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The imperative of peace in Mali

31 May 2024, by **Paul Martial**

A few days after the end of the official transition, which was due to take place on 26 March 2024, the colonels who took power organised an inter-Malian dialogue. A way for them to fill the institutional void and above all to regain the initiative while the country sinks into a deep crisis.

Repression at every turn

This inter-Malian dialogue, which has just delivered its 300 proposals, took place in a country that is facing repression. Several civil society organisations have been banned, including the Association des élèves et étudiants du Mali, which played a leading role in bringing down the dictatorship of Moussa Traoré in 1992. The Coordination des mouvements, associations et sympathisants de l'Imam Mahmoud Dicko has also been banned, as has the Observatoire pour les élections et la bonne gouvernance, a civil society organisation. The activities of political parties have been suspended, and some, such as Kaoural Renouveau, have been banned. Opponents are either in exile, like Oumar Mariko, or in prison, the latest being the economist Étienne Fakaba Sissoko. For writing a critical book, he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, one of which was suspended.

The media are under pressure, as indicated by an Amnesty International leader who spoke of a 'culture of self-censorship that is taking hold'. But

this repression is far from unanimous, including in the institutions of the State. The transitional authorities were unsuccessful in their attempt to dissolve the radical left-wing SADI party.

The war gets bogged down

The hardening of the repression can be explained by the junta's setbacks on the security front. By denouncing the Algiers peace accords (2015) which, if not perfect, at least had the merit of pacifying relations between Tuareg armed groups and the Malian armed forces, and by retaking by force the town of Kidal controlled by Tuareg rebels, the Junta has only radicalised these groups who have now sealed a non-aggression alliance with jihadist groups linked to Al-Qaeda.

On the ground, the situation is worsening, as noted by a UN expert, with a 'rapid and continuing deterioration in security in almost all the regions of Mali', which 'appear to be beyond the control of the Malian authorities'.

A demand for

peace

So, of course, the hand-picked participants in the dialogue made proposals that were bound to please the junta. Extend the transition period from two to five years. Authorise transitional president Assimi Goïta to stand in the presidential elections, although no date has been set for this. To severely restrict the number of political parties. And the icing on the cake, the promotion of the five coup colonels to the rank of general. The inter-Malian dialogue thus fulfilled its role as a showcase for the power of the junta and its president Assimi Goïta.

Within the well-controlled framework of the inter-Malian dialogue, dissonant proposals have emerged, notably around the demand for the opening of peace talks. These demands had already emerged in 2017 during the Conference of National Accord. At the time, France, with Barkhane, refused. Today it is the junta that is opposed. It prefers to wage an all-out war with disastrous consequences. UNICEF estimates that 7.1 million people, more than half of them children, need humanitarian assistance. Every week, civilians die caught between armed groups and Malian forces and their Wagner auxiliaries. Peace remains the people's number one demand. A challenge for Mali's parties, organisations and trade unions.

The Pylos disaster on trial

30 May 2024, by **Andreas Sartzekis**

On 13 June 2023, a boat overloaded with refugees was reported in distress off the coast of Pylos (south-west Greece). For 15 hours, the coastguards refused to rescue them, and finally hung up a rope, which we still don't know was intended to pull the boat in distress towards Italy! This manoeuvre caused the boat to sink, resulting in the deaths of more than 600 refugees, a veritable mass crime. The government immediately acted as it had in other cases (the Tèmbi rail disaster), shifting the blame onto individuals or even victims.

Although they were facing life imprisonment as criminal 'smugglers', the court thus justified the ongoing campaign of solidarity with the accused: demonstrations, concerts and rallies kept up the pressure for their acquittal and for the real culprits to be charged. On 21 May, the Left was present in Kalamata, alongside associations such as Keerfa and Diktyo and trade unions. Let's hope that this victory strengthens the anti-racist battle!

Anti-refugee repression

Beyond the tragedy in Pylos, the anti-refugee practices of a right-wing that is very open to the extreme right are a daily occurrence: more than 2,000 refugees are in prison, accused without proof of being smugglers. But the Kalamata judgement will certainly not help them: the court did not rule on the merits of the case, as the tragedy took place in international waters. We are also familiar with the practice of refoulement, which is prohibited but covered by Frontex, the organisation that monitors Europe's borders, whose former head has just, appropriately enough, joined the RN list. From February 2022 to February 2023: more than 1,000 refoulements in the Aegean Sea, or 28,000 refugees. And it is estimated that at least 20,000 refugees have drowned in the Mediterranean since 2015. But the recent European agreement on immigration is not enough for Mitsotakis: he has just written to the Commission to demand tougher

measures...

The fight goes on!

Petty revenge from the authorities: on 24 May, the 9 Egyptians were still imprisoned, on illegal pretexts. This shows the horror of such a racist policy, especially as at the same time the leader of the Chryssi Avgi (Golden Dawn) Nazis, imprisoned as the head of a criminal organisation, was granted an early release, which is legally possible, and other imprisoned Nazis are now asking for the same favour! This would have provoked the anger of a Franco-Greek journalist who has just died: a tribute to Angélique Kourounis, whose documentaries on Greek fascists helped the mobilisations, and who was obviously a firmly anti-racist activist.

Athens, 24 May 2024

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

The mullahs weakened, the people's struggle continues

29 May 2024, by **Babak Kia**

That said, Raisi was tipped to succeed the ailing 85-year-old Leader Ali Khamenei. From this point of view, his death weakens Mullaharchy. It will inflame tensions within the clans that share power and wealth and open the

way for future popular uprisings.

Raisi's death was certainly the subject of a staged national mourning by the authorities. The regime is hastily going to elect a new president

on 28 June. But what is important to remember are the spontaneous celebrations that erupted when Raisi's death was announced. From Tehran to Saez in Kurdistan (Jina Mahsa Amini's home town), the

population expressed their joy more or less openly, in the absence of any chance of judging Raissi for his crimes.

The “Butcher of Tehran”

Raissi’s CV goes a long way towards explaining the public’s detestation of him and the Islamic Republic. In the 1980s, Raissi was deputy public prosecutor in Tehran. Under Khomeini’s orders, he led the crackdown and had around ten thousand political prisoners executed at the end of the war against Iraq.

The regime’s aim was to eliminate any possibility of dissent and eradicate the militant generation that had opposed the Shah’s dictatorship but also rejected the dictatorship of the Islamic Republic. A deputy prosecutor but also an executioner, Raissi was denounced by survivors of this bloody wave as the man who killed opponents with his own hands. His role in the executions of 1988 earned him the nickname of the “Butcher of Tehran”.

