown by the presidential election campaign and, above all, the parliamentary elections with the creation of Nupes and the loss of hegemony of social liberalism in this coalition.

The electoral success of Nupes also meant the emergence of new sectors in politics that continue to militate in a unitary and open way in the local Nupes groups, even though the reality of this is unequal according to localities and the weight of the political forces in them, and until now we cannot speak of a Nupes organized and coordinated at the national level. The development of these collectives is autonomous where they exist. In any case, they constitute a space in which to integrate, share space and develop unitary initiatives and debates with the activists (party or non-party) that are involved.

On the other hand, nothing is stable in any party today. Although having their own peculiarities, all the waters are turbulent: both in the French Communist Party (split in two before the next congress) and the LFI (in full conflict after the election of the new leadership [5] excluding figures such as Clémentine Autin, Alexis Corbière, François Ruffin and Éric Coquerel, as well as the very "moderate" position of the leadership vis-à-vis one of its members condemned for violence against his companion, which has already provoked collective resignations from LFI. The question is all the more sensitive as the person in question appeared, before his conviction was made public, as the most probable successor to Mélenchon). With regard to the Socialist Party, it remains to be seen how its congress (27-29 January 2023) will conclude, with two alternatives aiming to replace the current leadership, and how this will affect Nupes.

Finally, from January, the social

question will be at the centre of the agenda. The pension reform desired by Macron should have been announced on 15 December (the deadline was postponed to 10 January following the unanimous agreement of all the unions to mobilize from January), the breakdown of public services (education, hospitals and so

on), the working conditions prevailing in the latter, not to mention the high cost of living or the coming energy restrictions - all of this defines a political situation where, in order to prevent the social unrest that is accumulating fuelling the embers of the far right, the social and political left must promote unitary initiatives

against Macron and his world. It is on this ground that the NPA must prove its usefulness, and its future is undoubtedly at stake. After this 5th congress, a door of hope has opened for the NPA.

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **Viento Sur**.*

Financing the 30x 30 agenda for the Oceans: Debt for Nature swaps should be rejected

28 December 2022, by CADTM

1. At the UN Biodiversity Conference, or COP-15, the post-2020 framework will likely endorse the target of declaring 30% of the world's land and oceans as protected areas by 2030. We recognise that protected areas can be effective means to restore and conserve biodiversity and support coastal communities who rely on fisheries for their livelihoods and food security. The success of the post-2020 framework is dependent on participatory and transparent approaches to locating such areas and developing rules on what commercial activities are permitted in them.

2. In delivering on '30x30', a rushed approach to gazetting large areas of the oceans as protected areas for nature could be extremely harmful. Governments must therefore recognise the rights of people, including their free, prior and informed consent to any decisions that deny them access to their historical fishing grounds, in line with the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on sustainable small-scale fisheries, as proposed in the [Artisanal Fishers Call to Action](#).

3. Furthermore, the protection of 30% of the oceans by 2030 must not distract governments from giving more comprehensive attention to the unsustainable management of ocean economies. Merely declaring large parts of the oceans as protected zones does not guarantee the sustainable and equitable use of marine resources.

Instead, COP-15 should strengthen efforts to halt the growth of socially and ecologically damaging industries, such as industrial fishing, intensive fish farming, and coastal and offshore mining. It should seek to end the large amounts of private investments and public subsidies these sectors receive. Without this, the 30x30 target will be superficial and it will fail in its ambition.

4. Our concerns about the 30x30 target extend to proposals on its financing. It is claimed that delivering on 30x30 will require a huge increase in government spending. While several financing mechanisms will be discussed at COP-15, an increasingly popular idea is to raise this money through innovative financial instruments, including debt for nature swaps and blue bonds. As seen at COP-27, there is strong support for these financial instruments among governments, multi-lateral organisations and most of the world's largest environmental NGOs. However, the risks and pitfalls of turning to financial markets to fund marine conservation are being ignored.

5. Debt for nature swaps are gaining particular momentum, and could be further endorsed at COP-15. It has been claimed these are ingenious solutions that will not only provide billions of dollars for marine conservation but will also provide

highly indebted countries lasting relief from crippling debt repayments to foreign creditors. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is leading the way in expanding these deals, having completed debt swaps in the Seychelles, Belize and Barbados already.

6. In Belize, TNC's debt for nature swap involved lending the government \$364 million, part of which was intended to allow Belize to refinance its debts owed to private lenders. This money was raised by Credit Suisse through issuing a blue bond to investors, eventually sold by Platinum Securities registered in the Cayman Islands. The deal was made conditional on enlarging marine protected areas from 20% to 30% of the nation's oceans, implementing various policies for coastal and ocean governance, including support for carbon offset trading and the development of commercial fish farming. This deal also commits the Government of Belize to provide \$180 million spread out over 20 years to a new national Conservation Fund, with TNC on its governing board. TNC will then provide overall guidance on the development of Belize's national Marine Spatial Plan.

7. With support from the US government, TNC has launched an 'audacious' plan to scale up these financial deals in 20 countries. In a presentation by TNC, a map was

provided that charts its ambition. We note that a deal valued at \$700 million is nearing completion in Gabon, and a deal valued at approximately \$800 million is in the advance stage in Ecuador.

TNC's active & planned debt for nature swaps



Source: NatureVest/TNC

8. TNC's Debt for nature swaps must be rejected. There are several reasons for this:

9. Debt for nature swaps are negotiated and finalised in secret. This is because publicity surrounding these deals could have unpredictable effects on bond markets, such as increasing the value of the debts of developing countries on secondary markets, therefore making them more expensive to buy. Free, prior and informed consent of citizens affected by these deals cannot be achieved with this debt swap model.

10. TNC's Debt for nature swaps lack transparency. The contracts signed between governments and TNC, which set out the terms of the financial transactions and the conservation commitments, are treated as confidential documents. The reasons for this have not been explained. However, a closer look at the complex structure of these deals reveals the use of subsidiary companies in tax havens and the repackaging of developing country debts by investment banks using opaque company structures. This lack of transparency prevents public understanding of what has been achieved in these transactions and how much money companies are receiving. This runs contrary to the [OECD's Debt Transparency Initiative](#), as well as the [Voluntary Principles for Debt Transparency](#) agreed to by the Institute for International Finance.

