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A Life of Struggle for Land and Community in Guatemala

31 January 2023, by **Dawn Marie Paley**

Dawn Marie Paley: To start, I'd wanted to ask you how we can begin to understand the impact the internal conflict in Guatemala had on communal life?

Isabel Solís: It had a big impact. I remember before, there was community; there was a lot of collective activity, for example, when it was sowing time, everything was collective, entire families, or branches of families, would unite to do everything, including building houses.

All of that was destroyed. Now, there is less collective work, now it is done for wages. The practice of mutual aid changed. Now there are fewer families who practice mutual aid, which means that I will go work for you, and later you will work for me. That was destroyed, and there began to be a lot of divisions between branches of the same family. Those divisions impacted the most intimate family bonds. That has continued to today, trust is broken, compared to what it was like before the war.

DMP: Could you tell me about the process through which you began to become involved in social organizations?

IS: Well, I think I followed in my mother's footsteps a bit, because ever since my brothers and father were

kidnapped, my mother began to struggle. She said, "I have to find them, I have to find them, and I'll continue until I find them."

Initially she became part of the Mutual Support Group (GAM), and she would take me to their demonstrations. I learned from them, from rural women who occupied the capitol building and who occupied congress, in the middle of the armed conflict.

Later, I also supported the activities of the National Coordination of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA). By then I was a teacher, so I could help with education, and that's how I became involved. I was 20 years old.

DMP: In 1996, the Peace Accords were signed in Guatemala. Did that change the context of struggle?

IS: Yes, it did. There was a group that analyzed the Peace Accords and all of its terms. One of the issues that was of concern to us was the issue of land and Indigenous people. The proposal was to use the market to solve it, of which we were very critical.

We said that the Peace Accords didn't address our problems and that protests—involving struggles for the land and to recover land—would continue. We didn't stop. I remember

one of the key cases then was a community that was recovering [the lands called] Pampas del Horizonte, in the department of Quezaltenango. That was the motor of the struggle for land at that moment.

I was in Guatemala City's Central Park when the final act of the Peace Accords took place. I traveled from my community, we even brought tamales, and we sat and ate there, and everybody was very hopeful and happy. But we didn't agree with the logic with regards to the issue of land, while many organizations did agree to that logic. And they would say to us, "You are screwing up the Peace Accords." They practically blamed us for the lack of compliance with the accords.

I think that that became clearer when extractive projects began to appear in rural areas, first in the department of San Marcos and later in other regions.

The communities that were impacted began to resist extractive projects. However, the organizations were convinced by the Peace Accords, and they began to administer crumbs [little development projects] to quiet groups within the communities, or they just talked and talked as resistance grew in the territories. Repression took place in the places

where there was resistance. It is similar to what's happening now, but it wasn't as visible then.

For me, the Peace Accords were a trap, a way of taking away our power and calming things down so capital could be invested into resource extraction.

They take the land away and poverty goes up. That is the key issue, and the proposal for how to deal with that issue was through the market. Why should I buy back land that was stolen from me? The Peace Accords needed to respond to historic dispossession by returning land to Indigenous communities.

There was a time during which the number of soldiers was reduced, but the soldiers became police and began to work as security guards on many private properties, especially in the Izabal region. I mention that region because that's where I was most active in that period.

The Peace Accords mention Indigenous communities in a very superficial way. They mention the recognition of language, the recognition of our traditional clothing, which is interesting and all, but I can't live on air, speaking my language, or wearing my traditional clothing. Communities must be respected in their entirety.

DMP: How many years did that sensation of speaking to the void with regards to social organizations last?

IS: I think that the national organizations, and especially those that were aligned with the Peace Accords, those that believed in peace, began to participate in resistance after around 2012.

After 2004, in the whole Verapaz region and part of Izabal, the communities began the struggle to recover their lands, and a very important movement of communities against mining started to take shape.

In 2005, I was working as a researcher again. I was part of a group of researchers, and we looked at the land reoccupations, and we realized that when communities were

evicted from their ancestral lands there was no news coverage. Nobody talked about it.

But the evictions were something that was known in the region, and communities began to organize themselves against the violent evictions. The campesino organizations still weren't responding, in fact, they ignored the resistance. Some of them did intervene and they pushed market solutions, while the communities demanded the return of land that had been taken from them or which was under threat of theft.

DMP: You were involved in CUC and CONIC, both of which are very important organizations. You decided to leave both. I wanted to ask you about how you perceive the power that these organizations had in a given moment, and what they are like today?

IS: I think there have been different moments. There have even been different organizations, and each one had its moment of importance. In my way of seeing, I would even dare to say that when organizations become really big and important, they can be weakened when they set their principles and initial demands aside and they begin to participate in party politics. That's when they begin to lose their power, and some even disappear.

For example, there was an organization called CERJ [Council of Ethnic Identities Runujel Junam] that was very interesting, but after its leader became a candidate for a party, over time the organization went dark.

That also happened with other campesino and women's organizations: They had an important and interesting trajectory and then got involved with a party and began to be diluted and disappeared or ended up just as a group of people sustaining the name of the organization or carrying out projects. Which is to say, they become NGOs.

I've got two readings of that. One is that it could be that for most of the members of the organization, the problems they are dealing with could

not be solved by participating in the state. I could be right about that, or not, we'd have to look deeper. The other is around the concentration of leadership, leaving one person to make decisions. When that leader leaves for another space, everything is weakened.

Regarding political participation via parties, after the Peace Accords, there was an interesting experience among the organizations with the New Nation Alliance [ANN], which was interesting for a while, for about four years. There were a significant number of congresspeople on the left. But I couldn't tell you what they did to benefit the communities.

During that period there were many people and communities seeking to grow their power, and there were regional movements that inspired other regions to create larger and better organizations. One of those was the Council of Peoples of the West [CPO], which was inspiring, but it was also weakened when it joined a party.

There's another example that's worth considering, which is the movement that was built around community consultations. There were more than 60 community consultations, and in all of them, the majority of people voted "no," which is to say, no to mining. That was an interesting movement.

There were organizations that thought that the process would automatically translate to a pool of voters, so many of the leaders sought to become candidates. And it didn't work.

That's interesting because it means the people are saying, "Yes, we are going to defend our territory. Yes, here we are. Yes, we are going to say no to extractive projects. Yes, we are going to resist. Yes, we will give our lives if that's what it takes [or give up our freedom] because we could end up in jail." A total dedication to the territory, to the defense of life.

But when the conversation began to turn to political participation via parties, and the goal became to be part of the state, the movement and its articulation shrank.

To me, the idea of sustaining my own

oppressor doesn't make sense. The state is an oppressive instrument. When the Spanish came and invaded, they pillaged the country and later built the state. The state was built to administer theft. To me, the state is not power. Their power was built on theft, and they sustain their wealth based on what they stole and continue to steal from us.

People on the left think the state itself is power. But we've seen that it's not. If we look at the experience of Bolivia, we see that the communities are still being dispossessed and robbed. But if being in the state is the same as having power, Bolivia wouldn't have dispossession, there wouldn't be evictions, there wouldn't be repression.

My thoughts on this come from what I've learned from working with the people and being part of community struggles. For example, in my community, many people are uninterested in elections, starting with my mother. She says, "I'm not going to waste my time. I'm going to work. The state doesn't give me a penny to eat; I am the one that has to give to the state."

What I'm saying is, how can we continue to sustain a structure that we have characterized as oppressive, repressive, and based on theft? And people from organizations—or people who say they are on the left—are so contradictory, because they say, "Well, we have to learn how the state is managed."

For goodness sakes!!!! How am I

going to learn from something that doesn't work? How am I going to learn from the state if the only thing it has done is steal, repress, and exploit??? I've learned more from the communities and from my people.

DMP: This doesn't surprise me. We're educated to believe the state has always existed, that it will always exist, and that change can only come from the state. What other forms of organization currently exist in Guatemala?

IS: There isn't one general form of [communal or Indigenous] organization nationally, because the country is structured according to the interests of capital [not according to Indigenous practices]. The other forms of organization that exist are those of the Q'eqchi, Quiche, Kakchiquel, Mam, Q'anjob'al, and other communities.

These other forms of organization aren't based on repression; rather, they are about administering communal life. Gladys Tzul explains these forms in her book.* And I ask myself: Why don't we use these forms on a national level?

One day I suggested just that, to a women's group, when everyone was talking about corruption, saying that with [ex-president] Jimmy [Morales] it didn't work, that when former President Otto Pérez Molina was removed from power, the social movement was interesting, but it didn't last. And the current president is the same.

So I said, why don't we think of

another way? Why don't we go towards a communitarian model, replicating on a national level a series of councils of women and communities, and we could even reduce the number of elected officials.

If we were to replicate the community system, it would mean no one got paid, it would all be pro bono, which would also mean there wouldn't be fights within and between parties. Why did I say that?!! They told me that I was assuming people's lives were already resolved, that such a thing would be impossible. Some said it was impossible to do such work ad honorem.

That's when I realized that some aspire to office because they want a salary and that's why there is corruption. It's become a vicious cycle. The same speeches, and promises of solutions, every four years. That's a narrative that hides the truth or hides the inability to think about and do things in a different way.

DMP: But maybe in a different space, like a community assembly, your proposal would be received differently?

IS: Oh, yes, absolutely. My hope is that abstentionism keeps increasing, that gives me hope. It's a sign that society is waking up. The more people vote, the more society is asleep and hope is more distant. To date there's no value given to abstentionism, and no one wants to consider it. Instead, it is frowned upon.

Source: *New Politics*.

Heading for a general strike in Denmark?

30 January 2023, by Jonathan Simmel

There was already a high risk of conflict last autumn. In the meantime, the new bourgeois "middle government" consisting of the Social Democrats, the Liberals and a new bourgeois "middle party" has poured

oil on the fire.

Background and introduction: Agreements and renewal:

In Denmark, pay and working

conditions are set by collective agreements. These are negotiated directly between trade unions and employers' organizations, and only a few key elements (holidays, working environment, anti-discrimination, etc.)

are regulated by law. In short, most essential conditions are set by the social partners, for example the minimum wages. Agreements are negotiated every few years, depending on how long they have been in force, and during this period there is an obligation of "social peace", which prohibits, for example, work stoppages, disputes, etc. Overall, this system has also contributed to the fact that we have very few conflicts in the Danish labour market. For employers, it is an effective safeguard for stable conditions in the labour market.

The current "main agreements" in the private labour market are due to expire on 1 March 2023. The parties must agree on new contracts, and members must then vote in favour of these before that date. The State Mediation Institution can postpone this deadline for up to 2 times 14 days, to allow additional time for negotiations.

We have a united trade union movement, which has historically had close links with social democracy.

The collective agreements were last renewed in 2020, for a three-year period and around 8.9% in pay progression. In the middle of the negotiations, the covid-19 pandemic broke out in Denmark and the country shut down. So even though key demands from the trade union movement had not been implemented, a huge majority of members chose to vote yes to this agreement.

With the recent development of inflation, and the associated loss of real wages for employees, the demands this time are extremely high. In addition, there are the demands from last time, which include effective safeguards against social dumping in the construction industry.

This is the challenge that the leadership of the trade union movement has been aiming to resolve, and resolve at a level that members could accept.

New bourgeois

government - attacking collective agreements!

As if this challenge was not difficult enough, after the November elections, for the first time since 1979 Denmark got a government "across the centre" consisting of 3 parties:

- The Social Democratic Party, which has historically led "red minority" governments as recently as 2019-2022, with the Red Green Alliance in the parliamentary majority.

- The Left, a bourgeois liberal party which has historically led "blue minority" governments and which is historically perceived as the mainstream party of government on the right.

- Moderates, a new bourgeois "centre party", founded by the former Prime Minister of the Liberals.

For the first time since 1994, we also have a majority government in Denmark.

The basis of this new government is bourgeois economic policy. A key element has been the desire to abolish a public holiday in Denmark, called "[Store Bededag](#)".

The government has now proposed to abolish this holiday, including provisions to remove by law all labour agreements that mention this day as a day off, or that require increased payment for work on this holiday (usually a supplement of about 50% of wages)

This proposed legislative intervention has put the government directly on a collision course with the trade union movement. As of last week, it has mobilized Denmark's largest petition against the government's proposal, and has called for a nationwide demonstration in Copenhagen on Sunday, February 5, with the expectation of the largest demonstration since the "welfare movement" of the 2000s.

The government has its majority in place, despite massive public opposition. Parliament is now working to use the constitution's provisions to force through a referendum, which has not happened since 1963.

Heading for a major conflict?

Either way, the deadline for negotiating collective agreements is approaching. And the fear is even if the negotiators manage to bargain a good agreement, with high pay rises and a range of other demands the members will still vote down the proposal if they are deprived of a public holiday from parliament at the same time. The trade-union movement leadership is very aware of this, and does not want to be in opposition to its own members. So the situation seems locked, and Denmark is moving closer to a major conflict every day.

Should a major conflict come into force, all organized workers in the private sector would be called out on strike, paid by the unions, and particularly key sectors would bring the country to a standstill. The most conspicuous is probably the transport sector, which will clearly stop the delivery of supplies to industry, supermarkets etc., but it will also close all possibilities for public transport, petrol to petrol stations, etc. So all sections of society would be directly affected.

In 1998, the conflict lasted 11 days before the government intervened by law to dictate a new collective agreement for the entire private sector, and to reintroduce compulsory peace for the next 2 years.

Should we have a major conflict, this time it will not be "just" about the struggle for redistribution in society. It will also be directly about how much we should work in our lives. If the government intervenes, it will lead to a new conflict against the government in power.

With all historical experience, it is an exciting time in Denmark and it could open up whole new possibilities for a left that has had difficulty finding itself and mobilizing in the last few years.

29 January 2023

Britain to see biggest strike for decades on 1 February

29 January 2023, by **Terry Conway**

The civil service union, PCS, was the first to call out over 100,000 members across 124 government departments – all those members in departments who had met the ridiculously high turnout threshold in the ballot for strike action under the existing reactionary anti-union laws. Three other unions that like PCS had already won ballots for industrial action joined them in announcing they would strike on the same day.

The University and College Union (UCU - teachers in higher education) has called out 70,000 members on this day as part of 18 days of action to take place across the next two months following the failure of the latest discussions with the employers to come up with an offer that would in any way restore the decimation of pay that has taken place over the last 12 years of Tory rule.

The train drivers union ASLEF will bring out the majority of its 21,000 members on this day and on one other in February after failing to reach agreement with the employers on pay

and conditions after six previous days of strike action in this dispute. The transport union RMT are also bringing out their driver members on 1 Feb and the other day ASLEF are striking. This seems like a lost opportunity from the union who in many ways has been the backbone of the strike movement as the majority of their members are not drivers but on other grades.

The final union that will be striking on 1 February is the NEU, the main school teachers union in England and Wales. (There is a separate union in Scotland which has its own programme of action which doesn't include 1 February.) The NEU announced the result of their ballot on 16 January. They succeeded in getting strong enough results to bring all their members out in Wales but in England only teaching members will strike as not a high enough proportion of school support staff returned their ballots. At latest count, 32,000 new members had joined the union since they announced the results and the programme of action starting on Wednesday.

All this means that 1 February will be a busy day not only for strikers but for all activists. There will be picket lines at workplaces where strikes are taking place. Despite the appallingly reactionary laws there is some protection against for people refusing to cross picket lines even where they have not been called out by a trade union and left activists are working to make sure workers know their rights. Later in the day there will be demonstrations and rallies in dozens of cities across England and Wales mostly organised by the local arms of the TUC, the single trade union federation in Britain.

Many of us will be agitating that the next step in the campaign needs to be a national demonstration to stop the new Minimum Services Bill, otherwise known as the 'Sack Nurses Bill' that the Tories are currently rushing through parliament. 1 February is a good start but we need far more to stop this massive attack on workers' rights.

29 January 2023

A Crisis Caused by Imperialism and Its Oligarchic Cronies

28 January 2023, by **Simón Rodríguez Porras**

High inflation—29 percent annualized as of June—and economic contraction were worsened by the quasi paralysis of the country for more than three

months. The government increased the discontent in September, in the midst of the protests, by doubling fuel prices according to IMF

recommendations. The worsening of the economic crisis was compounded by the widespread rejection of the de facto government; meanwhile

organized crime gangs occupy the vacuum left by the collapse of the state. The OAS Secretary General and the UN Security Council then began promoting a new military occupation of Haiti as a response, but there was no agreement among the different imperialist actors and their allies on how to carry it out.

The ruling PHTK is the child of imperialist occupation. It was formed in 2012, a year after the coming to power of Michel Martelly, a singer linked to the residues of the Duvalierist dictatorship overthrown in 1986. Both Martelly and his successor Jovenel Moïse, the assassinated former president, were declared winners in fraudulent elections. Popular resistance against the PHTK has been significant since the social uprising of July 6, 2018, against the first attempt to increase fuel prices, which forced Moïse to back down. In the following months, a powerful movement was launched demanding justice and the recovery of funds stolen from the Petrocaribe fund, a financing mechanism provided to the Haitian regime by the Venezuelan government.

In 2019, general elections were due but Moïse refused to organize them, instead dissolving the lower house of parliament, and dismissing the mayors and most of the senators, by claiming that the mandates of those offices had expired. However, he continued to govern in spite of his own mandate having also expired. In the face of mobilizations against his illegitimate and illegal government, he became increasingly isolated. He broke with his political mentor, ex-president Martelly, and tried to unilaterally impose a constitutional reform to concentrate more power in the presidency and to favor the granting of mining concessions to transnational companies. One of his last administrative acts before being assassinated was to appoint Ariel Henry as interim prime minister. Henry, however, was not able to formally take office, as Claude Joseph was serving as prime minister at the time.

The Core Group, a sort of colonial supervising body formed by representatives in Haiti of the U.S.,

Canadian, French, German, Spanish, and Brazilian governments, as well as the OAS and UN offices, decided the succession dispute in Henry's favor. During the few weeks that Joseph was the head of state, he requested a military invasion from the United States. Newly elected President Biden did not grant this request.

The chaos caused by U.S. imperialism in Haiti after three decades of intermittent occupations through the UN, in addition to U.S. defeats in Afghanistan and Iraq, generated hesitation among imperialists regarding a new invasion. The Washington Post published an editorial in favor of invading Haiti after the assassination of Moïse, while a different line was expressed by the U.S. special envoy for Haiti, Daniel Foote, when he resigned his post in September 2021. Foote criticized Biden's policy of massively deporting Haitian immigrants back to Haiti and vindicated the effort for a national unity front around the so-called Montana Accord, signed by a wide range of political and social organizations, including political expressions of the bourgeoisie opposed to the PHTK.

During the trials against some of the individuals involved in Moïse's assassination in the United States, prosecutors asked courts to keep the link between the accused and U.S. agencies such as the CIA and the DEA secret. Martelly has long lived in Florida without being bothered, and the businessmen from Venezuela and Ecuador who hired Colombian mercenaries to carry out the assassination have not been arrested either. At the very least, there would later be indications the U.S. government let the assassination happen, or that it protected some of the perpetrators, because it considered coup rule favorable to its interests. Canada's government, however, did announce sanctions on November 20 against Martelly and two former prime ministers, Laurent Lamothe and Jean Henry Ceant, for cooperating with criminal gangs.

In the midst of the economic, political, and social crisis, the G9 federation of gangs emerged in mid-2020. The government and the UN Office for

Haiti (BINUH) hoped it would enable a lasting pax mafiosa. In reality, the criminal federation consolidated its positions and went on to dispute territories with other gangs outside its alliance, scaling up the violence. These armed confrontations have left thousands of people displaced in Port-au-Prince. Ironically, the G9 gangs, whose strength is a by-product of the decomposition of a regime that imperialism itself has been sustaining, are now the alibi used by the UN Security Council to consider a new invasion to repress the popular protests in Haiti and keep the country under foreign tutelage.

The Threat of Military Occupation

Sadly, the Haitian people cannot count on any government for support. The Mexican government of López Obrador has sponsored several Security Council resolutions on Haiti, together with the U.S. government. Between 2004 and 2017, thousands of troops of the UN Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (Minustah) were provided by several self-styled progressive Latin American governments, headed by Brazil's Lula. The main beneficiary of the \$2 billion embezzled from the Petrocaribe fund, provided by the Venezuelan government, was the PHTK regime. The governments of Russia and China voted in July 2022 to renew BINUH's mandate in spite of calls by the Haitian left for them to veto the renewal.

With Ariel Henry's October 7 request for a foreign military occupation to fight against the gangs, the threat was imminent. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres proposed that the Security Council send a "rapid action force" with military personnel from one or more countries but not blue helmets. The U.S. and Canadian governments promoted the option of using troops from Caribbean Community countries. If this option becomes a reality, they would fulfill a role similar to that of the South American center-left governments in the Minustah, which was also

originally envisioned as a short-term endeavor.

The official alibi is to combat gangs, but the hypocrisy could not be greater. A good part of the fortune plundered from the Haitian people, from the Duvalier dictatorship to the PHTK, is found in properties and bank accounts in North America and Europe. Imperialism gets along well with the biggest gangsters.

In 2022, the popular struggle regained its strength. In January and February, large strikes by workers in the textile industry of the SONAPI free trade zone in the capital overcame repression and achieved an increase in the minimum wage, albeit insufficient. How will the current stalemate be broken, in which neither those at the top nor at the bottom

manage to take the reins of the country? The North American, Latin American, and Caribbean left have the responsibility of mobilizing solidarity with the urgent struggles of the workers' and popular organizations of Haiti, such as resistance to any imperialist military aggression, self-defense against police repression and the violence of the gangs, the building of international support networks, and the adoption of a transitional program for a way out of the crisis.

Revolutionaries in the region must support the demand that the Core Group, the BINUH, and their puppet Ariel Henry leave. Reparations must be paid by the United States, France, and the UN for the successive invasions, occupations, extortions, fraudulent debts, and crimes

perpetrated against the Haitian people. Foreign debt must be canceled, and it's essential to repatriate the fortunes looted from the Petrocaribe fund. Governments of the region should respect the rights of Haitian migrants and stop massive deportations.

The heroic Haitian working people are fighting to take their destiny into their own hands. As the comrades of the Socialist Movement of Haitian Workers put it, "Only the convergence of the workers' and popular forces can close the road to the imperialist attempts to serve the same dish in different packaging!"

Source *New Politics* with the note: This article is an adapted version of "Haití sigue luchando," featured in *Correspondencia Internacional* magazine.

Why should we support the popular rebellion in Peru?

27 January 2023, by **Israel Dutra**

We, in Revista Movimiento, are covering it on a daily basis, talking to the protagonists of the process, mobilizing international solidarity, following "up close" the heroic struggle of the Peruvian people. I was in Lima for a few weeks, as a correspondent of Movimiento, taking the solidarity of the MES and the PSOL to the fighters who are rising up.

Here, in a summarized way, we put the dynamics of the latest events and the need for a position of the Brazilian left and of the Lula government regarding the institutional crisis opened by the coup plotters of the Dina Boluarte government.