More recently, under his tenure as President of the Republic, he reactivated the vice squad. He bears direct responsibility for the harassment of women, the death of Jina Mahssa Amini and the violent repression of the “Woman Life Freedom” uprising. He has also imprisoned and tortured trade union leaders, environmentalists, human rights activists, women’s rights activists, children’s rights activists and artists. His economic and social record is disastrous. Hit by inflation of 70%, almost 60% of the population lives below the poverty line. At the same time, the regime’s leaders, the Guardians of the Revolution and their relatives have become extremely wealthy.

Solidarity from world leaders

It is easy to understand why no one is mourning Raissi’s death... no one except the dignitaries of the regime, their regional allies, some of whom

are absurdly and criminally camp, but also the leaders of certain European states or states in the region who, following the example of Turkey, have offered their assistance in the hope of finding Raissi alive. Even NATO offered its condolences... When it comes to saving a head of state, world leaders show solidarity, despite their differences.

But in Iran, no one forgets that these same regional and European leaders are never in a hurry when it comes to saving the thousands of Iranians who have fallen victim to natural disasters or to the regime itself. Nobody forgets the criminal migration policy of the European Union, which refuses asylum to those fleeing the dictatorship.

In their struggle against the Islamic Republic, the people of Iran are relying solely on their own strength and on international solidarity from below.

28 May 2024

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A New Alliance Could Change Puerto Rican Politics

28 May 2024, by **Rafael Bernabe**

Since then, the island’s politics have revolved around three political parties whose platforms are focused on its political status: the pro-Commonwealth Popular Democratic Party (PDP), the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP), and the pro-sovereign Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP). Beginning in the 1930s, a series of uprisings by nationalist forces have been met with repression by US agencies (notably the FBI, which maintained extensive files of suspected “subversives”), minimizing the voter base for the Independence Party and creating a two-party duopoly consisting of the PDP and

PNP.

In the 2010s, the combination of Congress’s imposition of a Fiscal Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) to restructure Puerto Rico’s \$72 billion debt and the devastating natural disaster of Hurricane Maria had the effect of shaking the island’s residents’ faith in the two-party duopoly.

The FOMB made it clear that the local government was not in charge of the island’s finances, neutering the Commonwealth’s illusory autonomy, and the Federal Emergency

Management Agency’s (FEMA) poor response to Maria made Puerto Ricans doubt the pro-statehood party. As a result, a new, possibly game-changing element will be a feature of the elections in Puerto Rico this November. The newly created Citizens’ Victory Movement (MVC) and the PIP will form a coalition (called La Alianza) to pool their growing constituency in an attempt to further erode, if not destroy, the existing two-party system comprised of the PNP and PDP.

Earlier this year, I [Ed Morales] visited Puerto Rico and sat down with

the MVC's Rafael Bernabe, who was elected as senator at-large in 2020, engaging in a dialogue with him about the new alliance. The following is an edited version of our conversation.

Forming the Alliance

Ed Morales: The deterioration of Puerto Rico's economy and the US Congress's imposition of the FOMB to manage the \$72 billion debt crisis has led to Puerto Rico's people losing faith in its traditional electoral politics. What are the conditions that lead to the emergence of the alliance between the MVC and the PIP?

Rafael Bernabe: When you look at what has happened in the past fifteen years in Puerto Rico, it's not too hard to see the reason La Alianza came about. The economy of Puerto Rico went into a very deep depression in 2005. If you look at the numbers, the economy of Puerto Rico has been in a depression. We have had fifteen years of economic stagnation, no growth whatsoever. About two hundred thousand jobs have vanished; thousands of people have had to leave the island because they can't find them. They can't live here. And at the same time, you have all of these terrible corruption cases in the government. The result of that crisis (which people feel very deeply), the fact that the two major parties have not been able to offer any alternative to that crisis, and that they are increasingly corrupt machines has meant that the support for these two political parties is decreasing sharply.

These parties combined used to get around 97 percent of the votes between them. The PIP got 3 percent, and they got the rest. And now that's down to like 64 percent: the PNP gets 33 percent; the PPD got 31 percent. These political parties have basically collapsed over the past ten years. In 2016, [ousted former governor] Ricky Rosselló won the governorship with 42 percent of the vote, which was already low enough, and then he was not even able to complete his term because the people got so fed up with his government that they mobilized and

they overthrew him. It's the closest thing we've had to a revolution in Puerto Rico. People were in the street mobilizing for twenty days nonstop and forced the governor to resign. In the election in 2017, the PIP jumped from 3 percent to 14 percent. And the MVC, which was participating for the first time, gets 14 percent, which is an indication that people are very much open to new alternatives. So the rise of the vote for the MVC and for the people is very much part of the same process, because many of the people who were on the streets trying to get rid of him were seeking new alternatives. Now that we are in an alliance, we have come together in one single force.

Ed Morales: Has there been any inspiration from these types of alliances that have happened in multiparty democracies in Europe and Latin America?

Rafael Bernabe: In Uruguay, there's the Frente Amplio, which includes many parties of the Left that governed Uruguay for a long time. Some of us may not necessarily agree with exactly the policies or the lines adopted by the Frente Amplio, but the notion of an alliance of the Left parties, yeah, that's an inspiration. And we know that alliances of parties of the Left are rather common, have been experienced and tried out in many places around the world.

Ed Morales: The last time we talked, about a year ago, you talked about legal strategies to formalize an official alliance. Have you exhausted those legal strategies?

Rafael Bernabe: Well, the situation is as follows: up until 2011, this type of political alliance in general elections in Puerto Rico was legal. It was not uncommon in the past for that to happen in New York, for example, where you could have the same candidate in the column of different political parties. Going back to the 1930s, there was an alliance between the Socialist Party and the Republican Party, and it was called a coalition. Alliances or coalitions like these were eliminated in 2011 when they rewrote the electoral law in Puerto Rico. Back then, they prohibited having the same

candidate in several columns. After the 2020 elections, the PIP and the MVC became interested in forming a coalition or an alliance. So we knew we had to deal with that prohibition.

The first angle of attack was to enact legislation to reform the law so that it would go back to the way it was before this prohibition. But the PNP and PDP majority are not interested in facilitating us having an alliance, so they blocked that, and there was no chance that they would approve the legal reestablishment of the possibility of having an alliance.