11. The mechanism used to disburse funds raised through debt for nature swaps is highly questionable. They commit governments to provide millions of dollars that are channelled through a new domestic conservation

NGO in each country, with legally binding agreements that this money is locked in for decades. This NGO will have an annual budget that surpasses government departments and will dwarf those of existing civil society organisations working with groups such as coastal fishing communities. The political implications of creating this affluent organisation that is running parallel to, and potentially in conflict with, existing government agencies has not been adequately recognised.

12. The size of debt for nature swaps mean they have a powerful influence on international responses to the debt crisis in developing countries: they are re-financing most of the foreign private debt of countries! Although they can save countries from paying back part of the loans they have amassed with private lenders, almost all the savings in these deals are handed over to the new national NGO focussing on marine conservation projects. As strategies to address the debt crisis, they do not free up public funds for urgent national development priorities, such as on health or education.

13. Debt for nature swaps contradict internationally supported principles for a co-ordinated and lasting solution to the debt crisis, such as the [UN Agreement on the Basic Principles for Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes](#). Solutions to the debt crisis need co-ordinated responses from all lenders, based on transparent and participatory dialogues. But opaque debt for nature swaps deals work exclusively in the interests of private lenders, such as investment banks, pension funds and hedge funds in the US and Europe. A recent study [by the IMF](#) argued an international response to the debt crisis must be de-linked from international support for dealing with conservation and climate crisis, and that future support for developing countries for conservation and climate finance should come in the form of genuine aid, not interest-bearing loans. This study advised that any further scaling up of debt for nature swaps should be avoided. [6]

14. Debt for nature swaps undermine global campaigns for debt justice, which require urgent reforms to the

way in which developing countries have been recklessly borrowing through bonds in foreign currencies. Yet the same institutions issuing these bonds and profiting from these debts are the ones being praised for brokering debt for nature swaps.

15. Finally, we are deeply concerned at the implications of a single conservation organisation gaining considerable power over the policies affecting the management of marine resources in so many developing coastal and small-island states, entirely down to its ability to raise funds through capital markets.

List of Signatories :

Acción Ecológica, Ecuador
Foundation for the defense of nature and its rights, Ecuador
Blue Ventures
Greenpeace
Canoe and Fishing Gear Owners Association of Ghana
Institute for Third World Ecological Studies, Ecuador
Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt (CADTM)
International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)
Coastal Action Network (CAN)
Jubileo Sur Américas
Community Action for Nature Conservation, Kenya (CANCO)
Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE)
African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organisations (CAOPA)
Masifundise, South Africa
National Coordinating Corporation for the Defence of the Mangrove Ecosystem, Ecuador (CCONDEM)
Mundus Maris
Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA)
(Collectif) Pêche et Développement, France
Coope Sol i Dar R. L.
SlowFood
Debt Justice, UK
SnowChange Cooperative, Finland
Ecoceanos, Chile
Sole of Discretion, UK
Fair Oceans, Germany
The South African Fishers' Collective
FIAN International
The Transnational Institute (TNI)
Fish4Ever, UK
World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP)

Fundación Lonxanet, Spain

Individual signatories

Christian Adams, fisher, South Africa

Hilda Adams, small scale fisher woman Westcoast Western Cape, South Africa

Magnus Johnson FHEA FMBA, Senior

Lecturer in Environmental Marine Science, University of Hull, UK
Nawel Benali, agronomist, Tunisia

Source: [CADTM](#)

Golpe in Peru: Castillo under arrest, people demand a constituent assembly

27 December 2022, by **Francisco Dominguez**

Regardless of Castillo presidency's evident shortcomings and mistakes, his ouster represents a grave setback for democracy in Peru and Latin America as a whole. His election last year took place on the back of an almighty crisis of credibility and legitimacy of a political system rigged with corruption and venality in which presidents were forced to resign on corruption charges (some ended in prison), with one committing suicide before being arrested on corruption charges. In the last six years Peru has had six presidents.

The rot was so advanced that no mainstream political party or politician could muster sufficient electoral support to succeed in winning the presidency in 2021 (the main right-wing party, *Fuerza Popular's* candidate got less than 14% of the vote in the first round). It goes a long way to explain why an unknown rural primary school teacher from the remote Andean indigenous area of Cajamarca, Pedro Castillo, would become the 63rd president of Peru. In Cajamarca, Castillo obtained up to 72% of the popular vote.

Castillo's election offered a historic chance to bury Peruvian neoliberalism. I myself penned [an article](#) with that prognosis, which I premised on Castillo's commitment to democratize Peruvian politics via a Constituent Assembly tasked with drafting a new constitution as the base from which to re-found the nation on an anti-neoliberal basis. A proposal that, in the light of recent experience in Latin America, is perfectly

implementable but whose precondition, as other experiences in the region have shown, is the vigorous mobilization of the mass of the people, the working class, the peasantry, the urban poor, and all other subordinate strata from society. This did not happen in Peru under Castillo's presidency.

Ironically, the mass mobilizations that broke out in the Andean regions and in many other areas and cities in Peru when they learned of Castillo's impeachment solidly confirms that this was the only possible route to implement his programme of change. The mass mobilizations throughout the nation (including Lima) are demanding a Constituent Assembly, the closure of the existing Congress, the liberation, and reinstatement of Castillo to the presidency, and the holding of immediate general elections.

This would explain the paradox that right-wing hostility to president Castillo, unlike other left governments in Latin America, was not waged because Castillo was undertaking any radical government action. In fact, opposition to his government was so blindingly intense that almost every initiative, no matter how trivial or uncontroversial, was met with ferocious rejection by Peru's right-wing dominated Congress. The Congress' key right-wing party, was *Fuerza Popular* led by Keiko Fujimori, daughter of Peru's former dictator, Alberto Fujimori. In Peru's Congress of 130 seats, Castillo counted on 15, originally solid, votes from *Peru Libre*,

and 5, not very solid, votes from *Juntos por el Peru*. In the absence of government mobilization of the masses, the oligarchy knew Castillo represented no threat, thus their intense hostility was to treat his government as an abhorrent abnormality sending a message to the nation that it should never have happened and that would never recur.