The march of the 4

Suyos, 20 years later

As we know, on December 7 last year, Castillo suffered a parliamentary coup after a clumsy attempt to oust the rightist majority in the National Congress. As a result of this palace action, his vice president, Dina Boluarte, became president. Castillo was arrested and imprisoned.

To consolidate himself in power, Boluarte chose right-wing figures for the ministry and around it – notably Williams and Otarola. Since the first days of the coup government, the South Peruvian led different protests and demonstrations, to which Boluarte responded with more repression. The year ended with a balance of activist deaths, and hopes on the part of the government for a truce over the Christmas holidays that would

stabilize the situation.

However, the force of the intervention by the peasants and workers of southern Peru (the vast majority of whom are of Aymará and Quechua indigenous origin) led to a real popular uprising in the province of Puno in the first days of January 2023. Within this context, the government promotes the Juliaca massacre, leaving 18 dead – one of the most tragic chapters in Peruvian history.

The indignation grew, took hold throughout the south and spread throughout the country. On January 19, a new "March of the 4 Suyos" was called. This name refers to the demonstration that took place in July 2000 and was the trigger for the fall of Alberto Fujimori's dictatorship. The "four suyos" were the four affluent political points in the different regions of the country during the Incaic period.

More than 20 years later, the Peruvian people have set in motion a mass struggle against a government that wants to assert itself with dictatorial elements.

The general strike was a great success. The March of the 4 Suyos was called "The Taking of Lima" by the press because of the hundreds of delegations that arrived from all over. The streets of the Peruvian capital were empty, almost like a Sunday or holiday. In addition to the demonstrators from the countryside, delegations from the remote neighborhoods and districts, coming from the hills, marched to the center of Lima to repudiate the government and demand Dina's resignation, as well as the closure of Congress, new elections and a Constituent Assembly.

The strike of the 19th definitely nationalized the Peruvian popular rebellion. Radicalized protests were held in the northern provinces, with almost 100 roadblocks, with broad popular support.

Government insists on repression

The march of the 19th ended in major battles in the streets of downtown Lima. There was a fire in a historical building, used by the press and the government to disperse and criminalize the demonstrations.

In the following days, Dina went on TV to defend herself, affirming that she would remain in office and that she would continue with the "order" line. The San Marcos University was invaded by the forces of repression on January 20th, with tanks and bombs, ending with the arrest of 200 activists. We have had almost 60 people killed in the process, 600 arrested, as well

as the arrest of leaders of the Front in defense of Arequipa, accused of terrorism.

In a constant loss of support, the government is sustained by a repressive turn. Besides ostensive police action, it combines a narrative brand with the persecution and criminalization of activists. The right-wing discourse has two pillars: the traditional "terruqueo", which means to impute to political opponents the relationship with terrorist groups, evoking the memory of the actions of groups that were active in the 80s and 90s; and the attack on Evo Morales, claiming that the leader of the Bolivian MAS would be behind the protests in the South, with the objective of the secession of the country. The absurdity of this narrative is aimed at preventing the rebellion from advancing.

The current situation is one of an increasingly weak government, politically, supported by the repressive forces and the most reactionary sectors of the hated congress. Polls show that 70% want a new constitution; 88% reject the government and 75% do not trust the current composition of Congress.

The government is isolating itself even among the middle classes, in big cities like Lima.

The Left must support the democratic struggle in Peru

We have reached a decisive moment in the national crisis marked by the Peruvian rebellion.

In the streets and roads of Peru, the future of the continental struggle is

being played out. Today, the extreme right is entrenching itself in Bolivia against the MAS government, in Brazil with the Bolsonarists, and in Peru to sustain the Dina government, opening the way for the return of the Fujimori clan to power.

In the midst of the Celac meeting, South American governments should be committed to supporting the Peruvian rebellion. Petro's government pointed a way, condemning the invasion of San Marcos University. The omission by sectors of the left only helps in sustaining Dina's repressive turn. Argentine President Alberto Fernandez, in an interview for the newspaper Folha de São Paulo on January 23, cited his concerns about the "instability" in Peru, without naming names or pointing out the government's clear responsibilities. Lula, for his part, and Brazilian diplomacy have not spoken about the massacres and violations of fundamental rights that have been taking place in recent weeks. It is necessary to change this course and take sides in this battle.

The PSOL, which approved in December, in its National Directory, a note of support to the Peruvian people, is playing to surround the ongoing rebellion with solidarity. We participated in acts in the embassies, the deputy Fernanda Melchionna, along with the caucus, questioned the Peruvian government for the violence and notified the responsible bodies in Brazil about the transaction and sale of weapons for the repressive forces of the government of Peru.

The heroic struggle of the Peruvian people deserves our support.

25 January 2023

Translation provided by [Revista movimiento](#).

Call for a global counter-summit of social

movements to the IMF-WB Annual Meetings

26 January 2023, by **CADTM International**

Established in 1944, the IMF and the World Bank meet mainly in Washington and every three years they meet in a member country other than the United States. Since 1947, the General Meetings of these two institutions have been held only once in Africa, in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1973. The choice of Morocco is no accident. This country is considered by Washington and its allies as a good pupil because its government systematically applies the neo-liberal credo of the two institutions and because it supports the inhumane policy of the European Union in terms of migration and asylum.

The international CADTM network (Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debts) will mobilize to actively contribute to making other voices from around the world heard at these WBG and IMF Assemblies, which bring together finance ministers and central bank governors from 189 member countries, as well as representatives from the private sector, academia and NGOs. We propose the organization of a world counter-summit of social movements against these assemblies.

In order to promote unity of action, the CADTM proposes that a common call to this counter-summit be drafted. It is addressed to all movements wishing to join forces in defence of humanity.

Hereafter the CADTM makes known its position with regard to these two anti-democratic institutions and their policies that run counter to the exercise of human rights.

Both institutions continue to promote neo-liberalism and capitalism, which have caused social, economic and ecological devastation on a global scale.

The people of the South, who gained political independence in the late

1950s and early 1960s, have been burdened with the repayment of colonial debts and the odious debts of the despotic regimes supported by the two institutions. The latter prevented the industrialization and endogenous development of these countries in favour of the promotion of export with the active support of the local ruling classes and large foreign companies according to the demands of the global market. The World Bank has financed white elephants with huge loans, large, expensive and unnecessary projects that do not benefit the local population. These factors led to the debt crisis that broke out in 1980. This was used by the IMF and the WB to impose structural adjustment programmes (reduced spending on health and education, privatizations, etc.) and the opening up of the countries of the South to the free movement of capital and goods in a context of capitalist globalization, financialization, free trade and the increasing internationalization of production chains, which reduce the sovereignty of states. The two institutions have thus contributed to the impoverishment of small producers, particularly the small peasantry, the impoverishment of the working class, the casualization of jobs, especially for women and young people, and the private indebtedness of working-class households, particularly through microcredit.

As regards the environment, the World Bank continues to develop a productivist and extractivist policy that is disastrous for people and harmful to nature. Contrary to its promises, it continues to massively finance fossil fuels, which have a disastrous effect on pollution and climate change. The World Bank also finances the construction of large dams that cause enormous environmental damage. It favours the development of agribusiness against peasant agriculture, it supports the

massive use of pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers responsible for a dramatic loss of biodiversity and soil impoverishment. The World Bank promotes the privatization and commercialization of land for the benefit of large landowners.

The World Bank and the IMF have also contributed to the rescue of the big private banks in the major industrialized countries following the global crisis of capitalism in 2007-2008 through massive public indebtedness accompanied by austerity policies and the destruction of social gains. They have used public debt to generalize the privatization of water, land, forests, mines, fishing grounds and public services, such as education and health.

The decay of the latter has been highlighted by the Covid pandemic. Since the beginning of the health crisis, the IMF and the WB, together with other institutions of big capital and multinationals (G20, Paris Club, etc.), have multiplied initiatives to avoid radical solutions of cancellation through deferment of payment by excluding private creditors, the main holders of the external public debt of the countries of the South. The new payment deadlines coincide with the context created by the invasion of Ukraine and the soaring prices of basic foodstuffs, livestock feed, fertilizers and energy that are hitting hardest the poorest countries already badly affected by heavy flooding and intense drought.

According to the IMF, about 60% of low-income developing countries are already in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress.

Debt suspensions are on the rise. Since 2020, 9 countries have defaulted: Argentina, Ecuador, Lebanon, Suriname, Zambia, Belize, Sri Lanka, Russia and Ghana. Several other countries are close to defaulting,

such as El Salvador, Peru, Tunisia, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia, Malawi, Pakistan, and Turkey.

IMF and WB lending to low-income countries increased dramatically in 2020 and is expected to remain at a high level for several years. The conditionalities are increasingly binding on the populations.

Both institutions act for the benefit of a handful of big powers and their transnational corporations that reinforce an international capitalist system that is destructive to humanity and the environment. It is urgent to initiate broad mobilizations for sovereign repudiations of the debt and to build a new democratic international architecture that favours a redistribution of wealth and supports the efforts of peoples to achieve socially just development that respects nature.

The organization that would replace the World Bank should be largely regionalized (banks in the South could be linked to it), and its function would be to provide loans at very low or zero interest rates, and grants that could

only be given on condition that they are used in strict compliance with social and environmental standards and, more generally, with basic human rights. Unlike the current World Bank, the new bank that the world needs would not represent the interests of creditors and impose market-righteous behaviour on debtors, but would have as its primary mission the defence of the interests of the peoples who receive the loans and grants.

The new IMF, for its part, should regain part of its original mandate to guarantee the stability of currencies, fight speculation, control capital movements, and act to prohibit tax havens and tax fraud. To achieve this objective, it should contribute, in collaboration with national authorities and regional monetary funds (which must be created), to the collection of various international taxes.

The international CADTM network calls on networks, organizations, social and civil society movements in the South and the North to hold a global counter-summit to the IMF-WB Annual Meetings to be held in

Marrakech from 9 to 15 October this year. An international follow-up committee will be set up to begin collective preparations for this very important global activist meeting, which could lead to other initiatives for a new international coordination of social movements.

Let's make the voice of social movements heard in Marrakech next October. We want to demonstrate the power of organized peoples, defend popular sovereignty and promote social and environmental justice.

END THE WORLD BANK AND THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND!

ATTAC CADTM Morocco, a member of the shared international secretariat of the CADTM network, will work with its allies in Morocco on organizational and logistical matters.

Source CADTM.

The official links to follow the news on the IMF-WB Annual Meetings:

<https://www.imf.org/en/News/Seminars/Campaigns/2023/Marrakech2023>
<https://openmorocco2023.com/>

Spectre of fascism is haunting us

25 January 2023, by **Yong-hui Hong**

It sounds rather silly. "Abeism", the longest source of post-war reactionary politics, must be eradicated. Over the past six months, the secret maneuvers between the former Unification Church (currently Family Federation for World Peace and Unification) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) have been exposed one after another. [1] Abe's career was crossed by international right-wing nationalism links. His politics, which prioritized capital, had ignored victims and exploited the labor force under low-wage and unstable working conditions in the name of "self-responsibility theory". "Abeism" is a result of corrupted capitalism. It has thwarted the creation of working class and crushed organized workers'

movements. The Japanese population has lost a lot by the emergence of "one-strong" politics. [2] On the other hand, conservative politicians who had gained political power thanks to Abe's political legacy still wanted to keep Abe's influence alive. And incumbent Prime Minister Fumio Kishida forced the state funeral of Shinzo Abe to maintain and reproduce its political legacy.

Forced state funeral of Shinzo

Abe to maintain and reproduce "Abeism"

The state funeral edict under the Empire of Japan before World War II had been abolished when the Japanese Constitution was enacted after Japan's defeat. The reason for its abolition was that it was incompatible with the Japanese Constitution's sovereignty of the people, equality before the law, freedom of thought and conscience, and separation of religion and state. Therefore, state funerals are not permitted under the current Constitution. However, Fumio Kishida

said, “the state funeral will be conducted at the discretion of the Cabinet,” and emphasized the “great achievements” of Shinzo Abe. And on 27 September last year, Kishida forced the state funeral which has no legal basis. At the state funeral, Former Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga read his condolence message. In the condolence message, each word that got into emotional expressions was terrifying.

“Why did heaven allow such a tragedy to happen? Why did it take the life of a person whose life should not be lost?”

“Prime Minister, your judgment was always correct.”

“It is because of you, an irreplaceable leader in the history of Japan, that we were able to pass all the difficult bills, including the State Secrecy Law, the Peace and Security Preservation Legislations, and the Revised Organized Crime Law.”

“Prime Minister, your judgment was always incorrect”

“A person whose life should not be lost.”

First of all, this word made us feel very sick. In other words, this word means that there are people in this world who are not regretted even if they lose their lives. As a successor of “Abeism”, Yoshihide Suga revealed the baseless eugenics. Abe was surrounded by the eugenics and racist prejudices. In 2018, a female LDP lawmaker Mio Sugita who was “raised” by Abe said in a magazine that the government should not support sexual minority couples because they cannot bear offspring and thus “lack productivity”. She came under fire in 2018. But so far,

Sugita repeatedly made offensive discriminatory remarks against Koreans, Ainu, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ people, people without children, and women. In the latest Fumio Kishida Cabinet reshuffle, Sugita was even appointed parliamentary vice minister for internal affairs and communications. [3]

“Prime Minister, your judgment was always correct”

No, your judgment was always incorrect. The Japanese population has lost a lot by the emergence of “one-strong” politics. And your death buried most of them in the dark. In 2015, Abe had crossed the Rubicon and made Japan a war-capable nation by passing a set of security bills to loosen the tight restrictions on the Self-Defense Forces. [4] Yoshihide Suga had consistently served as Chief Cabinet Secretary and had continued to support Abe for seven years and eight months since December 2012, when the Second Abe Cabinet was launched. He is also the longest-serving Chief Cabinet Secretary in Japanese history. Suga’s remarks at the state funeral were symbolic of fascist politics by Abe and Suga, who have repeatedly pursued “politics of lies”. For the fascists, coherence and consistency are irrelevant. Their remarks are full of contradictions. But some Japanese media praised them. LDP lawmakers “raised” by Abe have definitely inherited the eugenics of “Abeism”. Suga pretended to be calm in defiance of contradictions. And his condolence message rather aroused strong reactionary emotions among the Japanese people.

Inherited political legacy

Consistent political legacy of “Abeism” was inherited from his grandfather Nobusuke Kishi. In the process, cooperation between conservative politicians and conservative religious organizations has been consolidated into specific policies by the initiative

of the former Unification Church. [5] The Japanese branch of the former Unification Church was opened in 1959. And in the 1990s, the organization expanded aggressively throughout the world. Abe and his grandfather Nobusuke Kishi, also a former Japanese Prime Ministers, were not members. But they were known as supporters. The organization was one of the LDP’s reliable allies against communism. [6] Abe also had connections with another right wing religious organization: the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership (SAS). And SAS had a close relationship with the Nippon Kaigi (the Japan Conference), an extreme right wing nationalist organization that was established in 1997. In 2001, a women’s association was established in Nippon Kaigi. The main lawmaker members of the association are Eriko Yamatani and Sanae Takaichi, who will be explained later. Both SAS and the Japan Conference had Diet Members’ Caucuses. Many parliamentary members belonged to both of the two Caucuses. And the national image that the two organizations were aiming for overlaps. These conservative religious organizations played a major role in the backlashes against women and LGBTIQ people that began in the 2000s. And since 2006, Abe had been the de facto leader of the reactionary backlashes. Abe’s career was crossed by international right wing nationalism links. Close relationships with Abe were developed not only to conservative religious organizations but also to extreme right wing. Cabinet ministers and leading LDP politicians with close ties to the extreme right wing such as Yoshihide Suga, Eriko Yamatani, Sanae Takaichi, Tomomi Inada and others continued to support Japan’s longest-serving prime minister.

Close relationship with fascist extreme right wing

In February 2009, an intimate group photo of Eriko Yamatani (former Chairperson of the National Public Safety Commission in the Second Abe Cabinet) and seven members of anti-Korean organization “the Citizens Group That Will Not Forgive Special Rights for Koreans in Japan” (or *Zaitokukai*) was released. *Zaitokukai*

is a famous anti-Korean group which has about 10,000 members. In December 2010, Yamatani took a photo with Zaitokukai executives in her room of the Members' Office Building of the House of Councillors. [7] Yamatani has repeated the same claims as Zaitokukai regarding exclusion of Korean High School from its free tuition high school education program. [8] In September 2014, Sanae Takaichi (former Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications in the Reshuffled Second Abe Cabinet) and Tomomi Inada (former Minister of Defense (in the Reshuffled Second Abe Cabinet) met with representatives of an extreme right-wing organization, an adherent of Nazism, at the Diet Members' Office Building respectively and took pictures of each other. The organization name is "the National Socialist Japanese Workers' Party/Nationalsozialistische Japanische Arbeiterpartei (NSJAP)". The photos were posted on the organization's website. [9] Furthermore, in September 2014, a two-shot photo of Shinzo Abe and Zaitokukai's executive was posted on the website. It wasn't the first time the two had met. [10] "Abeism" was at the same time a "strong magnet [11] that attracted social movements/individuals of extreme right wing and "left wing" to "fight together". Their self-proclaimed social movements sometimes turned into hate speech demonstrators yelling "kill!", "parasites", "cockroaches", and "criminal Korean" in the areas of many ethnic Korean residents such as Kawasaki [12] by anti-Korean organizations such as Zaitokukai. And they sometimes turned into division of LGBTQ communities. "Strong magnets" have forced unfair and discriminatory treatment on oppressed people on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity, creed, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, family origin, disability and other grounds under the pretext of "opinion" and "freedom of expression". [13]

"United struggle" of fascist extreme

right wing and "left wing"

The cooperative play between Japan's right-wing LDP and conservative religious organizations has been purposefully constructed as a powerful framework to seek discriminatory policy consensus in order to abandon the LGBT Equality Act in 2021. It was like a rigged horse race. The LGBT Equality Act was not finally submitted by LDP to the parliament even after consensus between Japan's ruling and opposition parties. In the course of abandonment of the bill, Eriko Yamatani and others strongly and relentlessly hit out at transgender people at the closed-door meeting. [14] Yamatani said on May 19th:

Some people have stated an opinion that they have a male body but they are women. Therefore, they should be allowed to use the women's restroom. Or they participate in women's sports and win medals. A number of ridiculous things are happening.

On the same day, a self-proclaimed "left wing" twittered "Lawmaker Eriko Yamatani's claims are claims of common sense/just for granted." After that, other ludicrous and groundless transphobic remarks were made on social media and websites using feminist language masking conservative interests. And even discriminatory international solidarity was also being strengthened in some "left-wing" communities. As a result, the LGBT Equality Act, which had been under discussion for five years by the ruling and opposition parties, was strangled in June 2021 by joint struggle of fascist extreme right wing and "left wing". In response to the Yamatani's remarks, a novelist known as one of the leading figures in Japanese feminist literature announced that she would vote for Eriko Yamatani by "united struggle" at the 2022 Japanese House of Councilors election of 10 July. In the past, articles of the novelist's book

and an interview had been published in the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) newspaper. But friendly relationship between the novelist and the JCP did not last long. She published a novel in a literary journal on the issue of "transgenderism" around the world according to the website. And her book was introduced on "Countries"- "Japan" section of the website of an international anti-trans feminist group at the time of writing with contact information of the organization in Japan. [15] Abe's "one-strong" politics acted as a "strong magnet" attracting the extreme right wing and the "left wing" into a "united struggle" against LGBTIQ people. And the newly created "common enemy" was transgender people which doesn't fit into "traditional gender norms" which had been intentionally created. Then their capricious common purpose was trans exclusion. [16]

"Abeism": a result of capitalism in decay

From the past situation of Abe's politics, the fascism inherent in "Abeism" emerges. "Abeism" is closely associated with fascism and the fascist movements, if not fascism itself. The eugenics regarding LGBT mentioned by Mio Sugita "raised" by Abe is reminiscent of the Nazi's selection of people from the standpoint of "productivity". The ideology of "Abeism" rests on the authority of "traditional gender norms". And that ideology, like fascism, must always hunt down and persecute its enemies. The ideology requires the presence of an enemy to exist. And the "common enemy" created by that ideology has attracted the divided "left wing". The language and attitudes of racist close friends with Abe are very similar to how Trump describes immigration. It also resembles the situation of the extreme right wing forces, including racist, transphobic, anti-Semitic [17], and misogynist around Trump. The language to describe the oppressed and the method of oppressing them is fascist language and methodology itself: they use terms other than human beings such as "parasites" and "cockroaches" to perpetuate their

racist stereotypes. Horrible and terrible stereotypical portrait of oppressed people created by extreme right wing LDP politicians and "left wing" attracted by a "strong magnet" is like Nazi propaganda tactics. [18]

And in the tactics, the Japanese self-proclaimed "left wing" has played an important role as Strasserismus for their "united struggle" consciously or unconsciously.

Fascism is not a phenomenon of the past. [19] A spectre of fascism is haunting the world while increasing its negative and capricious life force.

23 January 2023

The Battle Over Abortion Rights in the Streets

24 January 2023, by **Dan La Botz**

The right-to-life movement, as it describes itself, marched to celebrate the high court's decision of June 24, 2022, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*, overturning *Roe*. The principal forces in the anti-abortion movement are the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Churches which work through the Republican Party. The movement has recruited tens of thousands of young women and men who come to march in groups from their churches and religious schools and universities, carrying banners and flags, chanting and cheering, filled with pride in having defeated *Roe* and looking forward to more victories in the future. Leaders of the movement plan to pass even more restrictive state laws while pressing the U.S. Congress for a federal ban on abortions.

The anti-abortion movement has since *Dobbs* placed many obstacles in state laws to make it more difficult for women to get abortions. A dozen states, mostly in the South, simply ban all abortions. In some states abortion is legal only through the first fifteen weeks of pregnancy. Georgia bans abortion after six weeks. States often require the abortion be by a licensed doctor and approved by another, a waiting period of 24 hours or more, a

counseling session, or an ultrasound examination. Some 33 states prohibit government funding of abortions and 12 restrict private insurance coverage. In 11 states abortion is illegal even in cases of rape or incest. Several states have laws that punish a physician who performs an abortion with 5, 10 or 15 years in prison. In Texas the penalty is life in prison. With women turning to the pill, Alabama, Florida, and Texas are trying to ban medical abortions.

The left has long criticized the anti-abortion movement for its lack of support for women and children. Now, taking a page from progressives, some in the anti-abortion movement have issued a statement called "Building a Post-Roe Future" calling for affordable health care, paid parental leave, flexible work hours, affordable child care, and child tax credits.

The abortion rights movement, led by women and with tens of thousands of new young activists, would like the U.S. Congress to pass a law guaranteeing women's legal right to abortion in all states. But the movement's leaders believe that for the time being the fight will be at the state level and they will be focusing on state legislative and congressional

elections to be held two years from now.

Jennifer Knox, a leader at the progressive Working Families Party, says, "Where we are right now, with abortion access being taken away, feels similar to 2020, an inflection point where people are energized." She believes that a women's movement could surge just as Black Lives Matter did then.