The second angle of attack was to challenge this prohibition in the courts. We argued that this prohibition is a violation of the right of association and the right of free expression, and that there's no reason why the state should prohibit two parties from forming an alliance in the electoral process. And the courts ruled against us. It's really an absurd ruling, holding that even though we do have a right to associate, the state has the right to limit such rights if there's enough reason for doing so. And they decided that there was enough reason because allowing for a candidate to appear in the column of more than one party would generate confusion in the electorate and would lend itself to some sort of manipulation of the voter. So they're basically saying that people are too dumb in Puerto Rico to understand something that is done everywhere else. We appealed to the appellate court, which ruled similarly. So we were left with the other option, which is to work around the law.

Ed Morales: In [MVC leader and former Puerto Rico representative] Manuel Natal Albelo's explanatory address at the MVC Assembly in December he referred to a "no competition" arrangement, and a fraternal competition. Could you describe those?

Rafael Bernabe: We cannot establish officially an alliance between the two parties, but we can come to an agreement, which would make it a de facto alliance. A very clear example is in the race for the mayor of San Juan. In cases such as this, we run a candidate, in this case Manuel Natal, and the PIP doesn't run a candidate.

We call on our people and the PIP people and everybody else to vote for the candidate of the MVC. The same thing happens, for example, in Caguas, the other way around — we don't have a candidate for mayor of Caguas. The PIP has one, and then over there we vote for the candidate of the PIP.

It's a little bit more problematic regarding the national posts, the governor and the resident commissioner, because in the case of the governor, the electoral law forces all parties to have a candidate in order to participate in the elections. So in that case, the MVC agreed that the gubernatorial candidate of the alliance is going to be Juan Dalmau, who is the candidate for the PIP. We are calling on everybody to vote for Juan Dalmau, but the law forces us to have a candidate of the MVC. We have a candidate for governor, Javier Cordova, and he's officially the candidate for governor of the MVC. But he's telling people, don't vote for me, vote for Dalmau, who is the candidate of the alliance.

There are other cases in which, for whatever reason, we were not able to come to an agreement. There are towns in which the people are going to have a candidate for mayor and we are going to have a candidate for mayor; they're going to compete. And the idea is that we are not going to compete in a negative way. It's a fraternal competition. We basically allow people to vote for whoever they want to vote for.

Ed Morales: I see in the local press there is this derogatory term, "candidatos de agua" ("water candidates"), that refer to candidates who are not asking for votes. What does that mean?

Rafael Bernabe: That's a term that you use traditionally for candidates who are placed on the ballot because they want a placeholder. But in this case, it's not really a candidato de agua, because Cordova is fulfilling a role. We prefer to call it a spokesperson candidate or candidato portavoz, a candidate who is carrying the message of La Alianza. We have several people who are aspiring to the post of resident commissioner, but it's almost

sure it's going to be Ana Irma Rivera Lassén, my fellow senator. The PIP has somebody who is their candidate for resident commissioner, but that candidate is supporting the vote for Ana.

The other element of the alliance is that Puerto Rico has eight senatorial districts. Each one of them elects two senators. So you have sixteen senators elected from all over the island and in each senatorial district, and a voter can vote for two candidates. If you live in Arecibo, you can vote for two candidates to the Senate and so on. In each one of those eight districts, the PIP and the MVC are each presenting one candidate, so it's split halfway. If you live in San Juan, you can vote for the candidate of the PIP and the candidate of the MVC. Instead of having two candidates for the PIP and two candidates for the MVC, we have one and one. So the people vote for one of the MVC and one of the PIP. And that's basically how it's organized.

Ed Morales: But it's still a victory for you if one of the two candidates wins.

Rafael Bernabe: Yeah, absolutely. We think we have a good chance of winning in some municipalities. And there are other municipalities in which both parties are relatively weak. So we both have candidates and most probably neither of them is going to win. The fact that we have two candidates is not really preventing us from winning in a municipality that we would otherwise win. And in the most significant contests, we have agreed to support either candidate, one candidate of the PIP or the MVC.

Possible Victory

Ed Morales: So the goal is to continue to raise awareness that the prevailing two-party duopoly is not working, and more and more people are feeling dissatisfied with it.

Rafael Bernabe: You could clearly see that with Natal — if you go by the official results, he lost the election for mayor of San Juan by around two thousand votes. He almost won. And

many of us think that he won. It was just stolen.

Ed Morales: What is the basis for saying that it was stolen?

Rafael Bernabe: Because there were a lot of irregularities, particularly regarding the absentee ballots and mail-in ballots. There were a lot of problems with that, and we denounced it at the time, and it was a matter of much discussion afterward. But regardless, let's assume that he lost by three thousand votes. If he had gotten the votes that the PIP candidate got, he would've won. So he stands a very good chance of winning the majority of San Juan in the capital city, and that would be a major thing.

In the 2020 elections, the MVC candidate for governor got 14 percent of the vote. Dalmau, the PIP candidate, got 14 percent of the vote. Those two added to 28 percent of the vote. [Current governor] Pedro Pierluisi won the governor's race with 33 percent of the vote. So again, it's within reach. If Dalmau were to get an increase in votes greater than these two parties combined receiving the last elections, which he could very well do, he could become the next governor.

It's not easy. I cannot say it's even probable, but it's quite possible. There are also district candidates for the legislature that have a very good chance of getting elected. Eva Prados was a candidate of ours in the last elections, and she lost by a very slim margin and is now running as a candidate of the alliance. She has a very good chance of getting elected. Rosa Segui, who worked with me here, was a candidate for the Senate. She did very well, and now she's running as part of the alliance and also has a very good chance of getting elected. So it's going to be a very close, interesting race. It's not like in the past, when the Left and the progressive forces just ran to bring a message and educate people on certain ideas and raise awareness. There's a real chance that we are going to win many important races this time.

Ed Morales: And so how would it work in the legislature? The last

time we talked, you described some elements of La Alianza were already working in the legislature, right?

Rafael Bernabe: Through the last three years of legislative work here in the capital, we have been collaborating: the PIP, us, and an independent senator, Vargas Vidot. So the PIP, Vargas Vidot, and us most of the time agree on just about everything, all the issues, and we work together. We vote in the same way and so on. So we are practicing the alliance already in terms of what we do here in the capital. Now we're trying to do it more widely.

Ed Morales: What is your take on the PIP? It's not just focusing on the status issue; it has been focused on a left progressive position, and I guess the idea that independence would bring an opportunity for more leftism and progressivism.