One example of parliament's obtuse obstructionism was the impeachment of his minister of foreign relations, Hector Béjar, a well reputed left-wing academic and intellectual on 17th August 2021, who, barely 15 days after his appointment and less than a month after Castillo's inauguration (28th July 2021), was forced to resign. Béjar's "offence", a statement made at a public conference in February 2020 during the election - before his ministerial appointment - in which he asserted a historical fact: terrorism was begun by Peru's Navy in 1974 well before the appearance of the Shining Path [1980]. Béjar was the first minister out of many to be arbitrarily impeached by Congress.

Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), an extreme guerrilla group, was active in substantial parts of the countryside during the 1980s-1990s and whose confrontation with state military forces led to a generalised situation of conflict. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission that, after the collapse of the Fujimori dictatorship, investigated the atrocities perpetrated during the state war against the Shining Path, [reported](#) that 69,280 people died or disappeared between 1980 and 2000.

Congress' harassment aimed at preventing Castillo's government from even functioning can be verified with numbers: in the 495 days he lasted in office, Castillo was forced to appoint a total of 78 ministers. Invariably, appointed ministers as in the case of Béjar, would be subjected to ferocious attack by the media and the Establishment (in Béjar's case, by the Navy itself) and by the right-wing parliamentary majority that was forcing ministers' resignation with the eagerness of zealous witch hunters.

Béjar was ostensibly impeached for his accurate commentary about the Navy's activities in the 1970s but more likely for having made the decision for Peru to abandon the Lima Group, adopting a non-interventionist foreign policy towards Venezuela and for condemning unilateral sanctions against nations. Béjar made the announcement of the new policy on 3rd August 2021 and the "revelations" about his Navy commentary were made on August 15th. The demonization campaign was in full swing immediately after that which included: soldiers holding public rallies demanding his resignation, a parliamentary motion from a coalition of parliamentary forces essentially for "not being fit for the post", and for adhering to a "communist ideology."

Something similar but not identical happened with Béjar's replacement, Oscar Maurtúa, a career diplomat, who had served as minister of foreign relations in several previous right-wing governments from 2005. When in October 2021, Guido Bellido, a radical member of *Peru Libre*, who upon being appointed Minister of Government, threatened the nationalisation of Camisea gas, an operation run by multinational capital, for refusing to renegotiate its profits in favour of the Peruvian state, Maurtúa resigned two weeks later. Guido Bellido himself, was forced to resign ostensibly for an "apologia of terrorism" but in reality for having had the audacity to threaten to nationalise an asset that ought to belong to Peru.

On 6th October 2021, Guido Bellido, a national leader of *Peru Libre*, who had been Castillo's Minister of Government since 29 July, offered his

resignation at the president's request triggered by his nationalization threat. Vladimir Cerrón, *Peru Libre's* key national leader followed suit by publicly breaking with Castillo on 16th October, asking him to leave the party and thus leaving Castillo without the party's parliamentary support. Ever since, *Peru Libre* has suffered several divisions.

Worse, Castillo was pushed into a corner by being forced to select ministers to the liking of the right-wing parliamentary majority to avoid them not being approved. All took place within a context dominated by intoxicating media demonization, accusations, fake news and generalised hostility to his government but with a Damocles sword - a motion to declare his presidency "vacant" and thus be impeached - hanging over his head.

The first attempt was in November 2021 (a few weeks after Bellido's forced resignation). It did not gather sufficient parliamentary support (46 against 76, 4 abstentions). The second was in March 2022 with the charge of "permanent moral incapacity", which got 55 votes (54 against and 19 abstentions) but failed because procedurally 87 votes were required. And finally, on 1st December 2022, Congress voted in favour of initiating a process to declare "vacancy" against Castillo for "permanent moral incapacity." This time, the right wing had managed to gather 73 votes (32 against and 6 abstentions). The motion of well over 100 pages, included at least six "parliamentary investigations" for allegedly "leading a criminal organization", for traffic of influences, for obstruction of justice, for treason (in an interview Castillo broached the possibility of offering Bolivia access to the sea through Peruvian territory), and even, for "plagiarizing" his MA thesis.

By then Castillo was incredibly isolated surrounded by the rarefied, putrid and feverish Lima political establishment that were as a pack of hungry wolves that had scented blood: Castillo would have to face a final hearing set by Peru's congressional majority on 7th December. On the same day, in an event surrounded by confusion - maliciously depicted by

the world mainstream media as a coup d'état - the president went on national TV to announce his decision to dissolve Congress temporarily, establish an exceptional emergency government and, the holding of elections to elect a new Congress with Constituent Assembly powers within nine months. US ambassador in Lima, Lisa D. Kenna, immediately reacted on that very day with a note stressing the US "rejects any unconstitutional act by president Castillo to prevent Congress to fulfil its mandate." The Congress's "mandate" was to impeach president Castillo.

We know the rest of the story: Congress on the same day carried the "vacancy" motion by 101 votes, Castillo was arrested, and Dina Boluarte has been sworn in as interim president. Declaring the dissolution of the Congress may not have been the most skilful tactical move Castillo made but he put the limelight on the key institution that obstinately obstructed the possibility of socio-economic progress that Castillo's presidency represented.

Castillo had no support whatsoever among the economic or political elite, the judiciary, the state bureaucracy, the police or the armed forces, or the mainstream media. He was politically right in calling for the dissolution of the obstruction of Congress to allow for the mass of the people through the ballot box to be given the chance to democratically remove it. An *Instituto de Estudios Peruanos* (IEP in its Spanish acronym) survey in November showed the rate of disapproval of Congress to be 86%, up 5 points from October, and staying on 75-78% throughout the second half 2021.

What was not expected with Castillo's impeachment was the vigorous outburst of social mobilization throughout Peru. Its epicentre was in the Peruvian 'sierra', the indigenous hinterlands where Castillo got most of his electoral support, but also in key cities, including Lima. The demands raised by the mass movement are for the reinstatement of Castillo, dissolution of Congress, the resignation of Boluarte, the holding of immediate parliamentary elections and, a new constitution. Demonstrators, expressing their fury

in Lima, carried placards declaring "Congress is a den of rats".