Sixty-two percent of Americans support the right to abortion. While liberals and progressives dominate the abortion rights movement, socialist feminists are also active in it. The Democratic Socialists of America saw the *Dobbs* decision as a rightwing attack not only on women's right to abortion, but also as the opening of a broader assault that will attempt to eliminate LGBTQ rights, and other democratic rights. DSA argues that, "The leadership of the Democratic Party have proven time and time again that they cannot be depended upon to save us." While that may be true, the abortion rights movement will be concentrating its work on electing Democrats to stop the Republic assault on their rights.

22 January 2023

Africa: the dustbin of capitalism

23 January 2023, by **Paul Martial**

A few weeks ago, Spanish customs put an end to an illegal trade in computer waste to Africa. This dismantling highlights how rich countries dispose of their waste cheaply.

Circumventing international regulations

It was from the Canary Islands that containers filled with WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment) were transported to Africa. A traffic that had been going on for two years. It brought in 1.5 million euros for nearly 5,000 tons dumped on the continent. WEEE is considered hazardous due to the presence of mercury, cadmium, lead, phosphorus or arsenic. The Basel Convention, which dates back to 1992, prohibits the export of WEEE to poor countries.

To circumvent this convention, these are notified as second-hand devices. As a result, thousands of tons of computer equipment are shipped to Ghana. The system is well established. Wholesale buyers supply the country's shops, working or repairable computer equipment is sold, and the rest, usually 70%, ends up at the Agbogbloshie landfill near the capital Accra.

Pollution of land and sea

The waste is processed by thousands of people who, to recover the precious metals, burn the components emitting thick fumes that are as dangerous for workers as for the environment. Soil analyses reveal heavy metal contamination one hundred times higher than the permitted limit.

Another polluting factor is textiles. They come from used clothing collections in rich countries or are sent directly by companies. Indeed, 40% of production is thrown away. These clothes, often of inferior quality, respond above all to an economic model of fast-fashion. Regardless of the quality, the idea is to produce new products as quickly as possible to encourage purchases. As with computer products, batches are transferred to retailers but only a small quantity can be sold. Other worn, damaged or soiled clothing is sent to landfills. Over time, they end up in the oceans forming chains that can reach ten kilometres preventing artisanal fishing activities. Other tissues end up in the sewers and cause flooding that promotes the spread of yellow fever mosquitoes.

An irresponsible policy

Twenty years ago, journalists revealed that the Calabrian mafia was unloading containers filled with toxic and radioactive products on the Somali coast. Massive pollution followed with dramatic consequences for the local people, including the increase in malformations during birth. A practice that continues. Trafigura, one of the first oil brokerage companies, has dumped toxic products into the lagoon of Abidjan, the capital of Côte d'Ivoire.

With the refusal of Asian countries such as China, Malaysia or the Philippines to accept the waste of Western companies, companies are turning to Africa. For example, the American Chemistry Council, which brings together the major oil companies in the United States, is lobbying the White House to export millions of tons of plastic waste to Kenya when this country already does not have the capacity to properly process its own litter. Whether for traffickers, the mafia or "honourable" business leaders, exporting waste to Africa is a way to earn or save money. But it is also and above all a way to perpetuate a system of overconsumption generating profits, whatever the consequences for the environment.

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

A disappointing agreement on engineering wages in Germany

22 January 2023, by Jakob Schaefer

The core of the Baden-Württemberg pilot agreement stipulates that payments will be increased in two stages (on 1 June 2023 by 5.2% and on 1 May 2024 by 3.3%); an inflation compensation premium is paid (€1,500 in the first quarter of 2023 and an additional €1,500 one year later; the duration is 24 months). The increase in additional remuneration (ZUB) goes from 12.3% to 18.5%, i.e., an increase from €400 to €600 for remuneration group 7 (base salary in the region).

However, the real wage loss in these two years will be at least 7%, depending on the real inflation rate, but more likely 11 to 13% if prices continue to rise by 10% or more. In addition, the rise in prices, which is decisive for most employees, is already well above the official 10%.

With such a price development, at least one opening clause should have been applied, which stipulates that if the inflation rate exceeds 4.25%, the two-year social truce ends and renegotiations must take place. Better still, a sliding scale of wages could be

demand, but with IG Metall's collective bargaining policy we are experiencing exactly the opposite.

Differentiations by company

Despite all the assurances of IG Metall's negotiators, capital has once again succeeded in pushing through differentiations with which the works councils then have to contend. Payment of inflation compensation can be postponed by company agreement. So, if management complains (and the works council is not strong enough), postponements will take place in many places.

In addition, the payment of additional remuneration (ZUB) can be postponed until April of the following year if the company is in a "difficult economic situation". Particularly scandalous! For IG Metall, the definition of economic difficulty is a profitability on sales of less than 2.3%. An opening of the accounting books is not even

provided for in the negotiations.

The result is not only below what is needed to maintain standards of living, but also below concrete possibilities, because mobilizations were clearly on the rise. Hundreds of thousands participated. There was no obligation for these bureaucrats to conclude at this time.

As bitter as it is, it is clear that there is unlikely to be an outcry in the workplaces (or in the collective bargaining committees, which are heavily controlled by the apparatus). It is all the more important now to highlight the inadequacy of this agreement and to mentally prepare for the fact that we must therefore act ourselves, that this is the most effective way of imposing higher wages and salaries. Without the development of a left class struggle current, nothing can be changed in the general (collective bargaining) policy of our unions.

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

Pensions: a historic mobilization - make it into a victory against Macron

21 January 2023, by NPA - Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste

In the vast majority of towns (even the smallest ones), the figures were higher than those of the big strikes of 1995, with sometimes one in seven or eight people in the street. In the private sector, participation was exceptional, with strikers coming from the food industry, engineering, cars, electronics...

A general anger

The trigger of this movement is the pension reform, which would force workers to work two more years, with a longer contribution period and therefore reduced pensions. All this in order to hand over tens of billions to big business and to try to pass a milestone in the establishment of pension funds, complementary

pensions that would become necessary to avoid growing old in poverty.

However, we know that putting retirement at 60 years and 37.5 years, with a return to calculation of the pension on the basis of the 10 best years of salary in the public and the private sector, is about 3.5% of GDP, which could be recovered for the majority of the population by really taxing the rich and big companies and

by stopping the tax gifts to the most well-off. Macron's violent "solutions" are therefore not inevitable.

Beyond the rejection of this counter-reform, a real frustration with the global economic and social situation is being expressed: pensions were already low following the previous counter-reforms, and current inflation, with the explosion of prices, is already reducing the purchasing power of the working classes. The dissatisfaction, the anger, is there, against Macron, against this government, against their contempt, against their unjust policies.

Building a movement to win

The scale of the mobilization places enormous responsibilities on the whole social and political left. Macron must withdraw his reform, we must

restore retirement at 60 and increase wages. The government refuses and we will therefore have to raise the level of mobilization, to go from a day of strikes, even a very successful one like today, to an all-out strike until victory, even more massive, with the participation of new sectors.

The trade unions have agreed on a new strike call for Tuesday 31 January. This is far, too far away: we should certainly have built on this first success to announce an earlier date next week, to step up the pace, to organize an increase in strength so that the movement moves into higher gear.

It is now a question of organizing general assemblies for discussion in workplaces and schools to strengthen and broaden the mobilization, to build cross-sectoral assemblies, to discuss the need to raise the bar by preparing the renewal of the strike from Tuesday 31 January, from 1 February, and until then to mobilize, to build the strike

now wherever possible.

This also requires combining different frameworks and forms of mobilization because we cannot afford the luxury of competition in our social camp. This is why we are taking part in the national demonstration on Saturday 21 January in Paris (2pm at Bastille), called by the youth organizations.

This mobilization is a test: all the trade unions and parties, the whole social and political left, the vast majority of the population, are opposed to the reform. If it passes, the government will feel that it has wings and will step up the attacks. On the contrary, if we win, we can turn the tide, win the return of retirement age at 60, wage rises, give confidence to build a political alternative breaking with Macron and his world, for a power of the working classes against this system.

19 January 2023

Support for the "Woman, Life, Freedom" Uprising - No to Executions !

20 January 2023, by Collective

Since the murder of Jina-Mahsa Amini on 16 September by the morality police, a popular uprising unprecedented in its scope, depth and duration has shaken the Islamic Republic of Iran. In less than 48 hours, the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom" spread throughout the country, then around the world.

The fight for the fall of the Islamic Republic is on

Soon other slogans flourished: "Death to the dictator", "Death to the oppressor, be it the Shah or the Supreme Guide", "Bread, Work,

Freedom", "Poverty, corruption, high cost of living, we will go until the overthrow".

This radical protest movement brings together women, young people, national minorities, workers with or without jobs, in a total rejection of this theocratic, misogynistic and totally corrupt regime. The uprising is anchored in the long term and affects more than 160 small and large cities. With more than 50% of the population below the poverty line and the absence of elementary democratic and social rights, it is the whole system that the people of Iran want to overthrow.

Calls for strikes are increasing, especially among university teachers,

workers in petrochemicals, steelworks in Isfahan, public transport in Tehran and its suburbs, truck drivers... The strikers suffer dismissals, arrests and torture.

Fierce and unlimited repression

To date, the repression has caused more than 500 deaths, including 69 minors, thousands of injuries, more than 19,000 prisoners and missing persons, kidnappings. In Iranian Kurdistan and Sistan Balochistan, the Revolutionary Guards are waging a bloody war against the rebellious

population. Kurdish towns are undergoing a state of siege that does not say its name.

The violence of this criminal regime knows no bounds. Numerous testimonies attest to the incredible brutality of the conditions of detention aimed at breaking the determination of the detainees. Prisoners are tortured, raped, beaten to death.

In order to create a climate of terror and put an end to protest, the judiciary pronounces increasingly heavy sentences against demonstrators. Despite this, the mobilization does not weaken. With courage and determination, students, young people, women, workers, artists and journalists continue to challenge the regime, and it has decided to take it a step further.

The proliferation of death sentences

For the simple fact of having demonstrated, at least 65 people (including 11 women and five children) have been charged with "enmity with God", "corruption on Earth", insurrection or murder. The judiciary connects parodies of trials, without any right of defense and multiplies death sentences.

After the executions of Mohsen Shekari and Majidreza Rahnavard on December 8 and 12, the Iranian authorities proceeded, on January 7, to hang Seyed Mohammad Hosseini and Mohammad Mehdi Karami. Their crimes: having dared to express their revolt in the face of the death of Jina-Mahsa Amini in Tehran or of Hadis Nadjafi in Karaj. The worst is to be feared for those who wait on the death row of Iran's sordid prisons and more broadly for all prisoners.

The people of Iran must be masters of their destiny

In this context and faced with the spectre of a political and social revolution in Iran, the leaders of the

great powers are working, more or less discreetly, for the constitution of a Transitional Council, bringing together all the currents of the opposition of the Iranian right, including the monarchists. These currents, liberal on the economic level and authoritarian on the political level, are the opposite of the dynamics of the mobilizations and the social and democratic aspirations which are expressed in Iran.

From the 1953 coup organized by the CIA and the British secret services against the Mossadegh government and its policy of nationalizing oil, to the Guadeloupe conference in 1979 where the heads of state of France, Germany, of the United Kingdom and the United States accelerated the Shah's departure into exile and decided on his replacement by Khomeini, the great powers have always acted, unsurprisingly, in favor of their own interests against those of the peoples of Iran.

Contrary to the solutions imposed from outside, we defend a real campaign of international solidarity with all those who are mobilizing in Iran to put an end to the Islamic Republic.

To live up to the determination and courage of the Iranian people

The outcome of the current uprising will be decisive for the peoples of the region and the world. It is therefore our responsibility, within our means, to help the "Woman, Life, Freedom" uprising achieve its emancipatory aspirations.

Indeed, the repressive machine that is the Islamic Republic will not be broken without a powerful international campaign and without a strong mobilization of world opinion.

- We demand an immediate end to death sentences, executions and the abolition of capital punishment.

- We demand the immediate release of all imprisoned political and trade

union prisoners, teachers, students, doctors, artists, activists and demonstrators, etc.

- We demand the establishment of an international committee made up of jurists, trade unionists, journalists and NGOs to carry out an independent investigation into places of detention in Iran.

- We support women's fight for the right to control their bodies. We demand with them the abolition of all misogynistic laws as well as gender apartheid.

- We support the fundamental and democratic rights of Iranian men and women, whether they are Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs, Azeris, Lors, or Persians.

- We support the workers of Iran in their struggle for dignity, their rights to defend themselves through strike action and the building of trade unions and political organizations.

- We strongly demand from France and Europe the freezing of the assets of the highest leaders of the Revolutionary Guards and the Islamic Republic, including those of the Guide Ali Khamenei and his entourage, the total amount of which is estimated at \$95 billion. These fortunes acquired through the plunder of resources, the overexploitation of workers, predation and corruption must return to the peoples of Iran.

- Like what was done against the Russian oligarchs, we demand the freezing of the assets of the Iranian oligarchs.

- We demand the lifting of banking and commercial secrecy in France, in Europe and in the world to block the wealth accumulated by the leaders of the Islamic Republic, the Revolutionary Guards and the companies linked to them.

- We demand the cessation of all industrial, economic and diplomatic collaboration with the Islamic Republic.

As signatories to this platform, we reaffirm our full and complete support for all those who fight in Iran for equality, social justice, democracy and

against all forms of autocratic and authoritarian power.

We are at their side by all the means at our disposal, and we are committed to multiplying initiatives of solidarity with the peoples of Iran. Until the victory of this irrepressible revolutionary momentum!

First signatories :

Nicole ABRAVANEL, historian EHESS
Gilbert ACHCAR, Professor SOAS London

Christophe AGUITON, anti-globalisation activist

Mateo ALALUF, Professor Emeritus of the Université Libre de Bruxelles

Tassos ANASTASSIADIS, journalist - Greece

Behrouz AREFI, Socialist Solidarity with Workers in Iran - France

Rolando ASTARITA, Professor of Economics - Universidad Nacional de Quilmes - Argentina

Manon AUBRY, MEP LFI

Clémentine AUTAIN, Member of Parliament, Seine-Saint-Denis

Ludivine BANTIGNY, historian

Alain BARON, international commission of the Union syndicale Solidaires

Jean BATOU, Professor, University of Lausanne

Abraham BEHAR, doctor

Emma BELLE, British civilisationist, Savoie Mont Blanc University

Olivier BESANCENOT, spokesperson for the NPA

Alain BIHR, Honorary Professor of Sociology, University of Bourgogne-Franche-Comté

Sophie BINET, General Secretary of the UFICT-CGT, member of the CGT Executive Committee, leader of the women's equality collective

Jean-Jacques BOISLAROUSSIE, Ensemble !

Alexandra BOJANIC, FSU international sector

Manuel BOMPARD, LFI deputy for Bouches du Rhône

Michel BONNIN, director of studies at the EHSS, centre for studies on modern and contemporary China

Mickaël BOULOUX, MP for Ille et Vilaine

Alima BOUMEDIENE, lawyer

Tiago BRANQUINO, cultural and political activist, trade unionist, elected politician - Switzerland

Nicole BRENEZ, academic

Michel BROUÉ, mathematician

David LIBREROS CAICEDO, professor, Universidad Nacional de Colombia

Raul CAMARGO FERNANDEZ, spokesperson of Anticapitalistas - Spanish State

Ana CAMPOS, doctor - Portugal

Robert CANTARELLA, director

Daniel CERIOTTI, nutritionist - Uruguay

Fernando CHARAMELLO, trade unionist - Uruguay

Claude CALAME, historian, director of research - EHESS

Salavatore CANNAVO, journalist - Jacobin Italia

Carmen CASTILLO, film-maker

Hélène CHANTEREAU, CGT info'Com trade unionist and Aplusoc activist

Lou CHESNE, ATTAC spokesperson

Ramiro CHIMURIS, lawyer and economist - Uruguay

Herbert CLAROS, international relations secretary of CSP Consultas - Brazil

Eliana COMO, trade unionist, CGIL Steering Committee

Jorge COSTA, Bloco de Esquerdo (Left Bloc Portugal)

Pierre COUTAZ, CGT international sector

Léon CREMIEUX, aeronautical trade unionist, Solidaires

Joseph DAHER, academic

Christian DANDRES, PS National Councillor (Switzerland)

Cybèle DAVID, national secretary of the Union syndicale Solidaires, in charge of international affairs

Sonia DAYAN-HERZBRUN, sociologist

Sophie DESROSIERS, retired lecturer, EHESS

Bernard DREANO, President of CEDETIM

Penelope DUGGAN, editor International Viewpoint

Sabine ENDERS, ATTAC activist

Behrouz FARAHANY, Socialist Solidarity with Workers in Iran - France

Patrick FARBIASZ, PEPS (for a popular and social ecology)

Nejat FEROUSE, confederal adviser to the CGT's International Space

Marina FERRERUELA, deputy and parliamentary assistant

Berivan FIRAT, spokesperson for external relations of the Kurdish Democratic Council in France - CDK-F

Téo FREI, climate strike activist - Switzerland

Bernard FRIOT, economist and labour

sociologist

Mario ROSSI GARRETANO, trade unionist - Uruguay

Franck GAUDICHAUD, historian, Jean Jaurès University, Toulouse

Sigrid GERARDIN, national secretary for women's rights, FSU

Paolo GILARDI, teacher trade unionist

Liliane GIRAUDON, poet

Alain GONTHIER, municipal councillor in Vevey - Switzerland

José María GONZALEZ, Mayor of the city of Cadiz - Spain

Sébastien GUEX, Honorary Professor, University of Lausanne - Switzerland

Murielle GUILBERT, co-national delegate of the Union syndicale Solidaires

Marie HOLZMAN, Sinologist and human rights activist

Jocelyne HALLER, Member of the Grand Council of the Swiss Left - Geneva

Ernesto HERRERA, journalist - Uruguay

Chantal JAQUET, philosopher, professor at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Claire JOBIN, sociologist, feminist strike activist - Switzerland

Samy JOHSUA, member of the Scientific Council of ATTAC

Leslie KAPLAN, writer

Andy KERBRAT, Member of Parliament, Loire Atlantique

Babak KIA, Socialist Solidarity with Workers in Iran - France

Aurore KOECHLIN, sociologist, feminist and anti-capitalist activist

Isabel KOIFMANN, trade unionist - Uruguay

Pierre KHALFA, economist, Copernic Foundation

Jacques KIRSNER, producer and scriptwriter

Nicolas KLOTZ, film-maker

Hubert KRIVINE, physicist,

Dominique LABOURIER, actress

Michel LANSON, retired professor

Michel LAUVERS, historian, Côte d'Azur University

Michèle LECLERC-OLIVE, Professor of mathematics, sociologist, CNRS

Olivier LE COURD GRAND MAISON, academic

Irma LEITES, plenaria memoria y justicia - Uruguay

Fred LEPLAT, Anticapitalist Resistance - England, Wales

Elodie LOPEZ, member of the Vaud Grand Council, Ensemble à Gauche,

municipal councillor, décroissance

alternatives
Francisco LOUÇA, economist,
University of Lisbon - Portugal
Mickael LOWY, Emeritus Research
Director at the CNRS
Christian MAHIEUX, international
trade union network of solidarity and
struggle
Jan MALEWSKI, journalist, editor of
Inprecor
Gilles MANCERON, historian
Pierre MARAGE, professor emeritus at
the Université Libre de Bruxelles
Maguy MARIN, choreographer
Gustave MASSIAH, CEDETIM
Omar MENONI, trade unionist -
Uruguay
Roland MERIEUX, member of the
Ensemble! animation team
Silvia Fernandes MICHELI, teacher -
Uruguay
Anwar MIR SATTARI,
environmentalist
Mathilde MONNIER, choreographer
Manuel AGUILA MORA, historian,
Autonomous University of Mexico
Noel MOREL, external relations,
libertarian communist platform
network
Mariana MORTAGUA, Member of the
Portuguese Parliament
Olivier NEVEUX, academic
Stanislas NORDEY, Director of the
National Theatre of Strasbourg
Françoise NYFFLER, feminist strike
activist and member of parliament of
Ensemble à Gauche - Switzerland
Danièle OBONO, LFI MP for Paris
Solenn OCHSNER, trade unionist,
feminist and climate activist -
Switzerland
Andrés OLIVETTI, trade unionist -
Uruguay
Annick OSMOND, socio-anthropologist
Ugo PALHETA, sociologist
Mathilde PANOT, Member of
Parliament for Val de Marne,
President of the LFI group in the
National Assembly
Ian PARKER, Professor, University of
Manchester (England)
Olivier PARRIAUX, professor emeritus
at the University of Lyon-Saint Etienne
Jaime PASTOR, political scientist and
director of the journal "Viento Sur" -
Spanish State
Roland PFEFFERKORN, sociologist,
University of Strasbourg
Elisabeth PERCEVAL, filmmaker
Jean-François PELLISSIER,
spokesperson for Ensemble!
Martyne PERROT, sociologist
Serge PEY, writer
Nicole PHELOUZAT, sociologist at
CNRS
Boris PLAZZI, CGT confederation,
confederal secretary for international
relations
Christine POUPIN, NPA spokesperson
Philippe POUTOU, NPA spokesperson
Stéphanie PREZIOSO, Member of the
National Council, Ensemble à gauche -
Switzerland
Nadège PRUGNARD, author, actor,
director
José Manuel PUREZA, Professor,
University of Coimbra - Portugal
Martine RAIS, doctor - Switzerland
Rebeca RIELA, economist - Uruguay
Laurent RIPART, historian at the
University of Savoie Mont Blanc
Teresa RODRIGUEZ, former Member
of Parliament and spokesperson for
Adelante Andalucía - Spanish State
Ema Graciela ROMERO, lawyer -
Uruguay
Pierre ROUSSET, internationalist,
director of the online newspaper ESSF
Henri SAINT-JEAN, association leader
Sara SALEMI, Socialist Solidarity with
Workers in Iran - France
Pauline SALINGUE, spokesperson for
the NPA
Catherine SAMARY, alterglobalist
economist
Mariana SANCHEZ, journalist and
editor, activist with SNJ CGT and
Ensemble
Cobas SARDEGNA, UNICOBAS - Italy
Jacob SCHÄFER, trade unionist -
Germany
Janick SCHAUFELBUEHL, Associate
Professor Faculty of Social and
Political Sciences University of
Lausanne - Switzerland
Marc SCHLESSER, Decroissance
Alternative - Switzerland
Houshang SEPEHR, editor of the
website Iran Echo - Socialist Solidarity
with Workers in Iran - France
Yasmine SIBLOT, sociologist
Omar SLAOUTI, teacher, anti-racist
activist, elected in Argenteuil
Alda SOUSA, mathematician,
University of Porto - Portugal
Claude STAZAN, CEDETIM
Isabelle STENGERS, philosopher -
Belgium
Quentin TALON, mathematician,
municipal councillor in Montreux -
Switzerland
Daniel TANURO, ecosocialist author
Imad TEMIZA, Secretary of the
Palestinian Postal Service Workers
Union - Palestine
Benoît TESTE, General Secretary of
the FTUU
Julien THERY, historian at the
University Louis Lumière Lyon 2 and
president of the Media
João TEIXERA LOPES, sociologist,
University of Porto - Portugal
Sylvie TISSOT, sociologist
Marc TOMCZAK, teacher-researcher
at the University of Lorraine
Pascal TORRE, deputy head of the
international sector of the PCF
Éric TOUSSAINT, political scientist,
Universities of Liège and Paris 8,
member of the International Council
of the World Social Forum
Enzo TRAVERSO, historian
Josette TRAT, academic, feminist
activist
Anne TRISTAN
Aurélie TROUVÉ, Member of
Parliament for Seine-Saint-Denis
Franco TURIGLIATTO, former Senator
- Italy
Charles-André UDRY, economist and
director of the Alencontre website -
Switzerland
Mario UNDA, sociologist - Ecuador
Miguel URBAN, MEP - Spain
Roseline VACHETTA, former MEP -
NPA
Christiane VOLLAIRE, philosopher
Thomas WEYTS, SAP Anticapitalist,
Belgium
Eleni VARIKAS, Professor Emeritus at
the University of Paris 8
Youlie YAMAMOTO, ATTAC
spokesperson
Erika DEUBER ZIEGLER, art historian
- Switzerland
Jean ZIEGLER, sociologist,
internationalist, politician -
Switzerland

Massive rejection of the Macron-Borne reform of the pension system

19 January 2023, by **Léon Crémieux**

Emmanuel Macron and his Prime Minister, Elisabeth Borne, have therefore decided on a new social attack against the working classes by presenting on 10 January a plan to reform the pension system, which aims to extend, globally and quickly, by two years the legal retirement age, which would increase from 62 to 64 for public and private sector workers. The project must be debated and voted on within the next two months, using an accelerated debate procedure (Article 47-1 of the Constitution; only 20 days of debate in the Assembly from February 8, 50 days in total for adoption between the two chambers, Assembly and Senate).