Rafael Bernabe: The independence movement for the longest time is not a movement that's limited to the goal of making Puerto Rico independent. It's very much involved in all sorts of social struggles: the labor movement, the environmental movement, the student movement, the women's movement, the LGBTQ movement, and so on. So most of the independence movement is very much active in all of these struggles. The MVC has the particularity that there are many independentistas in it, but not everybody is an independentista. We include people who are not independentista, but most of the people who are in the MVC are also active in all sorts of other social struggles. The agenda of both movements includes the colonial question and the status question, and the need to determine how we are going to define or redefine the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, but includes all sorts of issues as well, like the fight against privatization and the defense of the environment.

One indication of how significant this possibility of the alliance is, is the fact that you have this very strong effort organized by the business class. Last March, many important members of

the Puerto Rican business sector organized a super PAC called Democracia es Prosperidad (Democracy Is Prosperity) to gather funds and intervene in the elections. The official reason for this super PAC is to combat what they think is the threat of forces that want to limit free enterprise in Puerto Rico. They're very afraid of La Alianza because they know that we have presented legislation to increase the minimum wage, eliminate the subminimum wage of the people who receive tips in Puerto Rico, and reestablish many labor rights that were eliminated back in 2017 when they approved this labor reform law.

If La Alianza wins or gets a lot of votes, important social and labor legislation is going to be approved, and they want to avoid that. Until recently, these business sectors were happy to rely on the PDP and the PNP to defend their interests. They have this whole campaign against La Alianza, saying that this is a socialist alliance. There has been a Left in Puerto Rico for the longest time, and they didn't feel that threatened, but now they do.

Building a Platform

Ed Morales: In terms the messaging, this idea of attacking corruption seems to be the main messaging I hear in the media. But are you using that a lot to just get people's attention so you can also talk about things like decolonization?

Rafael Bernabe: The alliance as a whole and the MVC in particular have varied interests. Depending who you talk to, you will see a different emphasis. You need to fight corruption, and you need to have people who are honest occupying government posts. But if you talk with Ana Irma Rivera Lassén, that's not her main issue. She talks a lot about women's rights, about reproductive rights, about the fight against racism, the fight against transphobia and homophobia and so on and so forth. I tend to emphasize more labor issues, labor rights and trade-union rights

and so on and so forth. And Mariana Nogales, who's a representative in the House, emphasizes environmental questions. The MVC and PIP have supported measures protecting the University of Puerto Rico and defending public education from the projects of privatization. I would say that corruption is an issue, but by no means is our campaign reduced to the question of corruption.

Ed Morales: Sometimes much of the anti-corruption narrative comes from the Feds and the FBI, who carry out these investigations.

Rafael Bernabe: I guess there is an element that they don't want their money stolen. The United States sends millions of dollars to Puerto Rico. So there's a problem there. I understand that if they are going to send some money, it's supposed to be used for certain things. There's a problem if you tolerate violation of the law, and it's also true that a lot of people see them in a positive light, given the fact that the Puerto Rico government agencies have not been up to what they should be doing regarding these things. Many of the investigations carried out by federal agencies could have been carried out by Puerto Rican agencies, but they weren't.

Ed Morales: You've said that the degree of leftism and progressivism between the two parties is very similar. That is to say one party is not necessarily more about socialism or workers' rights than the other?

Rafael Bernabe: I would say neither party is a socialist party. They are both prolabor, pro-women's rights, and pro-LGBTQ rights. They both defend that public services should be essential, that services should be publicly owned, and the guarantee that includes electricity, water, education, and health. Both parties support the creation of public health system. These are by any account left-wing parties, progressive parties, whichever term you want to use.

In the MVC, there are people who are socialists, myself included, and everybody knows that we are socialists and it's no secret, but there are many people who are not

socialists. And we agree to struggle for certain immediate reforms and things that working people need to defend the environment, that we need to defend women's rights and so on and so forth. As a socialist, when I have the opportunity and the occasion, I explain why I am against capitalism. I think in the end we have to abolish capitalism in order to solve our fundamental problems. But I always make it clear that I'm speaking for myself. The MVC as such is not a socialist movement. It includes people who are and people who aren't socialists. If you look at the program of these two parties, they're very similar.

Ed Morales: So are you going to have two different party platforms, or are you going to put out one platform?

Rafael Bernabe: The idea is that both parties will retain their individual programs. That's fine. And then we are going to have sort of a basic program of La Alianza, and the way it's envisioned right now is a relatively short document that has ten, fifteen basic points. I'm sure it is going to include the creation of a single-payer type health insurance system and eliminate this system that we have now. I'm sure it will include some sort of mechanism to try and solve the status question. It's going to include the defense of the autonomy and the finances of the University of Puerto Rico, the defense of labor rights and restoration of labor rights as well. The PIP program is two hundred pages long, and the MVC's is like 150 pages long. We're going to have a much shorter document that consolidates, underlines, or emphasizes those issues that we think should be in the center of the campaign of the alliance.

Ed Morales: There's a theoretical question that I wonder if you could talk about that is in the US right now. There's a lot of discussion about this conflict between people who favor class politics and people who are involved in identity politics. There's an idea that supporting class struggle is somehow mutually exclusive from identity politics, which many believe has been co-opted by neoliberalism. Does this sort of

conflict exist in Puerto Rico?

Rafael Bernabe: No, not really. No, no. I mean not at all.

Ed Morales: You said that you were interested in class issues and are anti-capitalist. Do you think you are among the furthest to the left in the MVC?

Rafael Bernabe: I'm the most leftist, okay? There's nobody to the left of me. [Laughs] There's a big abyss. There's nothing. If you go to the left of me, you're dead. But I cannot think of anybody that sees these different topics as contradictory or antagonistic. You could find people who would say, "I'm interested in the LGBTQ struggle," but it's not like LGBTQ activists are against labor struggles. I would say most people on the Puerto Rican left see these struggles as complimentary. And most of the people I know on the Left would go to a march defending the environment and another day will go to a gay pride parade, and the next day they will go to some labor mobilization. I would say there are people who emphasize one thing more than another. That's inevitable, I guess. But no, I would say there's not such a sharp debate between the different approaches. Most people mix these things.

Ed Morales: In the United States, discourse on "decolonization" can get trapped in a theoretical framework, but here you're literally living in a colony, and decolonization is an immediate, tangible issue. How does that affect the political dynamic on the Left?

Rafael Bernabe: Here, the Left is made up mostly of people who are active in different struggles. There's an element of that, but it's not an academic left, let's say. And I don't say academic in a bad way. I'm an academic, I work at the university, but the people who are active in the Left are active in movements. There are people in the university theorizing things, but they're really not part of the Left. Not long ago, there was a march here in support of Palestine and denouncing the genocide. There must have been like a thousand people or

something. But most of the people who were there in that march were basically the same people from the labor mobilizations or the environmental mobilizations or the women's rights mobilizations.