In light of the huge mass mobilizations one inevitably wonders why was this not unleashed before, say, one and a half year ago? Castillo, heavily isolated and under almighty pressure, hoping to buy some breathing space, sought to ingratiate himself with the national and international right by, for example, appointing a neoliberal economist, Julio Valverde, in charge of the Central Bank, tried to get closer to the deadly Organization of American States, met Bolsonaro in Brazil and distanced himself from Venezuela. To no avail, the elite demanded ever more concessions but would never be satisfied no matter how many Castillo made.

The repression unleashed against the popular mobilizations has been swift and brutal but ineffective. Reports talk of at least eighteen people killed by bullets from the police and more than a hundred injured, yet mobilizations and marches have grown and spread further. Though the "interim government" has already banned demonstrations, they have continued. Three days ago they occupied the Andahuaylas airport; an indefinite strike has been declared in Cusco; in Apurimac, school lessons have been suspended; plus a multiple blockading of motorways in many points in the country. It is evident the political atmosphere in Peru was already pretty charged and these social energies were dormant but waiting to be awoken.

Though it is premature to draw too many conclusions about what this popular resistance might bring about, it is clear that the oligarchy miscalculated what it expected the outcome of Castillo's ouster would be: the crushing defeat of this attempt, however timid, of the lower classes, especially cholos (pejorative name for indigenous people in Peru), to change the status quo. Peru's oligarchy found it intolerable that a cholo, Castillo, was the country's president and even

less that he dared to threaten to enlist the mass of the people to actively participate in a Constituent Assembly entrusted with drafting a new constitution.

The appointed interim president, Dina Boluarte, feeling the pressure of the mass mobilization announced a proposal to hold 'anticipated elections' in 2024 instead of 2026, the date of the end of Castillo's official mandate. However, it has been reported that Castillo sent a message to the people encouraging them to fight for a Constituent Assembly and not fall into the "dirty trap of new elections." Through one of his lawyers, Dr Ronald Atencio, Castillo communicated that his detention was illegal and arbitrary with his constitutional rights being violated, that he is the subject of political persecution, which threatens to turn him into a political prisoner, that he has no intention of seeking asylum, and that he is fully aware of the mobilizations throughout the country and the demands for his freedom.

We'll see how things develop from here. Castillo's ouster is a negative development; it is a setback for the left in Peru and for democracy in Latin America. Latin America's left presidents have understood this and condemned the parliamentary coup against democratically elected president Pedro Castillo. Among the presidents condemning the coup are, Cuba's Miguel Diaz-Canel, Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro, Honduras' Xiomara Castro, Argentina's Fernandez, Colombia's Petro, Mexico's Lopez Obrador, and Bolivia's Arce.

More dramatically, the presidents of Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, and Bolivia issued a joint communiqué (12th December) demanding Castillo's reinstatement that in its relevant part reads, "*It is not news to the world that President Castillo Terrones, from the day of his election, was the victim of anti-democratic harassment [...] Our governments call on all actors involved in the above process to*

prioritise the will of the people as expressed at the ballot box. This is the way to interpret the scope and meaning of the notion of democracy as enshrined in the Inter-American Human Rights System. We urge those who make up the institutions to refrain from reversing the popular will expressed through free suffrage." (my translation)

At the XIII ALBA-TCP summit held in Havana on December 15th, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada and Cuba condemned the detention of president Pedro Castillo which they characterised as a coup d'état.

It is very doubtful that Peru's oligarchy will be able to bring political stability to the country. Since 2016 the country has had 6 presidents, none of whom has completed their mandate, and the impeachment of Castillo has let the genie (militant mass mobilizations) out of the bottle and it looks pretty unlikely they will be able to put it back. The illegitimate government of Boluarte has on 14th December declared a state of emergency throughout the national territory and, ominously, placed the armed forces in charge of securing law and order. The armed forces, according to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that investigated the dirty war between the Peruvian state and the Shining Path guerrillas (1980-1992), were responsible for about 50 per cent of the 70,000 deaths the war cost. It is the typical but worst possible action that Peru's oligarchy can undertake.

The demands of the mass movement must be met: immediate and unconditional freedom of president Castillo, the immediate holding of elections for a Constituent Assembly for a new anti-neoliberal constitution, and for the immediate cessation of the brutal repression by sending the armed forces back to their barracks.

Source: **Public Reading Rooms**.

Class Struggle in Wartime

25 December 2022, by **Elias Vola**

With about 15 million refugees, a GDP in free fall by 35%, nearly five million jobs lost, deaths – civilian and military – in the tens of thousands and, most recently, the systematic destruction of energy infrastructure at the beginning of a harsh winter, it is an understatement to say that the country is on the verge of asphyxiation.

Obviously, the priority interest for Ukrainian workers remains ending this brutal invasion, which necessarily involves the withdrawal of Russian troops from the entire territory. With 80% of deaths at work related to acts of war in the unoccupied areas, murders, tortures, disappearances and the physical elimination of all forms of protest in areas under Russian control, the struggle for a real improvement of daily life can only be conditioned by this central objective.

Unfortunately, war is not the only

enemy of Ukrainian workers, who are simultaneously facing frontal attacks from their own government on labour rights and trade union freedoms. These reforms, initiated in 2019 by the Zelensky government, were blocked by the mobilization of workers and the coordinated action of the UPF and the KVPU, the two main trade union organizations in the country. Taking advantage of martial law, which considerably limits protest capacity, the Ukrainian right has opportunely returned to the offensive since the beginning of the war. One of the pieces of legislation, passed by the Ukrainian Parliament last August, deprives employees of small and medium enterprises, i.e., 70% of employees, of the protection of the Labour Code. Trade union confederations, trapped by martial law and facing a new anti-union law, are redoubling their international efforts to try to put pressure on the Zelensky government: a constitutional appeal, a

challenge to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the incompatibility of the law with the application for entry into the European Union, an international petition promoted by the European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine (ENSU).

This disastrous panorama should not, however, hide the underground resistance, like that of the miners of Novovolynsk who, during the summer, refused to work for the new director accused of corruption: “The people are the government. We do not need new leaders imposed on us. Go back to where you came from, we won’t work with you.” Although the class struggle is difficult in wartime, the workers, having taken over from a failed state in many areas, will not feel compelled to tolerate these attacks indefinitely.

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from ***l’Anticapitaliste***.*

End the Islamic Republic!