The government's plan also aims to abolish a whole series of "special pension schemes" in which retirement conditions are more favourable (gas and electricity workers, the RATP, etc.)

The aim is also quickly to bring the necessary duration of contributions to 43 annuities (years worked or equivalent). The previous reform, carried out under the Socialist government in 2013, aimed to reach this objective in 2035 (one quarter of extension every three years); with the current project the objective would be reached eight years earlier, in 2027 (one quarter more each year).

In total, it is obviously a global project of social regression which will further aggravate the inequalities behind an official discourse of "social justice" and "rescue of the French pay-as-yougo system". [20]

In most industrialized countries, pension systems have been the object of many attacks, especially since the liberal turn of the 1980s.

France has not escaped this process and, since 1993, successive

governments, led by the Socialists and the Gaullists, have carried out four reforms against the pension system. Thirty years ago, workers, whether they were employed in the public or private sector, had a full pension (at the full rate) at age 60, having paid 37.5 years of contributions. If the project passes, we would very quickly go to 64 years and 43 years of contributions, 44 for long careers.

This would represent a new social attack, hitting in particular workers who have had careers interspersed with periods of unemployment or part-time work, especially women and, in general, those who started working before the age of 20, workers with little qualification. This would have the double effect of forcing them to work beyond the age of 64 and still receive lower pensions.

This reform project is part of Macron's overall plan to "work more" according to one of his 2022 campaign themes, to increase, at least on paper, the number of active workers, with a higher retirement age, pressure on the unemployed by the reduction of rights, pressure even on the beneficiaries of the RSA (active solidarity income - for those who have exhausted their right to unemployment benefit - 1.88 million beneficiaries in June 2022) by conditioning the RSA to a period of unpaid work from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. monthly. These measures obviously exert pressure on the wages of active workers, lowering the quality of jobs and increasing the situations of unemployment and precariousness for older workers.

Regarding the increase from 62 to 64 in the retirement age, a note (Policy Brief, 21 July 2022) from the OFCE (French Observatory of Economic Conditions - Political Science) estimates, based on the results of the

2010 reform, that retiring at age 64 would reduce the number of retirees by 600,000 in 2027, of whom 240,000 would then be employed, 215,000 unemployed and the rest in a "state of precariousness" due to disability, illness or inactivity. So that would lead to 75 per cent unemployment and precariousness! Only the most qualified executives and employees would remain in a stable job, the categories least subject to arduous work and choppy careers.

It is the same with regard to the attacks against recipients of unemployment benefits. We went, from June 2008 to June 2021, from 68 per cent to 47.4 per cent of the unemployed receiving benefits (according to DARES). Worse, in September 2021, the length of the period worked to be entitled to benefits increased from 4 to 6 months. And the latest reform, which comes into force at the start of 2023, reduces the period during which an unemployed person can receive benefits by 25 per cent. From now on, the maximum duration will be 18 months and, for workers over 55, 27 months, instead of 36 previously.

All these decisions go in the same direction, hitting ever harder the categories of the working classes already the most affected by the current crises.

More than the real increase in the number of workers employed, "a new strike force to develop growth", what Macron is aiming for is a further reduction in the cost of labour for companies and a reduction in public spending in the government budget.

The other main reason why the government has so quickly put forward this pension reform project is not to be found in the 10 or 20-year outlook for the pension system but

rather in the reduction of public finance deficits by 2027. In May 2022, the European Commission reinstated the Stability Pact rules, the Maastricht rules, suspended during the pandemic. The European Commissioner for the Economy, Paolo Gentiloni, then announced that, at the end of 2023, the Member States will have to comply with the rules of public deficits and public debt, at a maximum of 3 per cent and 60 per cent of GDP respectively. France, on this occasion, received the "advice" to reduce its debt and quickly reform its pension system.

Last July, the French government presented, as every year, to the European Commission its "stability programme", economic perspectives from now until this context 2027. In this context, Bruno Le Maire, French Minister of Economy and Finance, is committed to reducing the public deficit from 4.9 per cent of GDP in 2022 to less than 3 per cent in 2027. France is committed to increasing its budget by only 0.6 per cent per year: "The sustainability of public finances will not be achieved by an increase in mandatory levies... Controlling public spending is mainly based on structural reforms, particularly pension reform, as the President of the Republic committed to during the electoral campaign." The pension reform is therefore the pillar of the reduction in public spending to comply with European rules and maintain a favourable opinion from the rating agencies. Bruno Le Maire hopes to generate 17.7 billion euros by 2030, or more than 5 per cent of pension expenditure. Because at the same time, the government persists in its tax relief for companies. Thus, the CVAE (contribution on the added value of companies) paid by companies with more than 500,000 euros in turnover, which brought in 18 billion euros in 2019, will disappear completely in 2024.

If the European authorities and the European capitalists insist so much on the reform of pensions in France, it is because the pension system has the particularity of having resisted being torn apart pieces more than in other European countries.

Admittedly, the previous attacks have

already had and will continue to have even more consequences in terms of reduced purchasing power of pensioners and fewer years of life in retirement. The fact remains that France is one of the countries where people can retire the earliest and, with Italy, one of the countries in which the most money is spent on pensions, around 13.5 per cent of GDP, essentially public expenditure, within the framework of collective and compulsory pension schemes. Many capitalist experts insist on this "intolerable level" which supposedly imposes excessively high levels of compulsory levies on companies. What is less often noted is that this large share devoted to pensions also allows France to be one of the countries in the European Union in which the poverty rate for people over 65 is the lowest: 10.9 per cent against 16.8 per cent on average and 19.4 per cent in Germany.

Also, this system still represents an important point of resistance, a question of a choice of society, understood as such, in a country where more than 60 per cent of active workers would like to retire at age 60 or earlier.

This choice of society asserts itself with all the more force as the arguments asserted by Macron and the "experts" who follow one another in the media fail to convince. The Council of Orientation of Pensions (COR), official organization responsible for monitoring of the system, has itself released a report last summer advancing projections for the next forty years, showing a system in equilibrium. The "common sense" statement that there are going to be more and more pensioners and fewer and fewer active people (which is true) does not in any way lead to an uncontrollable increase in expenditure. On the contrary, expenditure as a percentage of GDP would remain very stable, between 13 and 14 per cent by 2070. It is revenues that would fall, due to insufficient pension payments from the state for public sector workers. In all the hypotheses, the accounts show only a slight deficit with regard to the amount of revenue and expenditure. The system has been in surplus for the past two years (4 billion euros in total)

and will show a maximum deficit of 10.7 billion in 2027, compared to the 350 billion euros in expenditure. All this is in the COR report, which explicitly states that the situation is not catastrophic...contrary to what the government says. In addition, the government claims that a greater number of active workers is necessary, whereas between the ages of 50 and 65 the current employment rate is only 56 per cent, due to redundancy plans, illnesses and the impossibility of finding a job.

So, already, the government has lost a battle, its attempt to justify a reform to preserve and "save" the system, and it will not be able to convince people in the next two months. Similarly, there is a deep conviction that if it was necessary to finance a limited deficit in the years to come, there is no reason for this burden to weigh on wage earners, and in particular the poorest sectors and those subject to the most difficult work. Because, in the face of these measures, the government regularly displays the desire, in order to "protect growth", not to increase employers' contributions to the Social Security Funds (including the Old Age Fund), to lower compulsory deductions and to lower all taxes on production and business. This in a context of explosive growth of corporate profits, massive distribution of dividends and individual enrichment of the wealthiest category of the population. In 2022, CAC 40 companies earned 172 billion euros in profits (a 34 per cent increase compared to 2021) and distributed 80 billion to their shareholders in the form of dividends or share buybacks. It is therefore a class reform...and it shows.

Basically, all the polls conducted in recent months, including since the announcement of the reform, show an overwhelming majority hostile to this reform, lesser only among executives...and pensioners. Ninety per cent of working people are opposed to the postponement of the retirement age to 64, 60 per cent approve of the union mobilization against this project and 46 per cent are ready to mobilize.

All the unions (CGT, CFDT, FO, FSU,

Solidaires, UNSA, CFTC) refused the framework of the law during talks with the government, even those like the CFDT, the UNSA, the CGC and the CFTC, which are inclined to accept liberal reforms and support for government policies. All the unions are calling for a first day of strikes and demonstrations on January 19, around a single slogan, the withdrawal of the government project. At its last confederal congress, the CFDT leadership even received an express mandate to refuse any extension of the retirement age, whatever the countermeasures. During other pension reform projects, notably in 2003 and 2010, governments had come up against a trade union front equivalent to that achieved at present, with all the trade union confederations directly opposed to the project. It should nevertheless be noted that in 1995, the CFDT was not in the movement against the "Juppé plan" aimed at aligning public sector workers with the level of the regressions imposed on private workers in 1993. Juppé nevertheless had to withdraw his plan in the face of a general mobilization and a long strike by the rail workers of the SNCF. 1995 led to a deep crisis in the CFDT and the departure of several unions to Solidaires and the FSU. Similarly in 2003, the trade union movement, which started out united against the Fillon reform with the same objective, split, the CGC and CFDT rallying to the project during its parliamentary discussion, which lasted six months. In 2010, the mobilization lasted nine months, from March to November, with 14 scattered days of action, marked by strikes and demonstrations. In 2013, the CFDT also supported the Touraine reform of the Socialist government. Since 1995, the social movement has failed to block a pension reform, except in 2020 when Macron had to postpone his reform project in the face of mobilizations and the arrival of the Covid pandemic.

This year, the period of the parliamentary debate will be reduced to 50 days, with furthermore the possibility for the government to resort to decrees and ordinances. Moreover, the government can also use article 49-3 which makes it possible to close the debates and to

impose a vote of confidence. In any case, the configuration of parliamentary debate is quite clear. The Macronist minority (170 deputies plus 80 allies) can count on at least most of the deputies of the Republican group (62 deputies). The majority is 286 votes. So, there is practically no risk of rejection of the text, since the policy of the Republican leadership is to appropriate this project, which corresponds to their programme and which they have even had modified, by making it "less brutal", reducing the retirement age from 65 to 64 years old. The other oppositions, whether NUPES or RN, are totally opposed to the project but can only conduct a truncated debate.

So the remaining question is the capacity of the social, union and political movement to organize a real unitary popular mobilization, through street demonstrations, and the construction of a balance of power reflecting the hostility of the popular strata, through a movement of prolonged strikes by several sectors of the working class. This means consciously building this movement and not proposing a series of disjointed strike days. Moreover, the short period of the parliamentary debate imposes the construction of a unitary and offensive movement. The task of the hour is to create on a local level enlarged inter-union coordinating committees which can organize the convergence of the sectors on strike, unitary structures bringing together unions, associations and parties. The NUPES and the NPA have taken the initiative of organizing unitary meetings in the towns and cities. A national demonstration bringing them together will take place on January 21, two days after the first day of the inter-union strike. The quasi-general climate in the union leaderships is the refusal of union-party coordination. The great-power behaviour of La France Insoumise has not helped, since last summer, to change this climate.

It will however be necessary to succeed in building, in particular on the local level, a united front. This is all the more important since the broad scope of the trade union front is not based on a real common practice or on a common body of demands vis-à-vis

the government project. The January 19 strike is already shaping up to be massive and, in several sectors, the unions are announcing a schedule of strikes that can be renewed or that will last for several days close together. This is the case for the unions in the CGT Petroleum branch (24 hours on the 19th January, 48 hours on the 26th, 72 hours on the 6th of February), unions which had already gone on strike for several weeks for wages last autumn. Olivier Besancenot, spokesperson for the NPA, also put forward the idea of several consecutive days of cross-sectoral general strike rather than a fragmentation of leapfrogging days.

It is also decisive that the mobilization should make it possible to unite around the immediate questions of wages and the cost of living and the attacks on the rights of the unemployed, linking the fight against the bill to demands against the high cost of living and targeting capitalist profits.

The last weeks of December saw, after a strike by RATP drivers, a major movement by SNCF controllers on wages and careers. Many strikes for wages have not ceased and will develop again with a new round of compulsory annual negotiations in companies. The exponential increase in energy prices and electrical supply contracts has also led, in recent days, to growing discontent, with even movements by bakers, restaurateurs, other small traders and craftsmen, many of whom are bankrupt or in default of payment.

The movement under construction must be able to be the framework for the expression of the growing discontent of the popular classes while advancing anti-capitalist demands and building a broad movement of support in the population. The National Rally would like to polarize this discontent while obviously refusing these anti-capitalist demands and the development of workers' strikes. There is therefore also at stake a decisive question of reducing its influence.

The construction of this prolonged movement will not take place without several industrial sectors building in a

united way a relationship of forces against the government, while Olivier Véran, its spokesperson, still believes

he is sure of himself, with a “stiff upper lip”. We can make a wager that the coming days will show how

mistaken he is.

13 January 2023

Thousands of Nurses Struck New York Hospitals for Patient Care and Won

18 January 2023, by Dan La Botz

Michelle Gonzalez, an ICU nurse at Montefiore Hospital said, “The strike was about our patients. Nurses and health care workers in general are working in really terrible conditions. We have too many patients who need to be seen or too many patients who are very, very sick assigned to us. That’s why we had to make this decision to go on strike.”

Nurses had three goals in the strike, all aimed at maintaining a stable and adequate nursing staff to protect patients’ health. First, establishing staffing levels. Second, establishing a conduit from nursing schools to hospitals to attract nurses. Third, adequate salaries to keep nurses. At the two hospitals that struck, they won all three.

At ten major New York City private hospitals nurses gave notice they would strike on January 9, though the union leadership hoped to avoid a strike, and discouraged nurses from walking out. With the union leadership pressing for a settlement, nurses at eight hospitals voted to sign contracts, but nurses at Montefiore and Mt. Sinai refused and struck for patient care staffing ratios that could be enforced, and they were successful. Under the agreement reached at those two

hospitals, the hospital corporation will be penalized if it fails to maintain staffing levels. If management fails to provide enough nurses, the salary that would have been paid to the missing nurses will be divided among the other nurses and paid within two months, while patients will receive a 15% discount. This is a novel and historic measure.

“This has been a phenomenal victory for us as nurses,” said Gonzalez. “When we went out to the streets, it felt like we were telling the hospital CEOs, that we are not going to continue working under these conditions. We’re going to continue to fight for better for ourselves and for our patients.”

Not only did the nurses win enforceable minimum staffing levels, they also won wage increases of 19.2%. In addition, hospitals agreed to fill vacancies; provide fully funded healthcare and lifetime health coverage for retirees, offer educational benefits, and increase pension funds payments.

Today health care is, after education, the second largest industry. There are 22 million health care workers, 14% of all workers, seven million hospital workers, and two million of them are

registered nurses. Unlike many other jobs and professions, nurses are 85% female and tend to reflect the ethnic diversity of the country, with white, Black, Latina, and Asian nurses working and when necessary, striking together.

Unions represent 20 percent of all nurses and recently many have struck hospitals around the country. Over the last three years of the COVID pandemic hundreds of nurses lost their lives and burnout drove thousands to leave the profession. Last year alone, six unions representing 32,000 struck at various hospitals across the United States. They have done so with great sympathy from the public, which has viewed the nurses as heroic.

In the 1970s, a time of labor upheaval, socialist groups sent their members into heavy industry—steel, auto, mining and trucking—but today the priorities are different. A leftist group called the Rank-and-File Project is recruiting leftists to become teachers and nurses, as well as warehouse workers and UPS drivers. Their goal is to organize rank-and-file workers and to strengthen the labor movement while recruiting workers to socialism.

15 January 2023

Two organisations of the Mexican socialist left fuse

17 January 2023, by **José Luis Hernández Ayala**

The history of the Mexican socialist left, in the last three decades, has been more of divisions or exciting unifications that almost always end in new divisions that discourage militancy and contribute to its deepening fragmentation. If, due to some unusual circumstance, the militants or cadres of all the organisations of the Mexican socialist and communist left met together at this time, it would be difficult for us to fill a room of 1,500 people in a country of more than 120 million inhabitants.

The common denominator that explains the failure of these unification processes has been the lack of socialist strategic political and ideological consistency of the organisations, a product of the misunderstanding of the national and international political situation; the absence of strategic political agreements for action; of being arranged through leadership-to-leadership conversations in cafes, without the participation of the bases of their organisations and the people; the absence of a Leninist democratic framework of operation, the right of tendencies and the discipline to adhere to majority agreements. This is due to the everlasting caudillismo of its leaderships and the intolerance and inability to deal with tactical and secondary differences within the organisations and, furthermore, it should be emphasised, due to the enormous weight of electoral opportunism that has prevailed in recent decades within the Mexican left.

Our case aims to be different. We seek to start from solid agreements in the characterisation of the national political situation and from a common practice within the social movements in which we participate. Although we do not disdain electoral participation, we have not made it the center of our activity either. We have sought to have discussions at the grassroots level and not only between our representatives. We agree on the creation of a revolutionary Marxist

organisation of a democratic, internationalist, anti-neoliberal, eco-socialist and feminist character and above all to build popular power in the different social sectors that are part of the Mexican people.

Our great strategic political agreements do not exclude tactical differences, but we will seek to resolve them in a respectful, democratic framework, understanding that the construction of a revolutionary party, with a Leninist profile, requires an enormous wealth of debate to find the best answers to the great diversity of problems that the class struggle will always pose to us.

The process of rapprochement between the ONPP and the CSR began within the Organización Política del Pueblo y los Trabajadores (OPT/Political Organisation of the People and Workers), where both groups had a series of agreements from 2012, and later continued with the formation of a front of organisations of the socialist left, the Movimiento de Unidad Socialista (MUS/Socialist Unity Movement),—from the defeat of the neoliberal bloc in power and the resounding triumph of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) in July 2018—as well as in the fight for renationalisation of the electrical industry, the audit of the payment of the public debt and the fight for the independent and democratic organisation of rural and city workers.

Consequently, we have supported progressive reforms such as for social programmes or the recovery of energy sovereignty, but we are critical of AMLO's policy of continuing to pay the illegitimate public debt or the inconsistency in resolving various demands and conflicts of the working class.

We believe that the construction of the MUS three years ago, in December 2019, has been a great success on the path of bringing together the Mexican socialist left. Our new organisation will not only maintain its membership

within the MUS and in other united front-type spaces that we have created, but we will continue determined to deepen and achieve the broadest unity of the Mexican socialist left. Our aim is to form a broad and powerful mass political organisation capable of influencing the course of the country, both to wipe out neoliberalism and to establish a new democratic and proletarian regime that lays the foundations for building socialism.

Although our ideological origin comes from diverse Marxist sources, this does not imply any impediment to the merger. The most important thing is our agreement on what to do now within a strategic perspective. In addition, this type of merger is not new. In Portugal, the formation of the Bloco de Esquerda (Left Bloc) was successful as a result of the merger of three organisations of different tendencies, the same occurred with the formation of the Partido Socialismo e Liberdade (PSOL/Party of Socialism and Freedom) in Brazil. In the Philippines, a non-Trotskyist split from the Communist Party joined the Fourth International. There are more examples. Therefore, I believe that one of the tasks of the new organisation will be the promotion of an internationalist movement of the revolutionary socialist left globally and in particular from Latin America.

The unification of the ONPP and the CSR will imply various organisational changes in the militant and social work that we carry out. A little more than fifty members of the CSR will join the new organisation, and the ONPP will contribute more than a hundred. The ONPP will continue to exist as a front of social organisations in which we will participate, but the new political organisation will be made up of the joint membership of both organisations.

Our new organisation will remain faithful to the principles of Marxism. In the absence of an eco-socialist alternative, based on the self-organisation of those from below, the

infernal machine of big capital will continue to spin out of control across the planet. As internationalists and anti-colonialists, our hopes are nourished by the feminist and anti-dictatorship mobilisations in Iran, the strikes for higher wages in England, the demonstrations for democracy in China, struggles for unionism and against racism in the United States and the fight against the new dictatorship in Peru.

Membership and close collaboration will be maintained with the Fourth International. We will participate in their meetings, debates and activities, but individual affiliation will not be

mandatory and we will seek to advance in the construction of an international that brings together revolutionary Marxist forces from all over the world.

In 2023 we start building a new political organisation with the hope of regrouping in a single party all those who are committed to a socialist perspective. We are not a left that manages the system. We seek to be an organisation convinced that we cannot end the exploitation, oppression and destruction of ecosystems without overcoming neoliberal and rapacious capitalism and without a revolutionary transformation of society. We seek to

create an organisation in dialogue and debate with other currents of the social movement, without sectarianism. We are open to the integration of new organisations and individual affiliation. We want our unification to be a starting point and not an end in itself. For this reason, this project is more pertinent than ever.

Today, we seek to renew the thread of the construction of a useful party for the exploited and the oppressed.

*Translated by David Fagan for International Viewpoint from **Punto de Vista Internacional**.*

The fight goes on in Britain

16 January 2023, by **Terry Conway**

The impact of existing laws was demonstrated in the results of a ballot for strike action over pay this week. One of the teaching unions, the NAS/UWT, published results which saw 9 out of 10 voting members backing strike action – but they can't call members out because only 45 per cent voted. While that's a higher percentage than often vote in parliamentary elections, under existing law it's still not enough to call a strike.