Ed Morales: I covered a little bit about the University of Puerto Rico protests in 2010, and saw that they had assemblies and this notion of horizontalism. The assemblies that the MVC functions through seem to echo this kind of organizing and party process.

Rafael Bernabe: The MVC has a very strong element of promoting participation and promoting debate and discussion and openness. If you look at our assemblies, not only are they open to everybody — anybody can speak, everything is put to a vote. All of it is transmitted over social media, so there's no secret decision-making and so on. We decided in an open assembly where we discussed the two candidates for Puerto Rican senators at-large, and we just finished the process of people registering who want to aspire to be a candidate. I am one of the candidates. So whoever's going to be the candidate is not decided by the leadership of the movement. It is going to be decided by many people. There's very much that culture of participation and debate and discussion.

Ed Morales: From below.

Rafael Bernabe: Yeah, yeah, from below, absolutely.

Ed Morales: I saw that in Claridad that the Hostosian National Independence Movement (MINH), which has roots in the old Puerto Rican Socialist Party, had expressed a desire to cooperate with La Alianza. Are there more parties like that?

Rafael Bernabe: Yeah, the MINH officially approved supporting the alliance. And there are some members of the MINH who are running as candidates for the MVC within the list of the MVC. They are running as candidates. And there are other left-wing groups that are also either already supporting or will probably endorse voting for the alliance; I

wouldn't be surprised.

Ed Morales: How about the unions?

Rafael Bernabe: In the case of the MVC, we've had a lot of support. One of the founding organizations of the MVC is the Sindicato Puertorriqueño de Trabajadores (SPT), which is the Puerto Rico local of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). And the SPT had a long process of internal discussion and debate in which it officially, through several assemblies, determined that it didn't want to support candidates in the old traditional parties anymore, and that it wants to engage in the construction of a new political party that would be capable of defending the interests of the labor movement. But we've also had established links with labor leaders and labor activists in many other unions, and many of them are very sympathetic to La Alianza.

Ed Morales: One more question. You're going to have the constitutional convention as part of your platform. I think I saw somewhere a quote of you saying, "We can't keep waiting for

Washington to push that through." How much of a priority is the constitutional convention?

Rafael Bernabe: Normally, in Puerto Rican politics, people are taught and people are told that we have to wait for the United States and for Congress to take action to solve this status question. As I argued, many times, they want us to be spectators to the process of determining what it's going to be our future. We just watch to see what Congress is doing, what it's not doing, whether such certain congressperson is willing to support something or not support something, whether a committee acts or doesn't act.

But the process of self-determination is not going to come that way; it should start with us. We should take action so that we begin the process of self-determination, and we sort of serve notice to the US Congress that we, the Puerto Rican people, have organized ourselves to solve this problem as urgently as possible. The way to do that is to call an Asamblea Constitucional de Estatus, which means that people vote, they elect delegates to this assembly. These delegates will be elected on the basis

of what status they represent. There will be some who support statehood. There will be some who support independence. There will be some who support free association. People will vote for whoever they want; if people choose a statehood majority, that's it. Independence majority, whatever. And that assembly then, as a representative of the will of the Puerto Rican people, will have the task of reaching out to the US Congress and telling them, well here we are.

We have to figure out how we are going to decolonize Puerto Rico. The bill that was presented by Nydia Velázquez and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez several years ago was probably the best, because that bill said that the US Congress recognized that Puerto Rico is in a colonial status. The bill was good, but it died. So our position is that we have to take action as soon as possible in the direction of solving this issue. And the first action we could take is electing this assembly as a representative of the Puerto Rican people in order to start the ball rolling.

15 March 2024

Source [Jacobin](#).

General Election 2024: End the Tyranny of Conservative Rule

27 May 2024, by Anti*Capitalist Resistance

1. As socialists, we are clear: the Conservatives are the class enemy who represent the interests of big business and some of the most reactionary ideas in our society. As the founder of the NHS, Nye Bevan, said, "they are lower than vermin. They condemned millions of people to semi-starvation." Any crushing defeat for the Tories is something we celebrate, along with millions of other working people exhausted by 14 years of austerity, vicious racism, and callous disregard for the cost of living. This is why we do not hesitate to say: Kick

the Tories out, keep up the struggles, and organise the resistance!

2. What do we mean by 'keep up the struggles'? Under a new Labour government, there's no time to pause or ease up in our fight. Waiting for them to 'settle in' is a luxury we can't afford. We are clamouring for a progressive shift from the previous Tory regime—that is clear. The unions must demand that a Labour government be a catalyst for radical change, not a reason to become inactive.

3. This election makes the 22 June London protest calling to Restore Nature Now even more important. We need to keep up the pressure. The demonstration should be a clarion call to all politicians and civil society that the environment is the central battle because it is not about some other separate issue; it is about the very basis of life on this planet. We have to fight to build our movements even during election periods; the battle of politics will be won through mass forces taking action to fight for the future.

4. Labour policies rarely diverge significantly from Conservative ones, but Labour's foundation in the mass trade union movement and its integration into these working-class organisations is a unique advantage. This presents an opportunity to advocate for a socialist agenda using more avenues to power than we have under a Tory government. The unions should leverage this influence to drive policies on wages and working conditions that address the cost of living crisis. Labour must eliminate all anti-union legislation and establish a 'bill of rights' for working people. It means a fight to reverse a decade of austerity that has devastated our communities and lives. King's College London estimated that around 148,000 people died due to government austerity policies between 2010 and 2020.

5. There are some obvious policies that need to be addressed immediately: scrap Rwanda legislation; end the war on refugees and the immigration raid; scrap the Cass recommendations; implement rent controls now for housing, scrapping the right to buy, and a massive expansion of council housing; end the blight of food banks through higher wages and better social security; end the two-child benefit cap. A Labour government must call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and halt all arms sales and other strategic support for Israel, scrapping the recent restrictions on the right to protest and organise.

6. We are in solidarity with the oppressed after the election, but also in the context of the election, which

we anticipate will prominently feature the "culture war" and foresee a heightening of attacks. Refugees (with immigration raids and the Rwanda deportation policy), disabled people (with attacks on social provision), Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers (with legislative attacks on their way of life), trans people (facing attacks on medical autonomy and increasing hate crimes), Muslims (with Islamophobia set against the ongoing genocide in Gaza), and Ukrainians and Palestinians fighting for their national liberation against horrific colonial violence.