24 December 2022, by **Babak Kia**

“Woman, Life, Freedom.” This slogan is the banner of the uprising. Of Kurdish origin, it links up with the cultural and political demands of national minorities oppressed by the central government. It also makes the link with all the feminist struggles of recent decades. When the oppressed raise their heads, all the marginalized and exploited components of society move forward. Women are supported by men who also aspire to freedom and equality. This slogan has real revolutionary potential. It expresses a radical rejection of theocratic dictatorship and patriarchy. By

chanting “Death to the dictator, whether the guide or the Shah” the demonstrators express their desire to put an end to all forms of dictatorship.

Protesters don’t give up

Every day and every night, protesters act in various forms and confront the regime. Women, youth, especially university students and high school students, and workers find modes of organization and contestation adapted

to the conditions of repression.

At a time when the country is hit by an unprecedented economic, social and political crisis, and the corruption of dignitaries is reaching new heights, workers are trying to find ways to strike and generalize this. On 5, 6 and 7 December, the country experienced particularly well supported strikes in the universities, among truck drivers (in struggle since 26 November), in some petrochemical sectors, in cement and steel factories in Isfahan and among bus drivers in Mashhad. Many bazaars have been closed.

Fierce repression

The Islamic Republic has lost all legitimacy and has only repression, rape, torture, the death penalty and massacres to maintain itself. In more than 160 cities, large and small, repressive forces are attacking protests. In Kurdistan and Sistan-Baluchistan, a veritable war is being waged against peaceful and determined demonstrators. The Revolutionary Guards do not hesitate to fire on the crowds, use heavy weapons, surround the cities, install a climate of terror and kidnap young protesters.

The toll is heavy: more than 500 dead including 60 teenagers and more than 19,000 arrests. In many cases, families do not know where their loved one is detained or their stage of health. In detention, rape and torture are systematic.

In retaliation for strikes, workers in

struggle are dismissed and arrested. They face intense pressure on their families and exorbitant legal costs.

Repression goes a step further

Despite the crackdown, the regime has failed to quell the uprising. To save their power and privileges, its dignitaries have decided to take it to the next level. The judiciary holds show trials and sentences detainees to long prison terms. Death sentences are multiplying. Already two young demonstrators have been hanged and others will be hanged in the coming days.

The Islamic Republic is accustomed to this: at least 35,000 opponents were executed in 1981-1983, and 4,500 political prisoners in the summer of 1988. At the time, Ebrahim Raisi (the current President of the Republic) was among those responsible for ordering the executions. The bloody machine

currently unleashed will only be stopped by a strong and immediate international campaign against the death penalty, as well as by a massive mobilization in Iran, especially that of workers.

Developing solidarity

In particular, we must demand a halt to executions and the release of all political detainees. We must also undertake concrete initiatives to support workers and all those who fight for equality, democracy and social justice.

It is urgent that the radical left, youth organizations, feminist and trade union networks take internationalist initiatives of solidarity with the ongoing uprising.

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from ***l'Anticapitaliste la Revue***.*

Graduate Workers Win a Strike; Starbucks Workers Organize One

23 December 2022, by **Dan La Botz**

The tentative agreement would give these workers, depending on their location in the state, basic wages of \$25,000 per year immediately and between \$34,000 and \$36,486 by 2024. They would also receive \$2,025 per semester for childcare and 100% health coverage in many cases. The final vote is December 19 - 23.

Graduate workers, who have felt like serfs in the education system, have joined in a variety of unions and have been organizing around the country. They are not an easy group to organize given that universities have resisted organization by the graduates who work at dozens of public and private universities, are broken into many different job categories, are also dependent on their department heads

for their jobs and for other income in the form of fellowships. Moreover, every two or three years the entire cohort of graduate workers moves on, leaving the university to take jobs in the public or private sectors, making it difficult to maintain membership and preserve organizational and political continuity.

Now, however, with support from major unions and driven by inflation, many are organizing, striking, and often winning. For example, at the New School, where 90 percent of classes are taught by non-tenured adjuncts and lecturers, many of them employed part-time, they won modest improvements in wages and health care benefits after a three-week strike.

Organizing drives in higher education are important for the labor movement for several reasons. First, because of the low rate of total unionization of the workforce at 10.3 percent in 2021, every victory is important. Second, these workers are demonstrating that strikes can be effective and that workers can win. Third, these graduate workers go on to other industries and services taking with them their union experience.

The same day that U of C workers reached a tentative agreement to end their strike, hundreds of workers at 100 Starbucks stores have begun a three-day strike to protest the company's unfair labor practices. Starbucks workers have won government supervised union

representation election at 270 stores, about 80% of all attempts, but in response to union organizing the company has closed stores and fired workers, both of which are illegal. It has also legally offered improvements in wages and conditions in stores where union organizing is not taking place as an inducement for workers to reject union representation.

“They’re doubling down on their union-busting, so we’re doubling down, too,” said Michelle Eisen, a barista from a Starbucks café in Buffalo, New York that was the first to vote for the union a year ago. “We’re demanding fair staffing, an end to store closures, and that Starbucks bargain with us in good faith.” Organizing Starbucks is a monumental task given that there are 9,265 company-operated and 6,608 licensed

stores in the United States.

The Democratic Socialists of America is involved in graduate student unions around the country and has a solidarity campaign with Starbucks’ workers and has mobilized its members to join the workers picket lines. No doubt a few of these workers will join DSA, which aims to become a working-class organization.

Solidarity with the mass movement for democracy in China

21 December 2022, by Fourth International Bureau

A fire in a residential building in Ürümchi, which killed a number of predominantly Uyghur victims, catalyzed the largest mass movement in China in decades. The fire was a result of China’s faulty pandemic lockdown regime, which has long deprived many across the country of basic freedom of movement and other human rights, and even access to basic necessities. These draconian policies are not new. Many local protests have emerged against how the lockdowns have been conducted in the last two years. Most notably, Foxconn workers in Zhengzhou have been suffering from forced labor conditions as a result of the factory employing a closed-loop system that traps the workers in the worksite to maintain production—a move approved by the Chinese state council. The workers staged a protest that became an important prelude to the mass protests, where they were met by police repression siding with Foxconn’s corporate interests.