Now the Tories are proposing to go further and have introduced a new law that will allow them to impose 'minimum service levels' in a whole range of sectors in a way that would fundamentally undermine the right to strike for millions of workers. The not very radical deputy leader of the Labour Party has dubbed it 'the right to sack nurses bill.'

So it's important that the TUC has declared a day of action on February 1 – but disappointing that thus far only one national union has said that it will call strike action on that day. The civil service union, PCS, has called out over 100,000 members across 124 government departments. There is still time for others to join them –

industrial action not the sort of legal action and lobbying the TUC seems to be thinking about is going to be necessary – and at a sustained level – to turn the situation round.

But there are reasons to be worried about strategy and political direction not only at the level of the TUC but of individual unions. One example comes from the postal worker side of the CWU – the Communication Workers Union a union with a relatively left leadership and a history of unofficial action. They came out on strike for 18 days in the last six months in the run up to Christmas in defence of wages and working conditions. They have to reballot under existing laws to be able to continue their action – but have timed this so that they will not be able to strike again before the end of February.

A more dangerous example comes from one of Britain's biggest unions, Unison. There had been huge pressure on the government, including from some of their own back benchers, over the fact that during the increasing wave of strikes they were either refusing to meet the unions at all – or where they did refusing to allow the current round of pay negotiations to

even be part of the agenda.

On Monday 9 January a meetings finally took place with health unions and ministers, and separately with transport and education workers. Rumours were circulating that perhaps the government would offer a lump sum for health workers. They didn't – rather suggesting the only way further money could be found was by workers working harder. Given the crisis in health is made much worse by a huge staff turnover – itself driven not only by low pay but by unsustainable workload – then not surprisingly that most unions saw this as an insult.

Unfortunately this wasn't the response of Unison's negotiator who was much more positive, saying that the government's tone had changed. Tone doesn't pay bills any more than claps (applause) did during the pandemic. But the fact that, although the left won control of Unison's national executive in June 2021, the General Secretary and senior staff are on the right made this no surprise to the left in Britain.

As the crisis continues and deepens, the need to build democratic left

The bill... ...at the end of the year

15 January 2023, by **Angela Klein**

Foreign countries are amazed: 295 billion euros against inflation plus 200 billion for the Federal Army - who is supposed to pay for that? The three relief packages of the federal government together cost 95 billion, the gas price brake 200 billion, not including 25 billion for the rescue of the gas importer Uniper (share purchase plus credit lines). However, the relief also includes a number of social policy measures that were planned by the government anyway, such as the citizen's income, the increase in child and housing benefits and others.

With the 200 billion for the gas price brake, the state subsidises private gas companies and thus relieves consumers. But it does not curtail the obscene profits these corporations make from the temporary gas shortage. At the lower end of the income scale, 3.7 million Hartz IV recipients are fobbed off with an extra 5 euros a month. Pensioners at least get a one-off payment of 300 euros. Those who are employed also receive only a one-time payment, while wages lag miles behind inflation.

Transparent manoeuvres, but effective: many people think inflation is a bad dream that will vanish after the winter. The one-off payments and relief on heating costs spread the feeling that the "solidarity contribution" for Ukraine is still halfway bearable - and that this contribution is necessary is not questioned.

The German government's Ukraine policy is supported by large parts of the population, despite its bellicose foreign minister. Otherwise the unrest in society would be much greater. The statistics portal Statista conducted a survey on 4 November, according to

which 31 percent of respondents consider the sanctions against Russia to be appropriate, while 37 percent think they do not go far enough! Forty-one per cent of the respondents consider the German arms deliveries appropriate, 31 per cent consider them too far-reaching. After all, 55 percent criticise that the diplomatic efforts to end the war are not sufficient.

These figures show that the desire for a quick end to the war is growing. It will continue to grow as it becomes clearer that the war will not produce a clear outcome and that all sides will ultimately end up in a stalemate. The prevailing opinion believes that Putin must be shown limits, but rather economically than militarily, because the danger of an uncontrolled escalation is too great. Meanwhile, none other than NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg says so. On 9 December, he warned in an interview on the Norwegian broadcaster NRK that the fighting could lead to a war between Russia and NATO: "If things go wrong, they can go terribly wrong."

Does the peace movement make itself untrustworthy, as variously claimed, when it pushes for a ceasefire and negotiations? Hardly. Both sides will have to say goodbye to maximum demands: Russia from saying that Ukraine cannot be a NATO member, Ukraine from restoring the state of 2013, including Crimea. However, the starting conditions for the peace movement are much worse today than in the 1980s: First, it fell victim to a thaw in the 1990s, when the Cold War seemed to have ended. Today, however, it must once again assert itself against the harshest hostilities, comparable to those in the 1950s and 1960s, when it was once considered

Moscow's fifth column. Anyone who advocates peace negotiations is shouted down as a Putinist - freedom of speech is the first casualty of war.

So far, the German government has successfully conveyed the image: Putin is to blame for inflation, but the government is helping out. The trade union leaders support this line by accepting wage cuts. For the better-off sections of the working class, these will only be felt with a delay. Large strike movements like in Britain are not to be expected.

But is Putin really responsible for the inflation? The rise in energy prices already started in April and May 2020, with few exceptions worldwide. It was initially a result of shortages when global trade flows were interrupted because of the pandemic. Then, prices rose rapidly from the beginning of 2021 because demand revived after the first wave of the pandemic. Energy prices got another boost in March 2022 with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In Germany, they peaked in August and September when the closure of NordStream 1 was announced. Energy price inflation is accompanied by a spike in food prices because fertilisers and transport are also becoming more expensive.

Whether the upward trend in prices will continue is currently the subject of controversial debate among economists. The western central banks, above all the Federal Reserve in the USA, have reacted with sharp increases in the key interest rate, which makes borrowing rates much more expensive. Expensive money is supposed to counteract an overheating of the economy, according to their theory. But there is no question of an overheated economy at the moment. The energy price shock is

due to the sudden shortage of oil and gas, which brought the speculators on the scene. The price can fall again just as quickly if the bottleneck is removed by boosting oil and gas production in other parts of the world. In fact, the price of gas has already fallen dramatically again, although not to pre-pandemic levels. What happens next with energy prices depends on the course of the war.

The climate catastrophe in the form of droughts, heat waves and floods also drives up prices. Even the move away from fossil fuels contributes. And then there is the very ordinary, home-made

inflation due to economic development. In the [“Atlas of the World Economy”](#) edited amongst others by the reknowned Keynesian economist Heiner Flassbeck, the authors exclude the price increases for energy and food from the general inflation rate. What remains is core inflation, which is not induced by external shocks. It amounts to 5 per cent (from 9 per cent) in the USA and 4.5 per cent (from 8 per cent) in the UK. The difference is even greater in Germany and the Eurozone, where core inflation is only 2 to 3 per cent (from around 10 per cent).

However, the European Central Bank does not want to go its own way, but to adjust its key interest rate to that of the Fed and the Bank of England. This makes loans more expensive, especially for small and micro enterprises, which have already been hit hardest by the pandemic and its economic consequences. The interest rate hike will hurt them, despite the consolation measures of the federal government.

January 2023

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [SozOnline](#).*

Oscar René Vargas is Nicaragua's Latest Prisoner of Conscience

14 January 2023, by William I Robinson

The 77-year-old Vargas had been living in exile in Costa Rica since 2018, where he was forced to flee after the regime issued an arrest warrant because he had criticized the government's repression of mass protests that year. After learning that his sister had become seriously infirm, Vargas returned to Nicaragua on November 22. Within minutes of arriving at his sister's house in the Bolonia neighborhood of Managua, several dozen police and state security agents raided the house, bursting in with machine guns and dragging him away. For the next 48 hours, the regime forcibly concealed Vargas until petitions by the family and the Center for Human Rights in Nicaragua (CENIDH), and international pressure forced the government to acknowledge his arrest.

Vargas, considered the dean of Nicaraguan sociology, is one of the most prominent and well-respected academic voices in the opposition. He is the author of 56 books and over 1,000 articles on Nicaragua, Latin America, and world affairs. Vargas began his political life in the 1960s, participating in the struggle against

the Somoza dictatorship. In 1967 he hid Daniel Ortega from Somoza's state security, thus saving his life. He participated throughout the 1970s in the struggle against the dictatorship, and from 1979-1990 he served as an advisor to the nine-member National Directorate, the highest decision-making body of the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Among his many international appointments, Vargas worked with UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Program, and as advisor to the president of the United Nations General Assembly from 2008-2009.

From exile, Vargas had become an increasing thorn in the side of the Ortega regime for his perspicacious analyses of Nicaragua's social, economic, and political crisis. In one of his most recent articles prior to his arrest, an analysis of the latest International Monetary Fund report on Nicaragua, Vargas warned that the regime is planning a new round of neoliberal austerity measures in the face of an imminent contraction of the economy, rising unemployment, a spike in food prices, and a new wave

of out-migration. Since Ortega returned to office in 2007, Nicaragua has been a poster child for the IMF and other international financial institutions, which have praised the government for its neoliberal economic policies and helped keep the economy afloat through billions of dollars in loans—[nearly one billion in 2020 alone](#).

Nicaraguan migration to the United States has skyrocketed since the mass repression of 2018 and the continued downward spiral of the economy, despite a recovery in 2021 from the Covid collapse of the prior year. Poverty rates dropped from 2007 to 2014 but subsequently climbed up again, [reaching 45 percent of the population](#) in 2019 and wiping out the earlier gains. Some 111,000 Nicaraguans have been detained so far in 2022 by the U.S. border patrol, compared with 50,722 in all of 2021 and just 3,164 in 2020. Remittances from immigrants abroad and a spike in foreign investment, principally U.S. corporate investment in the country's abundant natural resources, have helped prevent a complete collapse of the economy and provide an economic

lifeline for impoverished families. [Remittances](#) climbed from \$1.5 billion in 2018 to \$2.15 billion in 2021 and will reach nearly \$3 billion this year, accounting for 70 percent of receiving households' total income.

The violent repression of mass protests that broke out in April and May of 2018 against neoliberal austerity measures, corruption, and state violence marked the completion of the metamorphosis of Sandinismo into Orteguismo and the descent of the regime into outright dictatorship. Several hundred people were murdered under “shoot to kill” orders by the police and paramilitary forces operating with the support of the Nicaraguan army, as documented by [Amnesty International](#), [the United Nations](#), the Inter-American Human Rights Court, and the independent Nicaraguan organization CENIDH.

In the lead-up to the [fraudulent 2021 elections](#), Ortega carried out a further wave of repression, arresting and detaining without trial dozens of opposition figures, among them presidential candidates, feminists, religious leaders, business people, journalists and environmentalists, and peasant, labor, and student leaders, and forcing several hundred others underground or into exile, where they joined over 130,000 other political exiles. But the repression has continued since the vote in what appears to be a strategy to [purge civil society](#) of any civic group that is independent from the ruling party and the state apparatus. The government has forced the closure of over [1,400 civil society organizations](#) as of July 2022, including universities; student, artistic, and religious groups; feminist collectives; environmental and human

rights organizations; and medical, scientific, educational, cultural and other professional associations. The closures have continued since July and sources now place the total number of organizations closed at over 3,000 through December.

Most of those arrested in the lead up to last year's elections and in their aftermath have been sentenced for “treason” to long prison terms in secret trials held in the prisons themselves, with no attorneys or journalists allowed to be present. Throughout 2021 the government decreed a series of draconian [national security laws](#) that suspended habeas corpus and gave the government sweeping powers to detain and prosecute anyone who criticizes the regime under any circumstances. The laws define “treason” in such sweeping terms as to include, for example, anyone who “undermines independence, sovereignty and self-determination,” who “damages the supreme interests of the nation,” or who “undermines national integrity.” The laws also criminalized a wide range of online communications, including punishing with lengthy prison sentences any who “publishes” or “disseminates” whatever the government deems to be “false” or “distorted” information or “ideological falsehoods” that are “likely to spread anxiety, anguish or fear.”

These national security laws have been used to try the political prisoners. It is under these laws that government prosecutors charged Vargas on three such charges: “conspiracy to undermine national integrity,” “provocation to commit rebellion,” and “propagation of false

news.” The prisoners of conscience have been held in the infamous El Chipote prison outside of Managua, many of them in solitary confinement since the time of their arrest, without medical attention, exercise, or adequate food, in near-dark and frigid temperatures, and—except for a few instances—without familial visits.

Vargas's case is particularly urgent because of the fragile state of his health. He recently underwent heart surgery, had a pacemaker installed, and suffers from hypertension, diabetes, and glaucoma, requiring constant medical attention. Since his detention, he has rapidly lost weight and is frail. There is fear his life may be at risk because he is forced to sleep on cement without a mattress nor any blankets, exposing him to potential hypothermia.

International pressures are mounting for the release of Vargas and all prisoners of conscience. The Latin American Studies Association issued a statement in early December condemning the arrest of Vargas and calling for his immediate release. In an article he published the day before his return to Nicaragua, Vargas argued that the economic crisis, popular discontent, mounting defections among Ortega's inner circle, and international pressure are undermining the regime's ability to hold together its power base among the “nomenclature,” the army, police, and paramilitary forces. The combination of these pressures may eventually push the regime into a situation in which “freeing them becomes a tradeoff necessary for it to stay in power.”

source: [NACLA](#)

The deadliest year for Palestinians under Israel occupation

13 January 2023, by [Yumna Patel](#)

The killings began almost instantaneously, with the first two Palestinians killed within the first week of January — one by an Israeli soldier, and one by an Israeli settler. From then on, the killings did not stop.

Since the start of the year, Mondoweiss has kept a record of all the Palestinians killed by Israeli forces and settlers. As part of our documentation efforts, we have cross referenced the numbers and names of those killed with reports from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, local and international news agencies, and independent journalists.

At the time of publication, the total number of Palestinians killed in 2022 stood at 231. This number also includes 53 killed in Gaza, 49 of whom were killed during Operation Breaking Dawn in August, and five Palestinians with Israeli citizenship who were killed inside the territory of the Israeli state.

The vast majority of the deaths this year, however, came from the occupied West Bank, with 173 Palestinians killed. For the purpose of this report, we will focus on those who were killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, or those who were residents of the West Bank and Jerusalem but were killed in other parts of occupied Palestine.

This list does not only include Palestinians who were shot dead by Israeli soldiers, or run over by Israeli settlers. It also includes Palestinian political prisoners who died inside Israeli prisons as a result of “direct medical negligence,” or those who died while resisting Israeli apartheid and colonialism, and are thus considered “martyrs” — those who died for the cause — by the Palestinian public.

Among the 173 killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem were 39 children aged 17 and under, making them close to 27% of the total deaths in the territory.

According to our documentation, the least amount of Palestinians killed in a month this year was six, and the highest number was recorded in October, when 30 Palestinians were killed — almost one person every day on average.

Within the West Bank, the highest number of casualties occurred in two specific regions: Nablus and Jenin, representing 19% and 34% of the total casualties, respectively. The particularly high number of deaths in the two regions of the northern West Bank can be attributed to the resurgence of armed resistance witnessed in both areas, which the Israeli military focused its efforts on quashing this year.

In late 2021, the Israeli army amended

its already loose open-fire regulations in the occupied West Bank, officially allowing troops to shoot at Palestinians who had thrown rocks or Molotov cocktails at civilian vehicles, even if the Palestinian no longer presented an immediate threat.

The military spokesperson has maintained that the amended regulations only apply when rocks or fire bombs are thrown towards civilian vehicles, not when such objects are thrown towards forces during military raids, and that soldiers are to follow a protocol in which the use of deadly force is a last resort. The nature of the killings this year, however, tell a different story.

According to documentation collected by Mondoweiss, the vast majority of those killed were shot by Israeli police, border police, and the military during confrontations with Israeli forces. While there was a significant rise in armed confrontation between Palestinians and Israeli armed forces this year, many of those killed were shot while unarmed, or while throwing stones or Molotov cocktails towards Israeli army vehicles and armed soldiers. In many cases, rights groups deemed that those killed did not pose an explicit threat to the lives of the Israeli soldiers when they were killed.

31 December 2022

Source: [Mondoweiss](#).

Zero-COVID, reopening, and the proliferation of state capitalisms

12 January 2023, by **Promise Li**

It can be tempting for some parts of the left to view the US’ negligent pandemic controls and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)’s zero-COVID regime as representing diametrically opposed approaches to governance and public health. Some, like a recent [essay](#) in *Monthly Review*, even

describe China’s disastrous reopening process as “a continuation of a rigorous process of confronting a historic and global pandemic, while putting science and the people at its center.” In reality, the CCP’s sudden turn from zero-COVID to reopening is a continuation of a logic of governance

that prioritizes the preservation of profits for the ruling class over people’s livelihoods—a logic shared with the US’ own lax pandemic policies. Despite the different approaches of the US and China toward the pandemic, the two hegemon’s shared vision has always

been a commitment to maintaining the global logic of capital accumulation.

In fact, the CCP's about-face, demonstrates that there is not just one, but multiple, logics of state capitalism. We must differentiate between these to understand how the party-state's zig-zagging public health trajectory (in relation to that of the West) is a part of the global ruling capitalist elites' response to fundamental difficulties in maintaining the rate of profit. In other words, capitalist elites constantly need new ways to maximize the pursuit of global profits, so the strengthening of rivaling national economic blocs to address this also entails zigzagging through a multiplicity of state capitalist modes of governance. We must not mistake this multiplicity for ideological alternatives to neoliberalism. An important effect of this shift is the strengthening of divisions between the working-class and other independent mass movements. The key for the left is to uncover new strategies for mobilization which are attuned to the pluralism of emerging social movements, whose ideological and organizational variegation mirror and resist the multiple forms of state capitalism.

The pandemic has plunged the world economy into its lowest levels of growth since the Second World War—creating a need for global ruling elites to once again diversify and reinvent new methods to restore economic profits. China did not sustain its high economic growth last year as consumption levels continued to wane and industrial profits fell. The declining rate of profit across decades, only temporarily revived in the early days of neoliberal financialization, continues to be fueled by the perennial crisis of overproduction on a global scale. This is paralleled by the general downward trend in the non-financial sectors' rate of profit in the US as well. There has not been another "long wave" of capitalist growth in decades—a reality further troubled by the pandemic—though we witness occasional and uneven booms spurred by economic policy adjustments.

The declining role of US hegemony

requires new corrective structures for different national ruling elites to perpetuate market accumulation to restore the rate of profit. As political economists Bastiaan van Appeldoorn and Naná de Graaff **observe**, this has led to "a reconfiguration of the various roles states play within and vis-à-vis (global) capital accumulation and capitalist markets," such that "both the US and the Chinese case show clearly how indeed the different roles of the state that we have identified, while potentially contradictory, can very well go hand-in-hand." In other words, it is not enough to say that we are tending toward a general rise in state-centric and authoritarian paradigms—we must recognize the diversity of their expressions as they actually exist. Or even further: precisely the *pluralistic and uneven* nature of state capitalisms lends new force to a new phase of capital accumulation.

Take how China's zero-COVID measures have bolstered the productivity of the country's capitalist enterprises as an example. While elements of the left have praised China's pandemic strategy as prioritizing people's lives over profits in the face of the virus, the reality shows that this is untrue—though its failures have not exactly manifested in the same way as in the US. Foxconn's Zhengzhou factory, the site of the world's largest iPhone production site, in concert with regional lockdown measures and with the approval of local government to justify a "closed-loop" **regime**, which forced workers to remain in the factory to continue working to meet Apple's production quotas. Furthermore, the CCP's strategy of forcibly transferring groups of people during the pandemic in the name of infection control not only led to people being vulnerable in more unsafe conditions, but also introduced new modes of exploitation. Hundreds of riot police were sent on behalf of Foxconn to suppress the workers when they protested, and the CCP sent party **cadres** to act as scabs for Foxconn's production line when not enough workers returned.

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While the CCP merely adopted many surveillance and anti-worker tactics from Western countries, the pandemic approach in the US framed a different reality of exploitation. With relaxed pandemic control measures and minimal economic protection for infected workers from the start, the US' strategy of allowing COVID to rip across communities created its own set of pressures on workers. This combines a classically American brand of necropolitical social negligence and the expansion of the police state. While working communities faced widespread decimation due to state failure, there still remains some space for sustainable independent self-organization, as evidenced by the growing waves of rank-and-file labor militancy.

These differences in state capitalist governance create opportunities for different regimes to develop their own ways of maximizing accumulation that draws from each state's distinctive political system and culture. The pandemic has given the Chinese state, under the guise of the party's paternalistic care for its citizens, an excuse to continue strengthening its surveillance and policing apparatus through the zero-COVID policy. The US, eager to allow life to return to a facade of normalcy where people's basic liberal freedoms are seemingly respected (spurred on by the anti-vaxxer, COVID-denialist far right) promises a new path to economic revival. Building on the Trump administration's "America First" domestic policy, Biden has encouraged a new era of domestic industrial rejuvenation, though as labor lawyer Naoki Fujita **points** out, this "overriding industrial policy has been to create a surplus of workers with minimal bargaining power." Biden's recent move to block a potentially historic railroad workers'

strike is a clear example of this.

And just as important for the ruling classes on both sides, emphasizing these differences in approach helps to divide the working class by stirring up nationalist sentiments. As the CCP has taken aim at the US' negligent pandemic control and faulty data, the US has lambasted the Chinese regime for its overly restrictive lockdown measures. The Biden administration's new restrictions on travelers from China take a page from Trump's playbook by renewing the targets on Chinese people's backs among Asian American communities in the US.

In this sense, one can understand the CCP's sudden reversal from its years-long zero-COVID regime not as a departure but as an adjustment toward a different logic of state capitalist accumulation in response to market trends. Just as it had imitated (and perfected) the West's road to capitalist industrialization, it is now attempting to do what the US has done at an even faster speed. As the Chinese government slashed funding for medical and healthcare infrastructure in favor of testing and lockdown regimes in recent years, hospitals and other social resources became rapidly stretched thin, especially in rural areas. This means that as death tolls climb, Chinese citizens are finding it even more difficult to get adequate medical care. In the week before Christmas, tens of millions were reportedly being infected daily.

The suddenness of the Chinese regime's turn to reopening should suggest that this will not be its last u-turn or policy shift. We must recognize the diversity of these public health strategies as ruling elites' tactical and contingent responses to preserve a common and central strategy of accumulation. As zero-COVID measures began to take a toll on the Chinese economy—with industrial production slowing, including Foxconn's profits, particularly after a wave of workers' resistance—the party elites decided to take the leap to abandon zero-COVID to recover a new path for capitalist growth and stimulate domestic consumption. And zero-COVID lockdown measures have led to growing local unrest in recent

years. The CCP has ample experience in neutralizing such scattered expressions of discontent, but abrupt nation-wide convergences, like the one that occurred in December 2022, threaten to give birth to the party-state's greatest fear: the people's mass politicization after decades of depoliticization, sustained by an organized movement, independent of the CCP's rule. While giving in to some of the people's demands can also risk the further consolidation of this movement—as the people begin to understand the collective power they have—the regime took its chances. Abolishing zero-COVID policies can satisfy the protestors' most immediate demand, potentially defusing the movement while giving the regime an opportunity to reverse stalling economic growth. As ruling elites continue to exhaust different options to restore the rate of profit, we can be sure to see the deployment of different state capitalist strategies. It is imperative not to mistake any of them as providing alternatives to the logic of accumulation, despite differences in form.