7. Two Conservative climate policies were ruled unlawful by the courts for failing to provide enough evidence that there were sufficient policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A Labour government must prioritise the climate, end North Sea oil and gas extraction, and rapidly shift towards a low-carbon economy with free accessible public transport and renewable energy. Their attacks on democratic rights to protest have also been declared unlawful by the Supreme Court.

8. Emergency funding and radical reform of the NHS based on co-production, with full bodily autonomy (for women, disabled people, trans people, and everyone) should be guaranteed in its constitution.

9. After the election, we should be watchful and ready to organise against any resurgence of the far right, many of whom are waiting for a 'woke' Labour government to start mobilising, especially taking advantage of reactionary social

resentments increasingly expressed by younger men. Even the lukewarm measures of a Labour government are too much for these enraged fascists, so determined to obliterate any sense of hope for a better future. We can see the growth of Reform UK to the right of the Tories as evidence that the bitter pain of capitalism is forcing not insignificant numbers of people into the arms of reactionary politics, where they see racist hate against refugees as the only way to make sense of the world.

10. As an anti-capitalist organisation, ACR is clear that no elections to parliament can solve any fundamental issues people struggle with. Parliament isn't neutral under capitalism, and it is wrapped up with the power of capital. Democracy under capitalism is limited and distorted; limited to only the realm of 'politics' and not the wider economy where we spend most of our lives working; distorted by wealth and tradition, weighed down by money flowing into the media, advertising, and promotion for the parties backed by the rich. We stand for a more radical vision of society—one where we have participatory democracy, workplace control, and a socialised economy based on human need, not private profit—a society aligned within planetary boundaries, not wrecking our environment in the name of growth and business. A world of radical abundance and public wealth, not one of scarcity and misery for billions. This is our vision of the future world—it is one we are committed to fighting for.

Source [Anti*Capitalist Resistance](#).

The U.S. Supreme Court: Reaction, Corruption, Disgrace, Public Repudiation

26 May 2024, by **Dan La Botz**

SCOTUS justices who serve for life are appointed by the president with the approval of the Senate, a very

undemocratic institution that tends to reflect the interests of the ruling class. From the late 1930s through the

1960s Democratic Party presidents—Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, and

Lyndon B. Johnson—appointed most of the justices, giving the court a liberal character. In those years, the rights of workers, Black people, and women were strengthened and expanded. With the end of the post-war economic expansion, starting in the 1980s the court became more conservative, and by the 2000s, it became a rightwing court.

SCOTUS' nine justices reflect the country in terms of race, religion, and gender: six are white, two are Black, one is Latina, and two are Jewish, perhaps the most diverse court in U.S. history. But it is now the most conservative court in four decades, dominated by Republican appointees who have passed increasingly reactionary decisions. Republican president George H. W. Bush appointed Justice Clarence Thomas and George W. Bush chose Chief Justice John Roberts and Samuel A. Alito, while Republican president Donald Trump appointed three, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett. The right now has a six-to-three majority that has

completely altered the direction of the court.

The court's most important single decision was the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* of 2022, that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 SCOTUS ruling that had established women's constitutional right to abortion. But in other decisions, the court has also undone racial discrimination laws, undermined protection of voting rights, compromised the separation of church and state, weakened federal regulatory agencies, and subverted laws for the control of firearms.

At the same time, we have learned of serious corruption in the court. Justice Clarence Thomas accepted financial gifts from billionaire and Republican donor Harlan Crow. Crow paid for the private school education of Thomas' grandnephew and adopted "son," for the house where Thomas' mother lived, for many vacation trips for Thomas in Crow's private jets and yachts, and gave half a million dollars to Thomas's wife Ginni for her

rightwing political foundation and paid her a \$120,000 annual salary. Ginni Thomas supports the Trump's "stop the steal" movement that falsely claims he won the election. Justice Alito accepted a \$100,000 Alaska fishing trip from hedge fund manager Paul Singer. Both Crow and Singer are men who have cases that have come before the court, and neither Thomas nor Alito reported their gifts, nor do they apologize.

Now we've learned that Alito flew flags identified with Trump's "stop the steal" and with the January 6 insurrection, one an upside-down U.S. flag at his home and the other a Christian nationalist "appeal to heaven" flag at his vacation home. Within the highest court in the land, we have two corrupt justices, both of whom are linked to the far-right, six conservatives altogether who overturn regulations and democratically decided state and federal legislation. No wonder the court is despised by so many.

26 May 2024

G7: Whether or not to maintain the suspension of Ukrainian debt payments

25 May 2024, by **Éric Toussaint**

Who are Ukraine's creditors?

It ought to be remembered as well that the aid provided by the US and Western European powers is, in the case of the US, in the form of grants of arms or other financial aid, whereas the Europeans provide the arms in the form of grants, and the rest of the financial aid is in the form of loans that Ukraine must repay.

Ukraine's debt is more than \$100 billion.

The financial markets, i.e., major investment funds and banks, including BlackRock and PIMCO, are holders of Ukrainian debt securities. Vulture

funds are also on the prowl and have bought Ukrainian debt securities at discount prices. Ukraine's creditors include multilateral organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The World Bank and the IMF don't provide grants, and even during the war, the IMF continued to seek debt repayment at a high-interest rate.

Have creditors decided to suspend their demand for repayments from Ukraine?

In July 2022, the Western powers agreed to defer all debt payments for two years. If the suspension of debt payments is not extended in July 2024,

Ukraine must resume payments.

As a result, months of negotiations have been undertaken to determine what will transpire after July 2024. The European Union has postponed the date for the resumption of repayments by several years. So, what is at stake is mainly the repayments to private creditors, as well as to countries that are not directly part of the Western alliance or that are even opposed to this Western alliance, in particular China, which is also one of Ukraine's creditors, but also Russia.

It should also be pointed out that the authorities in Kyiv are not asking for the cancellation of the Ukrainian debt.

They are simply in favour of continuing the country's indebtedness. Zelensky's neo-liberal government borrowed domestically to fund the war and the resistance to the Russian invasion, and it continued to borrow abroad, in particular from the IMF, and so on.

In 2022, a petition was launched to cancel the debt.

Social movements and left-wing opposition to the war are calling for the total cancellation of Ukraine's debt to relieve the Ukrainian people of this burden and allow them to resist and rebuild their nation in their interests. A global petition has been circulating since 2022.

Why is this being negotiated within the G7 and not the G20?

The negotiations on financing the war and reconstruction are taking place within the G7 because if they were held within the G20, they would include forces from the global South, particularly the BRICS countries, which include Russia and China, who oppose the West's sanctions policy. Brazil, India and South Africa are also opposed to sanctions. For example, despite being an ally of the United States, India has increased its oil purchases from Russia since the invasion of Ukraine.