The years since the Tiananmen protests and the subsequent massacre in 1989 have seen a lull in mass movement consciousness as China accelerates its turn to neoliberalism. While local and wildcat actions have been widespread, there has been little success in building a cross-sector, independent mass movement across

civil society. Repression accelerated with Xi Jinping’s rise to power, further deepening China’s authoritarian mode of governance. The possibility of mass struggle has been further restricted by divisions among between Han Chinese and other ethnic groups, often stoked by the regime. We believe that these protests signal an important shift in the political consciousness of the people of China to overcome these entrenched limitations.

The protests in China should not be reduced to the anti-masking and anti-vaccine protests by right-wing groups in the West. People in China are discontented with the way in which pandemic control had been executed. At various times during the pandemic, masses of people were locked against their will into large fangcang-style hospitals that often exacerbated infections. Many were trapped in their residential buildings for days and weeks, sometimes without access to basic necessities.

The massive struggle across China forced the regime to back down from its years-long pandemic policies—in other words, it is important to acknowledge that the people have won their first battle. But the work is far from over. During the pandemic, the Chinese regime’s investment in long-term medical infrastructure that can

could mitigate the pandemic’s harms actually decreased, in favor of wasteful and anti-democratic testing and lockdown protocols. The government will inevitably face pressure on its medical system, and we may can anticipate its apologists to casting blame on the protestors. However, we must remember that the fundamental responsibility lies with the government.

In recent decades and especially during the pandemic, the Chinese government has continued its trend of privatizing key social services, and opening up workers to new forms of precarity and exploitation. Women in particular have faced the brunt of these measures. Childcare and other social benefits are rapidly being privatized or moved into ‘public-private’ models, and migrant and other women workers are caught between increasingly precarious jobs while bearing the weight of social reproduction.

At the same time, we must emphasize that women and other marginalized groups are at in the lead in providing increased political clarity to this inchoate mass movement. We wish to highlight the efforts of feminists and other marginalized groups that are taking the lead in challenging the more conservative elements of the

protests within the spaces of mass action themselves. Overseas Chinese activists have pushed for putting forward the struggles of Uyghurs and other non-Han ethnic groups as a central demand. Feminist and LGBTQ+ activists have not only led local and overseas struggles, but some have even sought to struggle for better feminist processes against gender-based violence within protest spaces. We also recognize that the protests began in 'Xinjiang,' one of the most surveilled and repressed regions of China, where Uyghurs have been denied their right to self-determination for years. Many Uyghurs and other non-Han ethnic peoples have been detained in "re-education camps," in the Chinese state's own words, which "[draw] on the practices of the UK, France and other countries," and are inspired by Israeli counter-insurgency tactics against Palestinians.

Socialists should strongly support the calls to self-determination by Uyghurs and others who demand it, even if Western imperialists seek to co-opt such demands. As Lenin said in 1916, "the struggle for national liberation against one imperialist power may, under certain circumstances, be utilized by another 'Great' Power in its equally imperialist interests should have no more weight in inducing Social Democracy to renounce its recognition of the right of nations to self-determination than the numerous case of the bourgeoisie utilizing republican slogans for the purpose of political deception and financial robbery." Socialists must work hard to build alternatives to the collusion between Western imperial actors and certain Uyghur nationalist elites, while continuing to center Uyghurs' independent demands for self-determination in the context of this mass struggle.

How else can socialists contribute in this ongoing awakening in mass political consciousness? We welcome other socialist and anti-capitalist formations' efforts in showing solidarity to the protesters, and emphasize our commitment to helping to build a pluralistic social movement. As revolutionary socialists, we try our best to learn and synthesize lessons from all aspects of a mass movement

by participating in the struggle. Our stance is clear: neither authoritarian bureaucratic capitalism nor bourgeois democracy can sufficiently fulfill people's fundamental democratic rights. What is needed is a multi-party system, democratically composed of workers', women's, and other organizations of the working-class and marginalized peoples under a broad-based anti-capitalist program. While we encourage the role of socialist organization to help advocate for these ideas, we do not seek to participate to take over or just to recruit, and attempt to substitute the self-activity and autonomy of the mass movement.

The most urgent task is to support and empower the mass movements in demanding their basic democratic rights: abolishing legislation that infringes on people's basic freedoms to speech, assembly, and self-organization. In particular, we agree with the spirit of Peng Lifa's demands, valiantly raised on Beijing's Sitong Bridge days before the CCP's National Congress this past October. Peng called for independent mass action from all sectors of civil society to demand universal suffrage and the abolition of Xi Jinping's dictatorial rule. However, we believe that a bourgeois parliamentary system, in which the fundamental class relations of society remain untouched, would not help, but in fact limit, a genuine vision of a democratic system based on economic redistribution and radical systemic reform.

Thus, we reiterate our support for the demands raised by local and overseas Hongkonger and Chinese socialists below.

1. Abolish lockdowns that forcibly detain people in their homes, denying them of access to basic needs.
2. Abolish forced PCR testing for COVID-19.
3. Allow those who are infected to isolate at home, while those with severe symptoms have the right to treatment in the hospital; cancel forcible transfer and isolation of infected and non-infected individuals in mobile cabin "hospitals".
4. Provide options for multiple vaccines, allowing individuals the right to choose their own healthcare.

5. Release Sitong Bridge protestor Peng Zaizhou and other political prisoners who are being detained from the protests.
6. Call for nation-wide mourning of the deaths of those caused by irresponsible lockdown measures.
7. Ensure the resignation of bureaucrats responsible for pandemic mismanagement.
8. Pandemic control measures must be informed by medical experts and conducted democratically amongst the people.
9. Safeguard the rights of people to the freedom of speech, assembly, organization, and protest.
10. Support independent workers' power in and beyond these protests; abolish anti-worker practices like the 996 work schedule and strengthen labor law protections, including protecting workers' right to strike and self-organization, so they can participate more extensively in political life.

These demands seek to echo and synthesize the most progressive formulations of the demands on the ground, while opening up the possibility for a deeper critique of the Chinese political system to emerge: that the genuine fulfillment of these demands for democracy would only be possible in the overthrow of the commodity capitalist system from which the authoritarian Chinese regime draws its power. The task for socialists is to continue participating and encouraging mass action and self-organization in these protests, while discovering new ways to bridge between a minimum program for democratic reforms and revolutionary socialism. In light of the ongoing climate crisis, exacerbated by the inter-imperialist rivalry between the US and China, we believe that the antidote is ecosocialism, which centers on everyday people's capacity to democratically and collectively organize production, their own lives, and how society is run. This will not be possible without a robust and independent mass movement in China and in the rest of the world.