This multiplication of forms of state capitalism reinforces the fragmenting of resistance movements. The US establishment's weaponization of human rights abuses in China to stir up military funding has discouraged progressive and left-wing organizations from building solidarity with workers and mass movements in China and its peripheries. Asian American organizations, by and large, had little to say about the largest mass protests in China in years which took place early in December 2022. Chinese protestors, including workers, have few avenues of support in progressive and left-wing organizations abroad, especially as such relationships can often elicit severe charges of "foreign interference" from the state.

But despite their brevity, the mass protests in China produced a new awakening in political consciousness across communities, sectors, and identities. Local kinds of actions persist in the mainland—medical students from multiple Chinese cities have protested over inadequate working conditions in the past month. Feminist and LGBTQ+ activists have

been pivotal in the movement and in sustaining the momentum on the mainland and overseas. Overseas feminist activists have organized political education and other actions abroad, and are now spearheading one of the more prominent campaigns for a Chinese LGBTQ+ activist "Dianxin," who was detained for participating in the protests in Guangzhou.

Some initiatives are actively bridging the gap between Chinese activists and broader left-wing movements abroad. The US-based Apple Retail Union has recently released a statement in solidarity with Foxconn workers. A multi-city global solidarity protest for Foxconn workers had seen collaboration and support from various radical left organizations like Labour Movement Solidarity with Hong Kong in London, joined by United Tech & Allied Workers at Apple, and Black Flag in Sydney. Many Chinese international students were active organizers in the recent academic workers' strike on the University of California campuses—the largest of its kind in US history.

Indeed, geographical fragmentation and political diversity can frustrate efforts to articulate connections between these struggles. But this sprawling and uneven landscape of emerging movements can also be the seeds of something uniquely powerful, especially when we are faced with a ruling class whose interests and power span across borders. The rise of a new generation of Chinese youth militants, embedded in multiple and diverse movements, can powerfully synthesize lessons to organize a global left opposition around clear programmatic alternatives to state capitalism. This would inevitably entail building deeper ties and overlaps between Asian American, labor, socialist, feminist, and other movements.

Just like the plasticity of state capitalist regimes and initiatives, the open diversity of these movements might be exactly what is needed to build an anti-capitalist mass movement that can transcend the errors of past generations of the Chinese left: Han chauvinism, authoritarianism, sectarianism. But

pluralism does not mean ideological disunity or disorganization. We must converge on the basis of understanding that neither bourgeois democratic reforms nor adjustments within the existing authoritarian capitalist system can promote struggles for genuine democratic self-organization and practice. We must continue to act as a bridge between different local movements and a broad-based program for revolutionary change that incorporates insights and organizers

from different struggles. Different organizations can develop coalitions and parallel campaigns as we collectively model the political future we want to build: a genuinely socialist and democratic system in China and other regions in its periphery, where organizations of workers and other marginalized communities come together to plan the public health measures and other aspects of society and production they need without coercion.

Such a vision of society would be the antithesis of the ones promoted by both the US and Chinese capitalist elites. Just as they have found variegated methods to enact their values that privilege profits over people, from zero-COVID to “letting the virus rip,” we must build our own pluralistic movement to effectively combat the many faces of US, Chinese and other state capitalisms.

Source: [Lausan Collective](#).

Razem: Building a left alternative in Poland

11 January 2023, by **Zofia Malisz**

Could you tell us about Razem's history and politics?

Razem was formed in 2015 by a group of leftist activists with years of experience in the Polish green and feminist movements, along with members of the Young Socialists.

The impetus for creating a new party was two-fold.

One was the frustration that emerged under the liberal Donald Tusk government (2007–14). Whenever voices started to demand the government focus on social spending instead of cuts and privatisations, Tusk's response was to say Poland was still in its transformation stage [towards a market economy] and that now was not the time to build up a welfare state.

Frustration grew as neoliberal policies were implemented at breakneck speed to indulge business elites, while people were denied even modest social benefits and public services were being dismantled.

All this occurred as anti-austerity protests were taking place in Greece, something we supported and that inspired Razem.

The other major factor was the protests against the Iraq war and

against Poland's participation in the occupation of Afghanistan. Several activists who went on to build Razem came from these protest movements.

The revelations of alleged illegal US prisons in Poland used to torture al-Qaeda members created huge outrage. Seeing the Polish government bow down to US imperialism unchallenged — and in fact encouraged by the mainstream, including former Solidarność activists — fuelled frustration on the left.

Razem was formed as an expression of this anger and frustration that had built up during the transformation process.

This particularly still concerns the young. Unlike the old Communist establishment or the new liberal elites aligned with business, they did not get the opportunity to enrich themselves during the transformation period.

Entering professional life, let alone starting a family, has become — and still is — a very difficult thing if you are living precariously.

Our co-leaders Magda Biejat and Adrian Zandberg have been highlighting the housing situation, particularly as rent and real estate prices have risen dramatically.

Poland is also facing depopulation, with the abortion ban discouraging women from getting pregnant and high cost of living pressures, which prevent young people from starting an independent life.

In terms of Razem's politics, I would say one difference between Razem and much of the Western left is that we do not use ideologised language and instead communicate left values organically.

This is because, after the 1990s [with the fall of the Communist regime], even using the word “socialism” became problematic. There was a backlash that the right wing and neoliberals gladly exploited to discredit any ideas of a social state.

This happened despite the fact that Poland's socialist tradition is much older than the Eastern Bloc's existence and played a hugely significant and positive role in the building of the Polish independent state. Not to mention that, contrary to what conservative ideologues want you to believe, the ideals of Solidarność were socialist.

Razem was [also] inspired by the modern left approach adopted by Podemos, who demonstrated how to communicate socialist ideas in a different way.

[Podemos] showed that it was very important to find new ways to break up right-wing duopolies. In the case of Polish politics, we have a duopoly between the liberal and conservative right that dominates the scene.

We had to first bring back the left and insert left issues into the centre of Polish political debate. We had to bring back social protest and unionising into everyday Polish political practice — and we succeeded. These were our motivations.

Since then we have engaged in an, at times dramatic, fight for space on the terrain of this duopoly. The duopoly manifests itself as a war of right-wing tribes that is a source of sustenance to their elites. So it was vital for us to avoid the trap of engaging in empty arguments.

Polish liberals reduce every social-political question to whether this helps defeat the conservatives, and vice versa, while never considering any problems on its merit. The Polish people are tired of this ritualistic fighting.

They appreciate the fact that our six MPs instead focus on talking about the issues. Parliamentary speeches by Adrian Zandberg, are something of a hotly anticipated public event because they give a rare sense of getting real among all this ruckus. They resonate because there is anger and people want solutions and real action. And they know they can depend on us for those.

People value Razem MPs showing up early at a strike to support workers' demands and to facilitate bringing the entitled bosses to the table. This is where we were able to make a difference in several industrial actions in recent years.

Poland is often grouped as part of a conglomerate of far-right authoritarian countries in Eastern Europe. How accurate is this? What can you tell us about the current government?

The same year Razem was formed, a conservative Christian government was elected. They found that the key to winning was to offer something that

people wanted, some kind of social benefit — in this case a child allowance — but which the liberals had been refusing to give.

The conservative government only secured a majority because it incorporated social elements into their agenda.

Polish society, when asked about the policies they prefer, most often point to a form of social democracy with solid public services. The conservatives have exploited this need to their political benefit — but have clearly failed to deliver any comprehensive social agenda.

In any case, it is clear that to grab power they did not campaign on banning abortion or dismantling the judicial branch of the state. But right after they came to power, they attacked human rights and the state's institutions. They started stirring up culture wars in later campaigns, for example, scapegoating and harassing LGBT people.

Yes, these policies are supported by the Catholic Church. The conservative majority owes the Church huge favours — a lot of this stuff happens as a form of a clientelist exchange between the Church and the government. But these are not policies that have majority support.

Polls show the majority of the Polish people want legalisation of abortion and civil unions for same-sex couples. Polish society has been secularising dramatically in recent years. The conservatives have been losing this battle and the rabid reaction of fundamentalist groups embedded in the government's environment reflects this.

Unlike in Hungary, the Polish government has not been able to undermine the electoral system, and while attempts to take over the judiciary have been largely successful, they faced popular protest.

Moreover, due to the European Union's resistance to accepting these illegal reforms, the government has hit a wall of Polish EU-enthusiasm.

This is a major difference with Hungary: the government here was

not able to find an easy way around the fact that people won't support any hint of "Polexit".

Neither will Razem, by the way, as we believe the EU badly needs social and democratic reform, but that Poland should stay and contribute to fostering integration and partnership on the continent.

This fact about Poland being pro-European integration helped defeat the government's attacks on our checks and balances.

The result was that all the Orbanite moves the government did, including the persecution of women and LGBT people, sparked a wave of unprecedented protest. The protests against the abortion ban were huge and spanned all levels of society.

This caused a dramatic dip in the polls and the conservatives are unlikely to win a parliamentary majority in this year's elections.

As to the idea of Eastern Europe as essentially authoritarian and full of far-right nationalists, I would say this is the result of decades of dismissing Eastern Europe agency. It is often the default, convenient portrayal in the media that flatters egos in the West.

We all know what trouble Western European countries are in regarding right-wing threats, look at Italy or France with [Giorgia] Meloni and [Marine] Le Pen, or the recent plot by German extremists to overthrow the system.

But somehow the global media and Russian propaganda manage to draw exclusive attention to right-wing authoritarian tendencies in Eastern Europe, obscuring the fact that there are left movements and a progressive civil society, and disregarding the emancipatory and democratising impulse that is well alive in the people. This contributes to the image of Eastern Europe as an especially conservative backwater, hostile to progressive ideas, which is not really the case and certainly is not a constant.

Of course, there are elements of this, but it is being incredibly exaggerated in the West, including within the

Western left. Look at Slovenia with Levica, Croatia with Mozemo, Latvia with Progresīvie or Poland with Razem, and you will discover inspiring left movements implementing progressive change in their country and municipal politics — and there will be more surprises like that in the future which should be acknowledged.

Particularly regarding Ukraine, it is vital movements such as Social Movement are supported in the context of resistance and rebuilding after Russian aggression is defeated.

How did Razem respond to Putin's invasion of Ukraine? Why does Razem insist on the need to come to grips with Russian imperialism?

Razem had no doubts about how to react given our countries' common historic experience with Russian imperialism. We had absolutely no doubts that this invasion represented an existential threat to Ukraine, that there could be no compromise, and that our party's reaction was crucial.

Unfortunately, we were very disappointed with progressive organisations, including ones that at the time we belonged to, that kept silent right up to and after the invasion, and even after the Bucha massacre.

This was disappointing but also, I admit, we may have been a bit blind to an obvious tendency that exists within part of the left to overemphasise US imperialism while letting Russian imperialism off the hook. It quickly became clear a big part of that left is not able to accept what for us are two existential issues: that Ukraine is a sovereign state and that there is such a thing as Russian imperialism.

In contrast, representatives of the left in Poland (Razem), Finland (Left Alliance), Lithuania (Left Alliance), Czech Republic (Alliance For The Future; The Left) and Romania (Democracy and Solidarity Party) met in Warsaw on March 8 with representatives of Ukrainian left organisation Social Movement to listen to them and ask them what they needed. The Danish left (Red-Green Alliance) was not present at the meeting but later indicated their

support.

It became clear that we should campaign, first, to support the left and Ukraine's armed resistance. This was done against considerable pushback from the so-called anti-war movement in imperial or post-imperial Western societies.

We often found that Ukrainian leftists had to fight even for their right to speak at events organised by the Western left. So this was a struggle and remains a vital point: to assert the existence and amplify the voice of the Ukrainian left. Their voice, once heard, inevitably cuts through all propaganda smokescreens — they lead a righteous fight for self-determination against an imperialist aggressor, no doubt about it.

Since then, the unity initiated in Warsaw has extended to other Nordic and Central European left parties, and more recently to left groups in the Balkans. We are building a network to share information not only about our common experience with regards to Russian imperialism but also regarding the process of harsh neoliberal transformation in states of the former Eastern Bloc.

Together with Social Movement and other allies such as the Portuguese Left Bloc or the Swedish Left Party we also launched a campaign to cancel Ukraine's debt, which is restricting Ukraine's war efforts and the ability to maintain its economy afloat. We have had some successes: a bill has been passed in the US House of Representatives calling on the US government to influence lenders on behalf of Ukraine, and the issue has also been raised in the UK and European parliament.

This is a campaign we hope to build on as an example of concrete solidarity and outward campaigning. We prefer to offer concrete solidarity, work with parties, trade unions and movements that are accountable to voters, members and the public.

Debates on realist geopolitics regarding multipolarity perhaps drive book sales, Twitter likes and invitations to panel debates, but they do not help the Ukrainian people who

fight off genocidal aggression of a neighbour who waging on neocolonialism in the 21st century.

How do you view the issue of NATO expansionism?

We are clear that the influence of Western militarism is not welcome in Poland. But we recognise that we are in a complex situation. Unlike the left that operates in the heart of an empire, the left in our part of Europe cannot afford to take a purely ideological stance that is divorced from the security realities of the peoples of our region.

On the one hand, given the lack of a proper European security architecture, NATO currently represents the only guarantee of protection for Polish citizens. The vast majority of Poles want this protection, because they know the threat Russian imperialism poses. That is why I do not think that we can honestly talk about NATO expansionism in our region. Instead, what we had was countries desperately applying to join NATO in the 1990s, while the US was initially not so favourable to us joining.

For people in our region, Russian expansionism is the existential threat. And it is Russia that is expanding towards and across our region — by invading Ukraine.

If you look honestly at the history of NATO-Russia relations regarding Europe, you will see it was Russia who regularly step forward first with the will to escalate.

Politically, you can speak of appeasement regarding Western European policy towards Russia in recent decades. Militarily, regarding troop and weapon deployments, you cannot speak of provocation.

On the other hand, Razem has actively opposed any Polish participation in NATO's contemptuous, hardly legal, interventions, such as in Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, etc. Any arbitrary action that is motivated by primitive extractionism or forced upon the alliance members via political pressure from the US is for us the true meaning of "NATO expansionism".

And we oppose it.

We are also clear that such actions have only emboldened Russia, and provided it with precedents to carry

out its own brazen imperialist actions.

Razem is aware that there are several imperialisms at play in our part of Europe and that we cannot afford to take sides supporting one imperialism

over another.

10 January 2023

Source **Green Left**, 10 January 2023.

Far Right Politicians Become a Power in the U.S. Congress

10 January 2023, by **Dan La Botz**

Twenty far-right Republicans paralyzed the U.S. Congress for five days by refusing to support Republican leader Kevin McCarthy—himself quite reactionary—speaker of the House, thus denying him a majority of House members. Without a speaker, the House was unable to do anything: It couldn't seat new members, establish committees, or pass legislation. The impasse ended on January 6 when on the fifteenth round of voting McCarthy made several more concessions to the rightwing bloc giving them disproportionate power.

All of McCarthy's Republican opponents have extreme rightwing records. Today they form the legislative stormtroopers of former president Donald Trump who, as the House's investigation proved, led the attempted violent insurrection in January 2021. Several of the twenty were involved from Congress in supporting the legislative aspect of the coup. Twelve of them support former president Donald's Trump's false claims, denying the results of the 2020 presidential election that was won by President Joe Biden. Fifteen of them voted to overturn the Electoral College results of the 2020 election. Seventeen of them were endorsed by Trump. Nineteen of them are members of the ultra-right House

Freedom Caucus (to which about 20 percent of all Republican representatives belong). A couple of them have spoken before white nationalist organizations. Now these twenty out of 434 representatives hold key levers of power.

McCarthy conceded to his opponents effective control of several congressional committees, though they don't have a majority. And he gave them the power to call to overturn the speaker at any time. The rightwing bloc will now be able to paralyze such essential legislative processes as the passage of the federal budget and the setting of the limits of the federal debt.

Other rightwing groups have had an influence on Congress in the past. From the 1950s to today, the John Birch Society, a far right, anti-Communist group, has had thousands of members and a significant influence in the Republican Party. Larry McDonald, a U.S. Representative from Georgia was elected the national leader of the John Birch society in 1983, though he died that same year in an airplane crash. In the 1950 and 60s, many conservative Republican leaders criticized the Birch society for its extremism.

The last time the United States saw violent, rightist politicians in Congress

was in the heyday of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s to the 1940s. The Klan of the 1920s was not only anti-Black, but also anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish. The Klan was involved in violent attacks on Black people, including lynchings, it also became a force in the Democratic Party. Several Klan members or fellow travelers were elected as Democrats to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House, to governorships, and to state and local offices

Some 11 Klansmen elected to the U.S. Senate, while five others were supported by the Klan. The Klan also elected several U.S. representatives and six governors in this period. Most of these Klan politicians came from the Deep South, but others were senators or governors from Oklahoma, Colorado, and Oregon. During the 1960s, while Klansmen terrorized the Black civil rights movement, Klan legislators worked to block civil rights legislation but they failed, beginning in 1964. Some of them remained members of Congress into the 1980s.

Today's rightwing movement is even larger and more widespread than the Klan was. We will have to resist this danger on the right everywhere.

Source *New Politics* -> <https://newpol.org/far-right-politicians-become-a-power-in-the-u-s-congress/>.

The Brazilian Capitol: confronting the fascists, no truce no amnesty

9 January 2023, by **Israel Dutra**

We had episodes of violence in Brasilia, even in December, when Lula's inauguration was followed by the arrest of Bolsonaroists with explosives, thwarting a plan of alleged attack; the encampments in front of the barracks then followed - in the DF, this was not repressed; and as it announced, the culminating act was the "assault" on the Three Powers, which after three hours, was reversed, resulting in about 300 arrested in flagrante. The mob left a trail of destruction, damaging works of art, destroying rooms and enclosures, a typical action of the Lumpens, as defined by Marx, marginal, unskilled sectors, who can serve as "cannon fodder" for the reactionary elites.

The leniency on the part of the Federal District government was clear, not only by the appointment of the coup-plotter Anderson Torres as head of security, but by the work as a whole. The Ibaneis Rocha government (MDB) had a role of omission in the repression of the "hallucinated" march of the Bolsonaroists, which was announced to the four winds, with a hundred buses arriving in Brasilia.

Correctly, by taking control of the situation, Lula took measures such as federal intervention in DF, spoke on national television denouncing the coup plotters, calling them "fanatical fascists", and blaming Bolsonaro, whom he referred to as "genocidal", for the incidents. Lula's position came at the right time, since Flávio Dino, Minister of Justice, was slow to take measures, even knowing that the actions of the coup plotters were being announced "in the open". Furthermore, the inertia of José Múcio at the head of the Ministry of Defence was clear, who during the week called the gatherings in front of the HQs "legitimate", stating that he had relatives and friends inside the camps

- which is inadmissible to combat the extreme right.

The need for a harder speech, like Lula's, expresses that there is no way to equate the struggle against the coup plotters with giving ground to them and their supporters, inside and outside the Armed Forces. Mucio adopted a line of conciliation with the Bolsonaroist radicals. That line has failed completely. And to the extent that the minister of the Secretariat of Communication, Paulo Pimenta, says that it is likely that there was cooperation between those responsible for the security of the Planalto and the Congress, Múcio's permanence in the post becomes untenable.

Moreover, the Armed Forces have also weakened in the eyes of the people, showing themselves to be incapable of defending the interests of the country. This only puts us further in need of making policy on the low and middle ranks of the different security forces in the country. Moraes had more courage and was right to remove Governor Ibaneis Rocha for 90 days.

The international community was unanimous in condemning Bolsonaroism and the coup plotters. The main countries of the world, including right-wing rulers, publicly communicated their rejection of the coup plotters. The different entities and associations of civil society promptly came out to express their condemnation of what had happened.

The need to go out to the streets was answered with a call for action on Monday 9th January in all the capitals of the country. We need to swell the ranks of these acts, expanding and convincing people to take to the streets, in a popular statement of rejection to the coup attitudes, the defence of the result of the ballot box

and the legitimacy of Lula's government.

This is done by relying on the strength of the streets, with the popular organization, with the need to massify the acts and prepare their organization, with their methods, self-defense and democratic spaces to mobilize and convene the calendar of struggles and actions. The street actions must have a democratic and broad character, as a unity of action with all democratic sectors.

And this opens a new chapter in the struggle against Bolsonaroism, in the scope of the mass movement, in which we need to dialogue with those who voted for Bolsonaro.

In addition to the immediate response, we need to go further and take action to undo the coup agents, put them behind bars and begin to nip the evil in the bud, taking advantage of the enormous rejection in all layers of Brazilian society and even in the international community. This means deepening the breaking of the secrecy about involved, the arrest of the financiers and others involved.

Measures must be taken immediately. Arrest the Bolsonaroist leaders, revoke the parliamentarians who collaborated, as well as advance investigations into figures like Carla Zambelli and Allan dos Santos, in addition to those responsible locally for the caravans, who have already begun to be identified.

We join deputy Alejandra Ocasio-Cortez's request to extradite Bolsonaro. This would be the first step towards his arrest, a fundamental task that the PSOL already requested last week. Arresting Bolsonaro is a necessary step, as an axis of agitation. We have also advocated a CPI, in DF and in the Federal Chamber, to

broaden the investigations, combined with the definitive impeachment of Ibaneis.

We continue to call for international solidarity and organize protests in the

streets, with our parliamentarians, evoking the anti-fascist struggle. Today we will take to the street demonstrations the banner that there will be no pardon for genocidaires and coup plotters. Without amnesty and with the maximum democratic

mobilization.

9 January 2023

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from **Revista Movimento**.

USA in Africa: the return

8 January 2023, by **Paul Martial**

From 13 to 15 December 2022, the Biden administration organized a US-Africa summit. All the leaders of the African Union (AU) member countries were invited. Missing were the presidents of Sudan, Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea-Conakry, whose countries are suspended from the AU because of a coup. The leaders of Eritrea and Western Sahara were not invited as they do not have diplomatic relations with the US. The last such summit was held during the Obama era. It was therefore a matter of the White House making up for lost time.

Being in the race

While Joe Biden denied that the summit was intended to compete with other imperialist powers in Africa, especially those considered adversaries - Russia and China - this does not fool anyone. Washington is paying for its disinterest in Africa since 2000, highlighted by Trump's diplomatic finesse in considering some African states as "shithole countries".

In the military sphere, the US has only furnished minimum service, notably in Somalia, by helping the Somali and Kenyan armies with drone strikes

against the Shebabs. In West Africa, it willingly lets the French army try to secure the region against the various jihadist groups.

As for economic exchanges with Africa, they are at half mast. From 142 billion dollars in 2009, it will only be 64 billion in 2021.

At the same time, Russia is advancing its position thanks to its exports, which are considered strategic for the African powers. These include wheat and fertilisers, as well as arms, which are often accompanied by military treaties. China, on the other hand, is pursuing its "Silk Road" project with trade that has reached \$254 billion, four times more than the US.