What are the disagreements between the G7 members?

There are major disagreements within the G7. The US government claims that it is possible to seize the assets of the Russian Federation, which are primarily located in Europe, specifically Brussels. The United States says: 'Let's take these assets, these financial assets, and put them in a fund to finance the war and reconstruction', while the Europeans, the majority of Europeans so far, in the European Union, say: 'No, if we do that, we will be affecting the immunity of states, and it won't just concern the Russian Federation'. Above all, they are concerned that if the Russian Federation's assets are seized, particularly those in Brussels, powers such as China, the Gulf States, and other countries that invest in Europe will withdraw their financial

investments from European banks, because what happens to the Russian Federation could happen to them if sanctions are imposed on them for other reasons in the future. As a result, Europeans, particularly Christine Lagarde, President of the European Central Bank, as well as the Italian, Belgian, French, and German governments, are opposed to touching and outright seizing Russian Federation assets in Brussels due to the consequences for the euro as an international reserve currency and for the major European private banks. This precedent would result in the euro losing its status as a reserve currency or at the very least substantially weakening its role as an international reserve currency. A considerable chunk of the deposits of major powers such as China and the Middle East in private European banks would also be at risk of withdrawal. In this discussion, the British generally agree with Washington, but they are more cautious than politicians on the other side of the Atlantic.

What compromise is the G7 heading for?

We are undoubtedly approaching a point where the G7 will decide not to expropriate Russian assets and thus maintain the freeze on Russian assets, and on the basis of these Russian assets or on the interest provided by these assets, they will create a mechanism to issue debt securities in the name of Ukraine, or, we can assume, in the name of a consortium of countries to lend this money to Ukraine.

In this situation, Russian assets would serve as collateral for the large investment funds and banks that would buy the loan's securities, allowing the money to be lent to Ukraine and substantially increasing Ukrainian debt.

In the trade press, there is talk of a \$30 billion loan.

What would be the position to defend?

In principle, I believe that it should be permissible to seize the assets of an aggressor state, i.e. one that has

invaded another's territory or is actively engaged in military aggression against another country. But the question remains: who manages the assets, and for what purpose? In today's international situation, it is incredibly hard to envision how a seizure might be managed by social movements, by citizens of the invaded country, so that the use of the funds seized genuinely serves the interests of the people of the attacked country. The seizure of an aggressor country's assets should certainly apply to all aggressor countries, which means that the United States and its allies, who have committed countless aggressions and invasions, should also be subject to this regulation. But this is not the case. For over a century and a half, the United States has seized other states' property on multiple occasions, beginning with the property of states it has attacked or invaded, such as Haiti in 1915, to give only one example.

However, seizing an aggressor country's assets should not be the only conceivable remedy. A fund to finance Ukraine's reconstruction and resistance to aggression could or should be funded by levying a tax on huge private firms that profit from war. The armaments manufacturers of Germany, France, North America, and other nations are profiting greatly from increased military budgets, the supply of arms to Ukraine, and so on. [1]

This applies, for example, to Rheinmetall in Germany, which is reaping enormous profits, as well as to other significant arms companies. At the very least, they should pay a tax comparable to or equal to the increase in their profits, and the proceeds should be transferred to a development fund managed directly by the Ukrainian people.

The assets of the oligarchs profiting from Ukraine's aggression, both Russian and Ukrainian, should be seized. In this way, significant sums may be raised to fund the Ukrainian people's resistance and the country's reconstruction.

It should be noted that levying a tax equal to the additional profits made by

arms companies in the context of this war and other wars, in general, would limit these companies' appetite to rejoice in the continuation of the war and contribute to it, as they would not benefit directly from it.

Measures to seize oligarchs' assets, and confiscate and expropriate their property, run directly counter to the sanctity of private property, and as a result, there have been no major seizures since 2022 because Western governments are not inclined to do so, even if they oppose the Russian Federation. Exactly what has been accomplished needs to be assessed, but in any case, it has been extremely limited and nothing has been transferred to a fund controlled by the Ukrainian people. In truth, there has been no specific tax on corporations that have benefited from the war. I mentioned the arms companies, but we can also discuss the massive profits made by gas and oil companies as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Profits have also increased for grain marketing corporations around the world, including the four big multinationals that control 80% of the global cereal grains trade. They

include three American companies and one European company. A special tax on the profits of these companies should have been levied and should be levied, including retroactively, both to finance the needs of all populations and to help the Ukrainian people. We must also continue to demand the cancellation of Ukraine's debt.

None of this is planned by the G7 leaders; thus we must present a clear alternative position in opposition to the G7's agenda of prolonging the war and funding it principally through debt. The G7 member countries intend to take advantage of the situation, and especially the possibility of seizing control of Ukraine's natural resources and privatising Ukrainian public companies such as the gas company and the power production and distribution company. These are public enterprises, and the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the governments of Europe, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States all want to see them privatised.

And, of course, we must also fight against the major investment funds

and private banks that are profiting from the war by lending money to the powers directly involved in the war and to Ukraine, and who are making a lot of money out of it.

It is also worth noting that several private European banks, including Austria's Raiffeisen, Germany's Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank, the Netherlands' ING and Italy's Unicredit and Intesa Sanpaolo, continue to operate in the Russian Federation. And despite the sanctions, they have quadrupled their profits in Russia since the invasion of Ukraine began. [They have just paid €800 million in income tax to the Russian authorities](#), with no action being taken by the European authorities. See the Financial Times revelations dated 28 April 2024: [Western banks in Russia paid €800mn in taxes to Kremlin last year](#).

23 May 2024

The author would like to thank Sushovan Dhar for his help

Translated by Sushovan Dhar in collaboration with Snake Arbusto for [CADTM](#).

Ecosocialism to change everything - the Sixth International Ecosocialist Conference

24 May 2024, by **Germán Bernasconi**

Successive meetings of the group promoting the Conference, including organizations from Brazil, Chile, the Basque Country, Portugal and Switzerland, were augmented with a series of international meetings, where the Marabunta organization joined the local Argentine group. After the elections and with the victory of Javier Milei, it was decided to continue holding the Conference in the month of May. This was ratified immediately after the victory of the libertarian candidate, in view of his program of structural adjustment of capitalism against the working class, since

international solidarity is key to defeating the plans of this figure.