Solidarity with the people across China, notably Uyghurs and other non-Han ethnic groups living in the occupied lands of 'Xinjiang'!

A football victory does not erase the Hogra

19 December 2022, by **Éric Toussaint, Jawad Moustakbal**

On Sunday 4 December 2022, a national march was organized in the city of Rabat. This march, which brought together around 3,000 people, had the slogan: "All against the high cost of living, oppression and repression".

It was organized by the National Social Front, which brings together several political, trade union and human rights organizations, to denounce the wave of soaring prices and the regime's repressive escalation against all dissenting voices.

The first march since the covid pandemic

This national march was the first since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, which the authorities took advantage of to ban all forms of collective expression. Participants in the march chanted slogans denouncing the recent attacks on purchasing power and the head of government, the billionaire Aziz Akhenouch, with placards that read: "Akhenouch out".

The structural reasons for the deterioration of the living conditions of the majority of the population are linked to the neo-liberal economic choices that have been adopted by

those who have governed our country for decades. The policies of liberalization and privatization, for example, benefit a local elite that revolves around the "palace" and often joins forces with Western multinationals to monopolize territories (water, forests, land, mines, etc.) or the most profitable public enterprises, or even strategic and vital sectors such as water distribution, energy, education or health.

These structural factors are primarily responsible for this situation, as they also limit the state's capacity to cope with economic conditions by constantly reducing the budget for public services and increasing our dependence on food and energy. This increases our fragility in relation to fluctuations in the prices of products that are essential for our people and our economy. Added to this are the effects of drought, which has become more intense and frequent over the last 20 years, in connection with the global ecological crisis and global warming.

The government's response to crises and inequalities: repression

Social inequalities in Morocco are also the highest in the region according to the latest Oxfam reports. Repression appears to be the only response the Moroccan state has to deal with these multiple exacerbated crises. The regime has succeeded in creating a climate of terror where people are prosecuted and convicted for a simple Facebook post, or even for clicking on the "Like" button

Regarding the victory of the national team in the World Cup, the regime has already launched its media machine to make the most of it and promote a so-called national unity and put the masses to sleep. Unfortunately, people today need even an illusory sense of victory given the multiple failures and distress they suffer in all aspects of their daily lives.

But I think that this joy will be ephemeral and that, even if a football victory succeeds in making people forget for a few days their terrible living conditions, the feeling of discontent and contempt (Hogra) of the working classes will return. What we can't predict is when this feeling of discontent will be expressed in collective mobilizations equal to the violence of the attack of the ruling classes.

7 December 2022

Read the full version in French on [CADTM](#).

United Auto Workers Elects New Leadership,

a Rank-and-File Victory

17 December 2022, by **Dan La Botz**

Organized in the 1930s through factory occupations, mass picket lines, and battles with scabs and police, the left-led union succeeded in organizing the big three automakers: General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler as well as many parts suppliers. By the 1940s as the plants turned toward war production, the UAW reached over one million members. Walter Reuther, union president from 1940 to 1970, was a social democrat, who supported the Black civil rights movement and the Latino farmworkers, but he also created a highly centralized caucus, a “one-party state,” that dominated the union for seventy years.

The union has suffered several crises. In the 1960s when Black workers made demands on both the auto companies and the union, the union sent white workers to physically attack a Black workers’ protest. In the 1970s militant workers, some of them Vietnam War veterans, pushed the union to carry out militant strikes against GM. Then in the 1980s, facing German and Japanese competition, the U.S. automakers began to close some of their older plants and also demanded and won concessions in wages and benefits. In response, rank-and-file activists created “locals

against concessions.” In the 1980s and 90s, the companies adopted what has been called “Toyota” management but is better defined as “lean production” or “management by stress.” The UAW entered into partnership with the companies, creating many joint programs—such as Quality Circles—that soon eclipsed the union.

In the twenty-first century, the UAW leadership became utterly corrupt, embezzling more than a million dollars from the union for luxury travel and extravagant personal expenses. Several UAW officials, including two former presidents, pleaded guilty and were sentenced to one- to six-years imprisonment. Seeing the need for reform, workers created Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD).

But this is not the UAW of old. When auto plants closed, the UAW lost members, the union began to organize in other sectors, like education. So the UAW today is no long solely an industrial union. Altogether the union has 391,000 active members and 580,000 retired members who also vote in union elections. But of the active members, over one quarter are now university graduate student workers.

The courts intervened in the union and gave workers options, so members voted in 2021 to end the practice of electing leaders at national union conventions and instead let members vote directly on top officers. Reformers then created a slate called UAW Members United. Reformers called for “no corruption, no concessions, and no tiers.” (Tiers refers to different pay rates for different groups of workers doing the same jobs.). The reformers won several posts in the leadership election that just took place. But only 106,000 of the nearly one million active and retired worker voted. So while there is a new leadership, it has not been propelled to power either by a widespread militant worker upsurge in the workplaces nor by a powerful movement for reform. (45,000 graduate student workers are now on strike in California, but their region did not support the reformers.)

Several of the reformers have experience at the local level, but they have not led a national union, and now they now face big challenges. They will need our solidarity.

14 December 2022

Starmer, migration and the economy

15 December 2022, by **Dave Kellaway**

Fantasy? Not really. The *Financial Times* on the 23rd reports a senior Labour figure saying that Starmer’s comments in his speech to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) the day before about ending Britain’s reliance on immigration were aimed at reassuring voters in Brexit-

backing “Red Wall” seats. The cynicism is quite blatant:

It’s very important for us to improve Britain’s productivity and the easiest way to do that would be to join the EU and increase

immigration — which business would love — but there’s no way politically we can do that,

In other words, they do not really believe in the economics of it at all but want to send out the dog-whistle line

that Labour is not soft on migrants.

Broken pledges

Starmer, in the post-Corbyn leadership contest, actually won the overwhelmingly pro-Remain, pro-EU free movement membership majority through ten pledges that largely endorsed most of Corbyn's progressive policies. They included free movement within the EU.