A catch-up summit

Well aware of these economic gaps, but also of the distancing of many African countries from the West, the US has put new proposals on the table. Firstly, a commitment to renovate the AGOA (African Growth and Opportunity Act), which allows African products to be exempt from taxes. In reality, this law dating from 2000 has only favoured less than 10%

of trade with the continent. On the other hand, Biden is very interested in the African Free Trade Area (AFTA), which will open up a market of more than one billion people. 2.5 billion dollars will be made available to fight food insecurity. This spending is part of the \$55 billion provisioning over three years.

This money is supposed to help with the four items outlined in the Biden administration's roadmap: fostering open societies capable of "countering the damaging activities of the People's Republic of China, Russia, and other actors"; improving security and democracy; fostering economic opportunity; and helping with the climate transition. Like all Western leaders for years, Joe Biden said at the summit that he would work to ensure that the African Union is a member of key international structures, including the G20 and the UN Permanent Security Council.

A lot of promises, then, which even if fulfilled would have little positive impact on the people.

5 January 2023

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

Social Movement (Ukraine): Looking back at

2022

7 January 2023, by **Sotsialnyi Rukh**

Humanitarian Aid

The war determined the main directions of Social Movement's activity. The first priority was to help the victims of Russian aggression, as well as those who stood up to defend their homeland. Starting with sporadic humanitarian work, we have established regular and systematic activities to support the Ukrainian military and people affected by the war, especially in the frontline regions. In addition, Social Movement participated in the organization of more than 10 humanitarian convoys of foreign trade unions and leftist organizations. The received aid was sent to Zaporizhzhia, Kryvyi Rih, Mykolaiv and other frontline cities. For the most effective assistance and protection of Ukraine, Social Movement joined with other progressive groups including Feminist Workshop, Solidarity Collectives, Bilkis and many others. Social Movement activists successfully raised funds, sourced and delivered military equipment for soldiers, generators for medical workers, successfully raised funds for Starlink and much more. Regular trips to the regions with the necessary assistance became regular. In particular, Social Movement helped many families to organize a stable source of water and electricity in Mykolaiv. SR activists joined the ranks of the TRO and the Armed Forces, where they still serve, created innovative navigation systems for army drones and provided soldiers with everything they needed to bring victory closer.

International Solidarity

The full-scale war put Ukraine in the center of international attention. For Social Movement, 2022 was marked by the struggle against pseudo-pacifist

ideology, whose proponents opposed the support of Ukraine. We did our best to unite left and progressive movements around the demands for full diplomatic support for Ukraine, effective and serious sanctions against the Russian Federation and the provision of all the necessary weapons for the complete victory of Ukraine. Social Movement activists established contacts with most of the influential left and green parties on all continents, prepared 100+ texts and interviews for an international audience - both on left-wing platforms (Jacobin, The Real News Network) and in mass media (Guardian, BBC, Business Insider, Elle, Mirror Weekly and others). Three international conferences were held. Our activists travelled to Great Britain, Ireland, Finland, Brazil, Germany, Poland, Georgia, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and other countries to promote the demands of support for Ukraine. Online lectures on Ukraine were held for the residents of Hong Kong and Korea. Without exaggeration, Social Movement has become the face of the Ukrainian left movement in the world. We managed to organize students around the world to support Ukraine and participate in the formation of the European Network of Solidarity with Ukraine (ENSU) and the US Solidarity Network.

Campaign for the Cancellation of International Debt

The most prominent expression of international solidarity was the international campaign led by Social Movement for the cancellation of Ukraine's foreign debt. The campaign resulted in its temporary suspension. From the first weeks of the war, Social Movement, together with the Polish left-wing party Razem, promoted the

demand for the cancellation of Ukraine's foreign debt in order to increase the country's defence capacity and a fair future that will not be dominated by huge repayments. We spoke in the Polish and later British parliaments, and raised the issue in most national parliaments in Europe through left-wing parties that endorsed the demands for debt cancellation and support for Ukraine. During the campaign, Social Movement established contacts with well-known financiers and economists in international institutions, NGOs and ruling left-wing parties such as the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland or the Left Alliance in Finland. Working with Democratic Members of Congress resulted in a bill committing the U.S. to advocate for a foreign debt freeze. Thanks to Social Movement, the foreign debt of approximately UAH 1800 billion was frozen for two years. This is a huge achievement, but our campaign will not stop there.

Resistance to "War Neoliberalism"

Despite the war, the Ukrainian authorities decided to continue the course of neoliberalization of the economy, which naturally led to the deterioration of the situation of ordinary citizens. Social Movement conducted powerful campaigns against the adoption of anti-labour laws and for the resignation of their main lobbyist in the Verkhovna Rada, MP Galina Tretiakova. A "Black List of Employers" was created, identifying those which abused the vulnerable position of workers due to the war. A lot of analytical materials were published on the causes and possible consequences of the attack on labor rights during the war. Social Movement emphasized and emphasizes that war is not the time for harmful socio-economic

experiments. Tax cuts for the wealthiest part of the population have contributed to social instability, shifting of responsibility and unequal contribution of different social strata to the victory. In the absence of targeted social assistance, civil society was forced to play the role of the state and to take over almost all social functions. State policy in the socio-economic sphere has led to decline, social inequality, and sometimes to undermining of defense capabilities. Social Movement solidarizes with the theses of economists of the London School of Economics and Adam Tooze: this war should not be a place for ideological experiments and promotion of inequality policy.

Legal Assistance

In order to protect workers from abuse by employers, the #LABOUR project was created, within the framework of which free legal aid was provided to more than 80 employees. The process of applying for help was greatly simplified thanks to the development of a telegram bot. Human rights activity was marked, among other things, by victories in court in the cases of Vyacheslav Manchuk, a railway worker from Vinnytsia region (moral compensation was recovered in favor of the plaintiff as a victim of an accident) and Lyudmyla Puha, a nurse from Poltava region (the plaintiff was reinstated at work and her earnings for the period of forced absence were recovered in her favor). Dozens of people managed to achieve results in pre-trial proceedings. Social Movement also published and popularized a manual on the protection of the right to remuneration, which aimed to increase the legal literacy of workers.

Our activists also won two courts against the police in connection with an unlawful detention on January 19, 2021. Despite the war, Social Movement is an organization that continues to engage in human rights activities.

Strengthening

Trade Unions

During 2022, Social Movement actively supported the trade union movement in Ukraine: including supporting the protests of ambulance doctors in Kyiv as well as the protest of crane operators in Lviv region. For activists from the NGO "Be like Nina" a report on staff reductions in view of changes in labor legislation was prepared. Social Movement activists and trade union organizers helped to organize an international meeting of crane operators from Ukraine, Poland and Israel. Social Movement actively cooperated with members of the KVPU, FPU and other trade unions to provide humanitarian aid, legal and political support. At the moment, we are helping to defend the demands of trolleybus drivers from Kyiv and Kharkiv, as well as nurses from Clinical Hospital #15 in the Podil district of Kyiv.

Education

Despite technical difficulties, Social Movement activists organized online seminars and events on the theory and practice of trade union organizing, energy policy, the political foundations of Ukrainian resistance, and other themes. The regular annual conference "Feuerbach 11" was organized with the participation of Social Movement activists and the magazine "Spilne" (Commons), to discuss the challenges of post-war reconstruction of Ukraine. Numerous analytical and popular scientific materials were published on housing and economic policy, prospects of peace negotiations, theory of Marxism and socialism, post-capitalist society, the history of the Ukrainian and world left, and analysis of Russian imperialism. Based on the results of a survey on mental health during the war, an article was published with tips on how to preserve mental health. The war did not prevent the regular "Left Perspectives" educational event which was attended by more than 80 participants, where Social Movement activists made various presentations.

Media Work

The media work of the organization has reached a new level. We have been actively mastering new social platforms. Social Movement has a Twitter account, which has already gained more than a thousand subscribers, videos have been made for YouTube and TikTok. Numerous printed materials were developed and distributed, including brochures, manuals, memos, and stickers. Master classes on design of political posters and stencils were held. The work of Katya Grytseva, who made considerable efforts to form the visual style of the organization, received well-deserved international recognition including several exhibitions in France.

Public Actions

The full-scale invasion temporarily put street activism on hold, but the war did not hinder democratic processes. During the year, a number of successful actions were held, including against the destructive "optimization" of the Academy of Printing in Lviv, a flash mob for the day of action for decent work and actions against sexism. Together with the feminist organization Bilkis, Social Movement opposed the campaign of disinformation and intimidation led by right-wing radical MP Ihor Sholtis.

Development of Regional Branches

During the year the number of members of Social Movement increased significantly. The Lviv branch grew, its activists took part in actions, organized public lectures on labor rights and creative workshops, mobilized progressive students, etc.

Resistance to Authoritarian Tendencies and

Chauvinism

The war increases the risks of growing popularity of right-wing views and hate propaganda. Even before the war, Social Movement supported women's and LGBTQ+ groups and advocated for the early ratification of the Istanbul Convention. We also condemned discriminatory trends in Ukrainian legislation, such as the adoption of new migration laws or

chauvinistic statements by some MPs. At the end of 2022, Social Movement supported the campaign against Law 7633 (censorship of scientific sources on the basis of language), which quickly attracted the attention of Ukrainian scientists and received considerable support from the scientific community around the world.

2022 was a difficult year for all of us.

We hope that 2023 will be better. We will work just as hard for a social, independent and just Ukraine, and we wish everyone security, victory and social progress in the new year.

Source:

<https://rev.org.ua/pidsumki-2022/>

Translated from Ukrainian using Deepl and proofread by AN for [European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine](#).

Immigration Crisis Continues, Causing Suffering for Millions

6 January 2023, by **Dan La Botz**

The current crisis began in March of 2020, the Trump administration, claiming it was fighting the COVID pandemic, issued a public health order based on a longstanding law called Title 42, Section 265, originally adopted in 1944 to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, but not to enforce immigration restrictions.

Beginning in March 2020, Title 42 was used to turn away refugees seeking asylum and refusing to allow them into the United States to present their case. Asylum is generally offered to people who fear violence in their home country because of their religion, political opinion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity and whose governments will not protect them. Under Title 42 asylum-seekers were now pushed back into Mexico where they waited in cities like Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez in squalid, dangerous, and unhealthy conditions. All of this violates both U.S. immigration law and the United Nations convention on immigration.

While Title 42 exacerbated the U.S. immigration crisis, it did not create it. The crisis has existed for decades. At the southern border with Mexico every year about one million—more recently closer to two million—are refused entry. Some migrants attempting to enter the United States

die in the Arizona desert, some 221 in 2021, while about one a day drown in the Rio Grande River. Coyotes who move the migrants across entire nations and then across the border charge thousands of dollars, and sometimes rob, rape, or abandon the migrants. In June of 2022 authorities found 51 migrants dead in a truck near San Antonio, Texas, not the only time such a thing has happened.

Throughout the nineteenth century and until the end of the twentieth, the majority of the American people prided themselves on their country as a refuge for both economic migrants and refugees seeking asylum. School children memorized the poem by Emma Lazarus written on the Statue of Liberty that stands in New York's harbor:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your
teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-
tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden
door!

There were, of course, always anti-immigrant organizations and politicians, and periodic waves of anti-immigrant hysteria, but in general Americans saw themselves as a nation of immigrants still welcoming others.

The political right turn of the 1980s began to change that attitude as Republican politicians claimed that immigrants were taking American jobs, threatening American identity, and bringing dangerous ideologies such as Islamic fundamentalism. In his 2016 campaign for president Trump sowed fear, saying of immigrants, "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." He vowed to build a wall at the Mexican border to keep them out while privately he talked of shooting border-crossers.

The immigration crisis has largely been caused by U.S. foreign policies and neoliberal economic policies everywhere, especially in Central America, where they have devastated national economies, and brought to power violent, authoritarian, rightist governments linked to drug cartels. Now climate change also forces farmers from their lands and drives them to migrate.

The Democrats have put forward proposals for more humane border policies, but with Republican opposed,

they are paralyzed. Some on the left call for an open border, but there is no

support for that in the society at large. Clearly, we need a new immigration rights movement.

Latest Situation of Flood affected areas and the need for relief & rehabilitation in Pakistan and our Relief Efforts

5 January 2023, by **Farooq Tariq**

The heavy monsoon rains from mid-June to September resulted in flash floods and standing water across Pakistan, causing human and livestock casualties as well as widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure.

While floodwaters have receded in many areas, large parts of Sindh and eastern Balochistan remain underwater and will likely remain so for several months to come. The standing floodwater and secondary impacts are resulting in an increase in water-borne diseases, unsanitary conditions, and rising malnutrition rates.

At the same time, water infrastructure has incurred significant damage and the flood-affected health system is impaired in addressing and mitigating the risk of a major public health crisis.

Concurrently, with the onset of winter, the affected population – both displaced and otherwise – requires assistance to prepare for the cold weather. The number of damaged and destroyed houses in Pakistan now exceeds 2 million, with over 1.2 million houses damaged and over 805,000 houses destroyed as of 23 September.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has recorded over 1,600 deaths and more than 12,850 injuries since mid-June, including 579 children killed and over 4,000 children injured. Some 7.9 million people are reportedly displaced due to the heavy rains and floods, including some

598,000 people who are living in relief camps, according to reports by the respective Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) of the affected provinces.

Reports indicate that more than 5,000 schools are currently being used to host displaced populations, while an estimated 23,900 schools have been damaged. Cases of watery diarrhoea, typhoid and malaria are a growing concern, with many people living in unsanitary conditions in temporary shelters, often with only limited access to basic services.

Initial reports of outbreaks of vector-borne and waterborne diseases have been received from parts of Balochistan and Sindh. Pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children under age five represent the most vulnerable at-risk groups, with estimates indicating that at least 83,000 flood-affected women are pregnant and due to give birth in the coming months.

Assessments indicate that some 1,460 health facilities and their contents are damaged, further limiting people's access to health services, while damage to 349 refrigerators and solar direct drive systems have reportedly resulted in disrupted vaccine cold chains.

In A preliminary assessment by the UN Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) comparing satellite data from 8 to 14 September to data from 15 to 21 September indicates that similar to a week ago, many districts in Sindh, two

in Balochistan and one in Punjab were affected by increasing floodwaters. Floodwaters appear to be stagnating or receding in many other parts of the country, although in Sindh increasing floodwater was again observed in Jamshoro, Malir Karachi, Thatta, Tando Allahyar, Mirpur Khas, Umer Kot, Tharparkar and Sujawal districts, and increasing floodwater was also observed in Gwadar and Lasbela districts in Balochistan and in Khushab district in Punjab.

The following areas need immediate relief response:

Food Security and Agriculture Needs:

- Targeted unconditional food assistance for the most vulnerable households.
- Conditional food/cash assistance to rehabilitate or create the infrastructure necessary for specific livelihood activities (e.g., irrigation channels, fishing boats, rural roads) or community services (e.g., health facilities).
- Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) for restoration of livelihood opportunities, including livelihood diversification activities (training on alternative income-generating activities).
- Protection of remaining livestock through provision of feed and vaccinations against Peste des petits ruminants (PPR), foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and haemorrhagic

septicaemia (HS).

- Provision of seeds and fertilizers for cultivation of important vegetable crops and support for the restoration of affected cropped areas and livelihoods ahead of the upcoming agriculture cropping season.

- Rehabilitation of damaged animal shelters and rehabilitation and desilting of critical sections of irrigation channels.

Health Needs:

- Early recovery and resilient restoration of health services.

- Essential medicines and equipment to set up emergency triage, including medical tents, mosquito nets, beds, facemasks and hand sanitizers outside health facilities.

- Mitigation of the risk of outbreaks of communicable/infectious diseases, particularly in camps and where WASH facilities have been damaged.

- Prevention of transmission of diseases in camps and communities through information and hygiene campaigns.

Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee, Labour Education Foundation and Crofter Foundation call on the international community for consolidated efforts of relief and rehabilitation in Pakistan.

Our Relief efforts

Labour Education Foundation, a member organisation of Labour Relief Campaign through its countrywide network collected data of daily-wagers, labourers, peasants (haris), and home-based workers belonging to the flood-hit districts and after consultations with representatives from the affected areas planned urgent interventions to counter the developing humanitarian crisis through whatever means available at

hand.

Larkana, Shikarpur and Khairpur districts were selected from Sindh province, Qila Abdullah from Balochistan, Dera Ghazi Khan from South Punjab, and Charsadda and Mardan districts from KP province for the planned interventions.

These interventions included distribution of cash grants to meet immediate needs, provision of winter bedding and warm clothes in view of the approaching harsh winters, arranging medical camps for treating those flood victims suffering from mosquito-bite and water-borne diseases, provision of fertilizer to the farmers, repairing irrigation channels damaged in the floods, and installing solar water-pumps meant for drinking water.

So far cash grants at the rate of Rs5,000 per person have been given to 600 most vulnerable flood victims. The amount was increased to Rs10,000 for around 156 women victims from Sindh's Khairpur district as an overwhelming majority of them were widows.

At least 600 people have been given blankets or sets of quilts plus mattresses, while warm clothes and jackets were provided to around 1000 people and children.

To provide healthcare to the victims, so far 11 medical camps, including one for skin diseases, have been organized where disease diagnosis facilities and medicines were also offered free of cost.

A solar water-pump is being installed in Qila Abdullah, while another one is under planning for Shikarpur. An irrigation channel is also being repaired in Shikarpur to benefit around 1,000 small farmers.

2nd January 2023

Farooq Tariq

General secretary

Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee

To send donations via ESSF

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93100 Montreuil

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Call for solidarity actions with anti-war activists in Russia

4 January 2023, by **Russian Socialist Movement (RSD)**

The murder of Markelov and Baburova became the culmination of the ultra-right terror of the 2000s, which killed hundreds of migrants and dozens of anti-fascists. For many years, while it was still possible, Russian activists held antifascist demonstrations and rallies on January 19 under the slogan "To remember is to fight!"

Today, when the Putin regime has invaded Ukraine and unleashed unprecedented repression against its own citizens who oppose the war, the date of January 19 takes on a new meaning. Back then the danger was posed by neo-Nazi groups, often acting with the connivance of the authorities.

Today, the ideology and practice of right-wing radicals have become the ideology and practice of the Russian regime itself, which is rapidly turning fascist over the course of its invasion of Ukraine.

Vladimir Putin is waging war not only against the Ukrainian people, but also against the Russian civil society resisting aggression. The brutal repressions hit, among other things, the left-wing movement: socialists,

anarchists, feminists, labor unionists.

Before the New Year, the most famous left-wing politician in Russia, the democratic socialist Mikhail Lobanov, was arrested and beaten. The platform "Nomination" he created united the anti-war opposition in the municipal elections in Moscow in September 2022.

Kirill Ukraintsev, the leader of the Courier labor union and a well-known left-wing video blogger, has been in custody since April. The reason for the arrest were the protests and strikes the couriers organized as they sought to improve their working conditions. A feminist, artist and anti-war activist Alexandra Skochilenko, who distributed anti-war symbols, faces a long prison term.

Six Anarchists – Kirill Brik, Deniz Aydin, Yuri Neznamov, Nikita Oleinik, Roman Paklin, Daniil Chertykov – were arrested in the so-called "Tyumen case." They were brutally tortured, seeking confessions in the preparation of sabotage.

Daria Polyudova, an activist of the Left Resistance group, was recently sentenced to nine (!) years in prison

for "calls to extremism." Leftist journalist Igor Kuznetsov has been in prison for a year now, accused of "extremism" for his anti-war and anti-Putin views.

This is a far from exhaustive list of Russian leftists recently imprisoned or persecuted for their beliefs. As Russian activists forced to leave Russia for political reasons, we ask our foreign comrades and all those who care to support the antifascist action on January 19 under the slogans:

No to Putin's war, fascism and dictatorship!

Freedom to all Russian political prisoners!

Solidarity with to Russian antifascists!

To remember is to fight!

We ask you to send us information about any solidarity actions during the week of January 19-24 – pickets, open meetings, online discussions, and even personal photos with posters – by e-mail at: rsdzoom@proton.me.

The Russian Socialist Movement

"Power Should Return to the People"

3 January 2023, by **Alexander Shubin**

– What historical analogies can help us understand our complex present and imagine our possible future?

Analogies can't prove any claims, but

the historical experience is certainly significant. Let's draw lessons from a century ago, when the tedious World War I eventually led to an across-the-board crisis, including the Civil War and economic collapse, from which the

country had to recover laboriously in the following years. At that time, Russia had to enter the course of modernization. After all these events, the shift was even more painful and sacrificial. We now also have to face

the challenge of post-industrial transition if we want to move forward and not collapse. The sooner we throw away phony imperialist ambitions and focus on the country's real internal problems, the more chances we will have to avoid absolute tragedy.

— How can the conflict possibly end, and what might Russia's postwar future look like?

Very soon after February 24, I predicted how everything would end. The goals of the so-called military operation cannot be achieved, there will be no victory, and the consequences for Russia can be as dire as for Ukraine. So far, this prognosis seems accurate. The repressive legislation makes it challenging even to discuss the issue. But events speak for themselves, so one can already talk about what will follow in the next historical period. Unfortunately, it will start in a cul-de-sac, with a frustrated population and empty pockets. We will have to painstakingly restore relations with our neighbors, who could not even imagine that destruction and murder on such a scale were possible in the region in the twenty-first century. But state officials, to preserve their power and property, will do anything to turn people against each other. Making up with European neighbors will be formidable, but it is too early to discuss a potential compromise. Although one can see its general outline, the parties involved will not take it seriously any time soon.

Today it is more pressing to think about how to build everyday life inside the country. People will have returned from the war with crippled psyches, poverty will worsen in the cities, and squalor will spread over the vast spaces given to us by history, which we, in the pursuit of imperial grandeur, could not take proper care of. Only a common task of putting our life in order based on new principles can save Russia from the mutual resentment of people who are left high and dry. Not on the old path of peripheral capitalism, which has exhausted itself and, in the current conditions, can only pull us into a fatal vortex. The ideal course should rely on post-industrial technologies and proper social relations. This can

provide a reasonably affordable way out of the country's crisis. We must turn our eyes to the issues inside the country, which can give everything for a happy life.

— Can the geopolitical situation within which the February catastrophe continues to unfold also be interpreted as a change in the world order, including the transition of international hegemony from the United States to China?

Geopolitical constructs focused on individual states wrestling over world hegemony no longer work in the twenty-first century since the states' economies are too intertwined. The processes we witness today in Russia, China, and the Middle East are episodes of the great crisis that started in 2008. This situation is reminiscent of the Great Depression of the 30s and its aftermath. Back then, the collapse of the capitalist "prosperity" of the 20s eventually led to a world war. The "Arab Spring," for example, did not bring about profound social transformation and can therefore happen again. We have also seen how deeply the pandemic disrupted the Western system. Military conflicts in the post-Soviet space and China's attempt to change its peripheral position in the economy through social consolidation and a coercive foreign policy can also be interpreted as part of this ongoing global process. But true hegemony requires more than GDP growth. We need a shift to more advanced social relations adequate to the post-industrial era. We need a strategy that the world can see as progressive and attractive.