Ironically, as the Bank of England, the Office for Budget Responsibility and many economists use economic data to show the negative effect on growth and living standards due to Brexit, Starmer is rejecting any notion of a softer Brexit, of re-joining the single market. At the same time public opinion polls show an increasing majority, even among leave voters, who think that Brexit is going badly.

In his speech to the CBI, Starmer identified the reliance on migrant labour as maintaining a "low wage" economy, which prevented the development of a higher-skilled, better-trained, and higher-wage economy. By talking about higher skills, training, and regulating collective bargaining rights, Starmer wants to dress up his policy of restricting migration with a progressive veneer.

No progressive or socialist is against higher skills, better training, and trade union rights, but is this the key message the mass media have taken from his speech? What Starmer is really doing is echoing the false argument that it is migrants who create the low-wage economy. This is a little different from the arguments of the Brexiteers and the racist Nigel Farage. You just have to Google to find a host of articles from mainstream economists and academics proving that migrants have no or very little influence on lower wages.

Older workers with memories of the economy when there were fewer migrants will tell you that the bosses have no need for migrants to keep wages as low as possible. I am sure if you compared wages between areas where there are few migrants and other places where there are many,

you would not find any variation due to migrant density. Surely there are some intelligent people in the LOTO office who know about this evidence and are deliberately ignoring it for cynical political reasons.

Pro-business points based system

As an [article](#) at the Open Democracy website explains, the Tories' points-based migration system that is today more or less embraced by Starmer is not that effective in organising migrant labour even when you accept its discriminatory framework:

The new system offers very little flexibility in how people can qualify for a work visa and applicants cannot qualify without a job offer.

In fact, if you look below the surface it becomes clear that the UK's most recent points-based system is actually just a conventional employer-led system, where applicants must have a job offer and meet certain other criteria. An arbitrary number of purely cosmetic points are attached to these requirements.

A points-based system is a step backward from the free movement we benefited from within the EU. It allows the state and the employers to pick and choose which workers they require based on the posts they have to fill. Deciding who can come in will be assigned to a new body called "Skills England," but the assessment criteria are very vague, as Nils Pratley points out in this article. By supporting a points-based system, Labour is treating workers like any other commodity rather than supporting the right of workers to freely move in the same way as capital does, across all borders.

Even in terms of the "needs" of British business today, it is questionable that the greatest lack is for highly skilled workers—look at the mess there is

today with the seasonal farm workers. Presumably, Starmer is okay with government migrant systems that stop EU workers but import Indonesian fruit pickers who are indebted to gangmasters. These workers are limited to working in the one workplace they are assigned and are not allowed to do any other sort of work. Labour has been silent on this scandal, as it has been on most issues where defending migrants' rights is at stake.

Accepting the points-based system also effectively accepts the capitalist notion of high and low skill, correlating that with high and low pay. Is a paid caregiver less skilled than a hedge fund trader? Does remuneration today have much connection either to skills or social usefulness? If the Labour leadership had any grain left of socialist antagonism toward the system, it would question this framework.

Labour's response to the drama of the small boats carrying migrants across the channel has never been based on a clear defence of asylum seekers or the rights of migrants not to be drowned at sea. Instead, it echoes the focus on the evil people smugglers, with Starmer lending his prosecutor-in-chief experience to the cause. People smugglers exist because the government hasn't set up safe and easy ways for people to seek asylum.

Even the Tory MP, Tim Laughton, at the committee hearings with Braverman, raised this issue more forcefully than Labour. The Home Secretary could not answer his simple questions about how an asylum seeker from an African country went about trying to get to Britain, which has signed up to international agreements about accepting refugees. Braverman had to turn to an aide, who bumbled on about how the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission on Refugees) could help out. This was totally inaccurate, as was pointed out officially by the UNCHR. Would Starmer ever use just one of his questions at PMQs to raise such a question? Don't hold your breath.

Competency not compassion

Just like during the depths of the COVID crisis, Starmer and Labour leaders only focus on competency when dealing with the migrant issue, such as the huge delays in processing claims. He wants the message to be not that we support asylum seekers' rights or support migrant workers but rather that we will be more competent in controlling and restricting them. His latest CBI speech attempts to avoid the bluntness of Miliband's "controls on immigration" mugs, but

covering it up with dubious economics on a highly skilled economy amounts to the same thing.

Starmer is pushing out a negative migrant message just when public opinion has changed on this issue, as shown in an Institute of Public Policy survey, quoted in the *Guardian*:

The IPPR report, which focuses on swing voters most likely to switch parties, shows that Labour could attract 5% of the public and only repel 2% by signalling a more open approach to immigration. Only 1% of the general public would be

attracted to Labour if it adopted a restrictive stance on immigration, the paper said, and 11% would be repelled.

No surprise who was one of the first to praise Starmer's speech: Nigel Farage stated that "Labour are now to the right of the Tories on immigration".

No one is illegal!

Stop Rwanda operation!

Solidarity with migrant workers!

Source *Anti*Capitalist Resistance*.

One Thousand Trans March in Tokyo in Solidarity with Transgender People

14 December 2022, by **Mi-hyang Pak**

Many people spoke their thoughts at the speech event starting at 10 am, underscoring the urgency to defend the rights of transgender people. The representative of the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center said that they want to build a non-exclusive women's movement. A member of Tokyo Shinjuku Ward Assembly underlined the administration's incomprehension. The Trans March was being held to strengthen social cohesion of transgender people and raise awareness about human rights issues.

The Trans March, which was organized entirely by community volunteers, began in San Francisco in 2004 after an American transgender teenager Gwen Amber Rose Araujo was murdered by four men in 2002. The Trans March in San Francisco, which could be one of the few large annual transgender events in the world [7], became the fourth main LGBT Pride event. And the annual grassroots social change events took place around the world. In Japan, the first Trans March was held in 2021 in honor of the International Transgender Day of

Remembrance. The International Transgender Day of Remembrance has been observed annually from its inception on November 20 as a day to remember those who have been murdered as a result of transphobia. [9] In 2019, San Francisco Mayor London Breed held a press conference with the Office of Transgender Initiatives prior to the Trans March. Breed declared June 28, 2019 - the day of that year's Trans March and the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots - to be "Trans March Day", and announced a housing program for transgender people. [