By 2008 the globalized world no longer had a single leader, and the system gravitated toward extraterritoriality. Opposing elites could reside on neighboring streets in New York and Seoul, for example, cooperating and competing internationally. However, the crisis weakened and undermined the system of global capitalism. This setback will end with a regrouping of forces and strategies, not with China becoming the world's leader, as it lacks a clear blueprint for the people of the United States and the European Union. The

idea that there is a hegemonic state (or even three or four) is outdated and was adequate only for the beginning of the twentieth century. Now we live in a different period when Ukrainian politicians can influence German policies, Russian politicians can influence American ones, Chinese politicians can influence Russian ones, and so on. While upholding the values of the world order, today's U.S. leaders no longer have the ambition to rule directly over the world's elites. Instead, they want elites to think similarly to guarantee predictability, security, and successful business. China's elites do not seem to follow their mindset, which causes mutual mistrust and anxiety. While China was modernizing, there was a willingness to learn and adjust. With completed modernization, the state now claims to be the second center of a bipolar world. But from there to the decline of the United States, it is still a long way off. If the current crisis leads to revolutionary upheavals in the U.S. and the West in general, for example, this wave will also reach and devastate China. In my view, arguments about who rules over what country or some part of it are no longer valid in the twenty-first century. In terms of contemporary technology and culture, it no longer matters. For those who want to move beyond the frame of the Cold War, realizing the prospects of extraterritorial human interaction will help overcome territorial conflicts and nationalist attitudes.

— This said, we see that territorial conflicts are still ongoing. Does this mean that the project of globalization has reached a dead end? What can replace it?

International conflicts are a product of nation-building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when industrial society was forming. Globalization at the end of the twentieth century also developed within the framework of industrial society. Therefore, it could not overcome international conflicts and even aggravated them as borders were drawn to satisfy the interests of the elites. Since 2008, the crisis of globalization has spurred conflicts because elites, industrial in their origin, were regrouping. However, if the world restructures on a post-

industrial basis, the ground for international territorial conflicts will eventually disappear. You will be more likely to communicate with someone who lives hundreds or thousands of kilometers away than with your neighbor. The language used in a given territory is fundamental in an industrial society. In the future, however, it will no longer matter as people will be able to live with neighbors whose native language they don't understand. If you don't like your neighbors, you don't have to communicate with them. Because most jobs will be remote, you will be able to choose the circle of communication that you like from all the inhabitants of the planet, not just your fellow citizens. If people's communication moves into subcultures, united by common interests, national identity will lose meaning. Not very soon, but we will come to that.

— What are these subcultures? How do you imagine them?

People will be united by what is most precious to them. It can be a profession, a hobby, an ideological desire to change the world, a spiritual practice, or something else. I see the subculture as something similar to a trade union, a cooperative, and a club for sharing experiences.

— Russia is a multi-ethnic state. What should its policy toward different ethnic communities be to avoid conflicts and violation of rights?

We live in a country that recognizes its ethnic diversity. On paper, ethnic minorities are respected, especially since they are numerous. But in reality, the state is trying to unite the "Russian world." Why not the, say, Turkic world? And why, when discussing the history of our country, do politicians portray as something malicious the "Tatar-Mongol Yoke"? [note: This is the common name for the Mongol invasion of Kievan Rus' and the Grand Duchy of Moscow; the age of Mongol rule of the thirteenth to the fifteenth century] After all, Russia is the successor not only (and predominantly) to Rus' but also to the Golden Horde.

We should finally acknowledge that Russia is not equal to the Russian nation-state and that nationalism in any form (including the aspiration to lead the so-called "Russian world") is destructive. We must stop treating different ethnic groups as "minorities" and constructing privileges according to the region. Citizens must have full rights everywhere, and traditions must be respected not only in the territories assigned to specific ethnic groups but everywhere equally, from Murmansk to Vladivostok. I am talking about traditions compatible with universal values. They guarantee a citizen's right to live according to their cultural identity and those around him not to suffer if particular conventions are archaically associated with violence. Forcing traditions on anyone is unacceptable in contemporary society.

— What economic program for overcoming the post-war crisis do you think Russian society needs? And what can be done now?

First, it is clear that projects requiring significant budget expenditures will not work. As much as we'd like to fund the social sector, there will be a tremendous economic shortage under any outcome of the current conflict. In these challenging conditions, only a social shift can save the day. There must be a redistribution of profits within enterprises from owners and managers in favor of workers and guarantees of social rights. The capitalists must be first to tighten the purse strings. But as the crisis deepens, this won't be enough.

Life in overcrowded cities will become far more challenging. Since life in towns and villages is uncomfortable and financially precarious, people come to the big cities, particularly Moscow. But Moscow will also lose financial flows from global trade and the fossil fuels market. It will be necessary to organize life with modest expenditures. And for this, we have an advantage: a vast space where you can settle in with maximum comfort. Suppose work is remote, so people can live, for example, in technologically advanced buildings with a local energy supply (which does not exclude urban energy networks but will be more economical), 3D printers, providing

cheap household items and technologies, and hydroponic systems for growing crops. This way, self-sufficiency can be partially achieved. This is fantastic for cutting costs without sacrificing the quality of life. One can argue that these technologies are expensive, but once a personal computer, a printer, and a cell phone were luxuries. Now they are in the mainstream. If there is a demand for the technology, it becomes cheaper. And social demand can be formed not only through incentives from the state but also through social relations that make living convenient with these technologies.

Today the country's resources are concentrated in the hands of the ruling elites, primarily in Moscow and a few other cities, and people gravitate toward these resources in their pursuit of well-being. If resources remain local, people will live more or less evenly throughout the territory of Russia (maybe, except in places with harsh climates). We need decentralization of power to keep resources from being absorbed by the center. Russia should change from a de facto empire into a federation (incidentally, in line with the constitutional principles of the Russian Federation), with autonomous regions of equal rights and effective self-governance. Power should return to the people; the local authorities should make most decisions and allocate to the federal government as much as the people deem necessary. The management of the central authorities should be strictly limited to areas of common concern: civil rights; social and environmental standards; foreign policy and security within borders; the crime control. Everything else people can decide within their communities. In brief, I call this program "2S-2R": social transformation, self-government, regulation of the economy, and re-modernization on post-industrial principles.

— You often talk about post-industrial society, but your concept differs from that in textbooks. How do you understand it, and how can it be achieved?

There is no single point of view on this issue in textbooks. As the author of

one, I am sure of it. This is a broad topic, so I will answer briefly here. The reader can find out more in the published "[Informaliat Manifesto](#)" [in Russian]. There is a widespread belief that modern Western societies already live in a post-industrial era, but it is incorrect. To be considered post-industrial, a society must differ from traditional agrarian and modern industrial urban society; otherwise, it is not "post-." Industrial society is based on hierarchy, top-down management, and narrow specialization of a worker, who functions as an instrument in an organization and production cycle. The contemporary world is still primarily organized according to this principle: "You're the boss; I'm the fool." Instead, post-industrial society should be entirely different, not hierarchical but self-governing and horizontal. People's activities will not be functional but predominantly creative. The social division into ruling and laboring classes will die, and the primary social strata of the future, which I call the "informaliat," will combine creative, organizational tasks with the realization of the idea: "I decided, so I did it." Automation and self-sufficiency can provide for this social arrangement, and creative human activity will dominate over "labor" that implements other people's ideas.

Post-industrial society is also post-capitalist, essentially socialist in the original, pre-Stalin sense. Many movements and organizations that raised the red flag were not organized according to socialist principles: they

were hierarchical and authoritarian. Genuine socialism is a society of equality, self-government, self-organization, and creativity, i.e., post-industrial.

Today, thanks to computer and information technologies and a new level of communication, we can begin the transition to the society that humanists, socialists, and futurists of the past were dreaming of. But this also requires a transformation in consciousness, a cultural revolution. We need to stop clinging to the old fetishes of wealth and power, the pursuit of financial triumph and greatness of the state.

Even the first steps in the transition can make some bleeding-edge problems of our time disappear. A comfortable life is possible almost everywhere, not just in metropolises. The demographic outflow from cities will also improve urban life: traffic jams and crowds will disappear, and crazy high-rise development will stop. The ecological situation will improve. That means better health. Many people will be able to work remotely and leave factories because automation is actively developing. Accordingly, these people will be able to engage in creative activities and inventions. But even in the industry, self-management will improve production and working conditions. When I was young, I worked in a factory. Some workers expressed exciting ideas about improving labor organization, but the bosses did not need it. The bosses feared change and had a snobbish attitude toward the

grassroots. So wrong.

We need to create a society in which creativity and equality reign. It's a long way off, but it begins with small steps. Of course, the elites will do everything to prevent this because it means a social death for them. However, the severe consequences of the current "operations" can significantly undermine the power of the elites in our country. The failure of their old methods can cause a split and encourage some from the ruling and lower classes to live in a new way. Then it will be possible to move on to post-industrial society. There are already many components at hand that just need to be brought together. A critical mass of organized activists inspired by this idea must come together. If this subjective factor does not materialize, Russia will continue falling into social decay or become an archaic country holding others at bayonet point. The world, in general, is at a grand junction, just like at the end of the Middle Ages before the beginning of industrial modernization. In Europe, it might have begun already in the XIV century, but the people at the time did not dare to break with the old way of thinking and lifestyle. Only in the XVI century, with the beginning of the Reformation, the transition became irreversible. It is up to the new generation to determine whether this century will be characterized by a prolonged crisis or a step toward a new peaceful future.

26 December 2022

Source [Posle](#).

Strike action continues with significant public support

2 January 2023, by **Terry Conway**

Even if I hadn't done that, I would certainly have known about PCS members in Border Force – the people who check passports – striking over the holiday. Every news bulletin on

the mainstream media in the run up to Xmas had an item about it.

Despite the fact that the Tory government and their friends in the

media have been constantly pumping out anti-union rhetoric ever since rail workers started their campaign of industrial action early in the summer, public support remains high.

Support is particularly high for health workers, after nurses belonging to the Royal College of Nurses took their first ever strike action for two separate days in December - and subsequently announced action for two days together in January. [21] Ambulance workers from 3 unions also struck in December and some will strike again in January.

An opinion poll published on 14 December showed 60% per cent support for striking NHS staff, with firefighters, teachers, postal workers and refuse collectors also having a higher rate of support than of opposition. Nevertheless, these are lower rates of support than in September-October. [22]

Public backing particularly for health and transport workers is based on two related facts. Working-class people blame the Tory government for the cost-of-living crisis and at the same time hold them responsible for the state of both the NHS and public transport. Even where support for strikes has fallen, more people hold the government responsible than they

do anyone else. The Tories have refused to even discuss pay with workers where they are the employer - and have clearly been leaning on major employers where they are not.

The first attack on Border Force workers by the Tories and the media was that strikers were ruining everyone's Xmas. They tried the same line earlier with postal and transport workers.

The next trick was to claim that the Border Force strike was having no impact as queues at airports were not lengthening - suggesting that their strike was a failure. This gave PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka the opportunity in interviews across the festive period to argue that the government was wasting vast sums of public money bringing in the military to scab - while in fact not properly checking people's documents.

Serwotka also took the opportunity to speak about the real situation facing many civil servants. The media are happy to perpetrate an image of them as comfortably off older men in suits, but in fact there are thousands of PCS

members dependent on food banks to survive. The RMT railworkers' union leader Mick Lynch did an excellent job in putting the workers' case earlier in this period of industrial militancy and Serwotka is continuing this offensive.

Meanwhile looking forward to the New Year, as well as continuing action from many groups of workers who have been striking over recent months, new groups could be joining the campaign for fair pay. The two unions that organise school teachers are balloting members and results are expected in the second week of January, this could see many thousands more workers taking action. At the same time the much smaller but obviously strategic Fire Brigade Union is expected to announce the results of its ballot in the next days. Rumours are circulating that the Trade Union Congress will organise co-ordinating strike action on 1 February. Not a moment before time. One of my New Year's resolutions for 2023 is undoubtedly to spend lots of time on picket lines...

1 January 2023

Brazil: a victory in a tragedy underway

1 January 2023, by Virginia Fontes

In the final moments, Lula and his team finally came out of their offices and engaged in a popular campaign. This changed the atmosphere between the two rounds. A mix of activists, intellectuals, voters from all walks of life including the working classes, all faced the fear fuelled by Bolsonaro's government and took to the streets. At the same time, many networks were activated to support Lula, to detect "fake news", to circulate verified texts and to spread the main instructions, especially the most popular ones. All this was done more or less spontaneously, in an effort that brought together forces from various lefts with adherents and sympathizers of the Workers' Party, the PT, with anti-Bolsonarists of all tendencies.

There was no systematic organization, which made the slogans all the more heterogeneous, and tilted the whole electoral campaign towards a personalized support for Lula.

Nevertheless, everyone - because it was repeated enough - knew that this election was only the beginning of a rather hard struggle and that it was necessary to keep up and take forward popular organizing in order to ensure the transmission of presidential power and, in addition, to preserve the slogans and demands in the face of a powerful proto-fascism. It was necessary to confront the media as a whole, some of which displayed an anti-Bolsonarist position but without support for the PT. But also to attack

several Bolsonarist social networks and their algorithms (YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook and others), which counted on big funding, including from the US.

The dominant classes - especially the most concentrated sectors (banks, mega-owners in agribusiness, part of the industrialists) - showed their dissatisfaction with Bolsonaro, but this did not mean any support for the PT. We should not forget the military and police forces that supported Bolsonaro without stopping the threats coupled with blackmail.

As expected, the day after Lula's victory - by a narrow margin of 2.1 million votes - Bolsonarists organized

roadblocks to demand the cancellation of the elections, demanding military intervention, all under the watchful eye of the military and police (who, by the way, did everything to prevent the poorest voters in several regions from reaching their polling stations). After almost a fortnight of blockades, these Bolsonarists finally gathered around the military headquarters from where they continue to shout putschist slogans.

Immediately after the commemorations, the PT and Lula himself made one last use of these popular networks, which are so valuable for consolidating popular reorganization, despite their great diversity. But they did so in the opposite direction - to immobilize them, to silence them, to demobilize popular activity, to break this fundamental chain of communication. They joined the mainstream media, which also took the vow of the three monkeys - not to listen, not to see, not to speak.

Thus, for the last forty days we have silently witnessed the daily presence of the far right, its obvious rapprochement with the military despite Bolsonaro's silence. But we have also seen these putschists cover themselves in ridicule, with the online broadcast of their sick behaviour.

There have been popular protests, especially from some social movements, such as the MTST - Movement of Workers Without a Roof, small parties located in a true anti-capitalist left, as well as anti-fascists. But the calls for calm were renewed by the PT, despite the success of some football fans who broke through blockades to attend their matches and some spontaneous breakthroughs of these blockades by people without visible organization.

This highlights the process that is underway. For the newly elected government, it is a matter of reserving all decisions at the highest level of the chain of command, of cooling the ardour of popular participation, and of remaking a coalition that claims to range from the left to the ruling classes, as well as harbouring sectors of the right and even the extreme right. This is a much broader

spectrum than that of the previous PT governments. In short, a national union that includes fascist or fascist forces.

It is not an easy situation and we must not forget that we are facing a rather dramatic circumstance. It can be calculated that a third of those who voted for Bolsonaro are fundamentally Bolsonarist, that is to say, each day closer to fascist positions. Among them, a significant section belongs to the working classes. And this despite the almost 700,000 deaths of the pandemic, largely due to the genocidal policies of Bolsonaro and his team. Brazil is the only country in the world where an austerity policy has been constitutionalized, with 50.8% of the national budget devoted to paying the public debt and/or interest. [23] This constitutional amendment has been renamed the "end of the world ceiling". The big banks, financial funds, brokers - Brazilian or foreign - are the beneficiaries of this debt. In contrast, the most miserable received intermittent aid, as during the pandemic even Bolsonaro was obliged to ensure their survival, and their number reached 21.5 million people in November 2022. [24] Many of these subsidies were granted illegally (the percentage is not yet known) at the time of the elections, although the law formally prohibits this. The bad faith - for the benefit of the banks - went further. Consigned loans, i.e. intended to be repaid by future deductions from these aids, with abusive interest rates, were offered as if they were a donation and put the poorest people in debt for a long time. On the other hand, almost two million people received these grants at the last minute without being registered, and some of them were given to the military or to pro-Bolsonaro sectors.

The outlook is even bleaker: the parliament elected in 2022 is predominantly hard right, as are the elected governors. Six of them belong to forces close to the left, out of a total of 27, while the rest belong to the right. [25]

The institutional situation is dramatic and almost all the administration for popular rights is being ravaged - education, health, science, public transport, climate change issues,

support for indigenous peoples, support for women, anti-racism, urban tragedies, etc. Inequalities are growing. The only institutions that emerge unscathed from this proto-fascist government are the armed forces, the police, the judiciary and parliament. All very well paid, and infiltrated by proto-fascists with political rightists of all colours.

The social crisis is enormous and the economic crisis affects the poorest people most of all, because a good part of the Brazilian bourgeoisie has cashed in on its profits.

So the election of Lula, despite all the hesitations during this campaign and the first steps of the transition, despite the worrying range of political alliances, despite the risk of a new and even more serious popular disengagement from any form of political organization, this election therefore gives a real breath of fresh air. This is despite the acceptance and ongoing naturalization of the measures taken after the 2016 media-parliamentary-legal coup. The Bolsonaro government has been so terrible, has stirred up so many brutal forces, so many setbacks that even a very limited new government at least opens up avenues for social and political struggles, against the censures already underway by religious sects and other arch-conservatives. It signifies relief, but remains in the shadow of growing concerns.

Other aspects deserve attention.

1. The Armed Forces-FFAA, the police, the militias

The Bolsonaro family is called the "*família*" because of its close proximity to the militias of Rio de Janeiro. A rather complex phenomenon to describe in a few words, these are armed gangs, with a long history that spans the 20th century and which acted with the agreement of the military during the 1964-1988 dictatorship. Increasingly close links between these armed gangs, the police and the FFAA have

been forged around the sale of drugs (which they pretend to fight), property speculation and the sale of illegal services, taking over public services (transport) or private services (sale of gas, internet access, among other activities).

The confrontations result in a permanent struggle for territory, contribute to strengthening the links between militiamen and police officers, and ensure a very lucrative economic activity. There is no absence of the state, but rather a particular form of its presence in popular territories. These militias control the popular territories with a rare ferocity, and can eliminate (kill) economic or other opponents. The Bolsonaro government has strengthened the militias throughout the country, especially by authorizing the sale of arms and encouraging the CACs - collectors, marksmen and hunters - which total around 700,000 people with a heavy arsenal. Among these CACs are several medium-sized landowners, as well as certain segments of the middle classes. They outnumber the armed forces, which number 360,000, and the military police, which number 406,000. [26]

Yet this group is predominantly Bolsonarist. Why have they not carried out the coup d'état that they kept promising? Why didn't the FFAA come out of their barracks against Lula, despite the insistence of the Bolsonarists? The answer is rather international - the instant recognition of Lula's election, in the first place. Secondly, General Mourão, Bolsonaro's vice-president, said last November that a military coup would risk international sanctions; a fear that seems to respond to signals from the US. [27]

So, for now, there will be no military coup. But these autocratic and fascist forces remain intact and everything leads us to believe that the future Minister of Defence will not apply punishments decided against these putchists. [28]

2. The

bourgeoisies

The Brazilian bourgeoisies are fundamentally run through by the interests of the foreign bourgeoisies, especially those of the US. They are not fragile bourgeoisies, neither economically nor politically. While in 2020 (the last year of official statistics) the total stock of foreign investments in Brazil reached US\$765.4 billion, Brazilian investments abroad reached US\$448.0 billion. [29] Politically, with the agreement and participation of large foreign companies, these bourgeoisies have carried out two central political actions over the last thirty years.

First, to finance almost the entire spectrum of political parties at election time. This has allowed them to blur the divide and control the evolution of partisan policy proposals.

Second, and this is little studied, they have built up a huge network of non-profit entities, parallel to the formal trade union network of employers. This parallel network performs multiple tasks - bringing together and politically organising the different economic sectors; establishing multi-sectoral associative forums, to present "technical policies" for the whole economy; ensuring that Think Tanks have a huge influence in the whole of higher education; and finally, weaving a mesh of entities geared towards the popular sectors. This last network presents itself as "political, but not partisan" and through it these bourgeoisies act to destroy universal policies at the same time as they propose a "new" policy of "poverty reduction", based on entrepreneurship, meritocracy, etc. With this network, they control the news of almost all public education with a "movement" called "All for Education"; they try to control public health ("All for Health"). This has been done with the agreement of PT governments. They present themselves as "democratic" but they participate in fascist groupings, according to their interests.

There are of course divisions in these bourgeoisies, and limits. The 2016 coup seems to have been supported mainly by the less economically

concentrated layers of these bourgeois classes. The results, however, favoured all but a small handful of the larger ones, hit by the Lava-Jato operation, with the support of the US (and other foreign governments), which curbed the appetite for more autonomous (imperialist) Brazilian investment abroad. It seems that these tensions between these various sectors of the bourgeoisie continue, and the Bolsonaro government has both favoured the mega-property of agribusiness, but also the intermediate sectors, openly allowing them to break the law, invading indigenous lands, turning a blind eye to mining and Amazonian timber extraction, activities carried out by the more politically fascistic, medium-sized sectors. So much so that the big agri-mining and forestry companies, which accepted everything for a while, have cooled down a bit with Bolsonaro due to international denunciations.

Another important division runs through these bourgeoisies - formed in close alliance with the US, their main client being China.

3. The popular strata

Their situation is even more difficult. Most of the trade unions are very weakened and do nothing to reverse the situation, at least for the time being. In a meeting with several trade union centres on 1 December 2022, Lula said, without causing a real outcry, that he would focus on "attracting foreign investment, especially direct investment, so that we can achieve a new regulation of the world of work, without wanting to return to the past." [30]

Politically, the working classes are divided over Lula and Bolsonaro, including in several capitals, such as Rio de Janeiro. Only in the deep Northeast did the vast majority vote for Lula.

There has been a small reduction in the unemployment rate, but there are still 10 million people without work; around 39 million people in precarious or disenfranchised activities [31], and these figures are increasing with the

growth of the informal economy ('uberization' and others). Around 80 million people are in debt [32]; 33 million people are in a situation of famine, around 125 million in various degrees of food insecurity [33], inequalities are growing; there is a sharp decline in public services... Social movements have been persecuted but, despite this, have not dissolved and have gained support from certain middle classes, intellectuals and cultural circles. So

there are huge concrete difficulties linked to survival, but there is a diffuse, albeit fairly combative, fermentation among indigenous peoples, feminists, anti-racists and ecosocialists.

In short, Bolsonaro was defeated electorally. Everything leads us to believe that the PT is trying to recompose alliances from above, and to make it difficult for workers to

organize themselves. For this, the bourgeois "non-profit" entities are already in place, proposing new compromise policies, and in good agreement with the fascists, always present, and in arms. After a small moment of respite, the struggle has only just begun.

*Article reviewed by Irene Seigle.
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