Some objectives of the meeting

The environmental movement in Argentina is broad, diverse and with many activists. The anti-extractivist struggles, as well as those against the expansion of genetically modified crops and against the use of agro toxins, make it one of the most dynamic sectors with a great appeal among youth. However, the

ecosocialist perspective is not a voice of great relevance. This diagnosis positioned the Conference as a platform to bring together all the activism that draws on this perspective. On the other hand, the dynamics of the Meeting meant that it takes place only every two years.

The challenge was to give it some political and activist continuity, which consolidated debates and could advance to greater levels of agreement and programmatic and strategic developments at the level of the challenge posed by the climate

crisis, the responsibility of the capitalist productive regime. Likewise, its being held in the South posed the challenge of touching on topics that are not common in other latitudes, such as extractivist debates, as well as green colonialism or the problems surrounding environmental racism and the struggles of indigenous peoples.

Finally, the holding of COP 30 in Belem in 2025 imposed a new debate around this conference, the usefulness of participating, the strategy of denunciation and ignorance or participation in the counter-summit that is already taking place.

The development of the Conference

After almost a year of work, on 10-11 May, more than 200 people met at the Central Auditorium of ATE (State Workers Association) and the two auditoriums of the Quagliaro Hotel, also owned by the aforementioned union. On 9 May, Conference activities were planned, but they were suspended due to the necessary general strike called that day by all the country's trade union federations responding to the strong adjustment imposed by the government of Javier Milei. Over both days, various topics on the ecosocialist agenda were covered, starting with the history of

the Conferences themselves, knowing that every struggle must have its memory, so as not to have to start from scratch again.

The problems of Eco-Marxism, the plundering of territories, debt and trade in an eco-socialist key, the rise of militarism and the extreme right and repression were some of the topics of the first day, which closed with a panel that represented the big environmental struggles that have occurred in Argentina in recent decades.

Saturday the 11th began with an intervention by Michael Lowy in the ecosocialist debate between the centre and the periphery, followed by an in-depth debate on what to do in the face of COP 30, a space that inaugurated the First Latin American and Caribbean Ecosocial Conference. Food sovereignty, ecofeminism and the debate on energy and class in capitalism animated an afternoon where each topic was explored in depth. The final panel discussed the current situation of the ecosocialist movement and its future prospects, with one of the leaders of the global ecosocialist movement, Daniel Tanuro participating by video.

The Conference crowned its realization with the promise of a triple continuity: participation in the counter-summit in Belem, holding the Second Latin American and Caribbean Ecosocial (ist) Conference there; the

seventh International Ecosocialist Conference in Belgium organized by Gauche Anticapitaliste; and the continuity of the programmatic, strategic debate in an international network that will hold its first meeting in the next few weeks.

Some conclusions

I consider that the Sixth Conference was a success. With the participation of more than 40 organizations and more than 15 countries, as well as a large part of the Argentine provinces, the ecosocialist movement has a milestone from which to intervene in a better way in the environmental movement. The ecosocialist challenge now lies in giving continuity to the organization of its own permanent instances of reflection and construction, as well as intervening in a unitary way in the fight against the extreme right-wing deniers of the climate crisis while always being careful not to fall into the false solutions of green capitalism.

Today we are closer to a systemic ecosocialist alternative that allows the working class to enjoy a healthy environment, fewer hours of work and more time for collective enjoyment. It is time to go on the offensive and articulate a systemic program against the climatic and social barbarity of capitalism.

20 May 2024

Towards a return to dictatorship in Tunisia?

23 May 2024, by **S. Mousakaran**

Elected in 2019, Kaïs Saïed came to power at a pivotal moment of collective fatigue and the absence of a political alternative. A former university lecturer who had not held any political office, he rallied around himself by mobilising a populist discourse on the revolutionary forces and the popular will, of which he would be the one and only repository, thus discrediting all intermediary

bodies - trade unions, media, associations and civil society.

Concentration of power

On 25 July 2021, he initiated a legal restructuring with the promulgation of a new Constitution concentrating the

main powers in the hands of the President. He attacked the democratic bodies and checks and balances created by the post-revolutionary Constitution of 2014.

A veritable hunt for opponents was then launched, targeting political opponents, judges, journalists, trade unionists, civil society associations and actors and, more generally, any

person or structure critical of the new political leadership.

In this context, Kaïs Saïed uses the concepts of traitors to the nation, or even “mercenaries” who would “undermine the State in the name of freedom of expression”.

Helping migrants criminalized

In order to win popular support, he has designated associations that help migrants as the real enemy from within, at a time when Tunisia, a transit point for Europe, is experiencing a huge influx of migrants.

In reality, civil society as a whole is under threat. Activists are reporting practices and humiliations the like of which have not been seen since the time of Ben Ali, with the return of increased surveillance, police raids on premises, telephone harassment and

cases of obscure “foreign funding”, a real obsession of Kaïs Saïed.

The arrest on 6 May 2024 of anti-racist activist Saadia Mosbah is the latest stage in the criminalisation of the work of associations.

The new wave of arrests of lawyers and journalists in Tunisia since 11 May seems to be the logical continuation of this return to dictatorship, with Kaïs Saïed attacking the last bastions of freedom.

Climate of fear

European governments are no strangers to this serious authoritarian turn. Although several officials have expressed “concern”, the fact remains that the European Union is perfectly happy with the new regime, to which it has entrusted the task of outsourcing its borders and managing migrants before they arrive in Europe, just as it was with Ben Ali’s regime.

The similarities between the two regimes are sadly confirmed. The arrest of lawyer Mehdi Zagrouba, following that of Sonia Dahmani, has rekindled a trauma: torture. Mehdi Zagrouba claimed to have been tortured by police officers just before his appearance before the judge, causing him to vomit and faint during the hearing.

More than a decade after the revolution, a climate of fear has returned to Tunisia, where freedom of expression seemed just a few years ago to be the only achievement.

Nevertheless, mobilizations and demonstrations are being organised to demand a fixed date for the presidential elections due to take place in the next few months. No deadline has yet been set as the presidential term draws to a close.

23 May 2024

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

To foreign politicians - justice for Ukrainian workers!

21 May 2024, by **Collective**

On the eve of the European Parliament elections, trade union activists in Kryvyi Rih appeal to candidates and remind politicians that it is wage earners who bear the brunt of the war against the aggressor. They are the ones who lack ammunition, and it is their interests that should be discussed in high places. As Ukrainian trade unionists, we believe that ignoring these facts is fraught with catastrophic consequences. We warn against using support for Ukraine to cover up selfish agendas, which is common among certain international elites.

Yuriy Samoilov, leader of the Independent Trade Union of Miners, said: “In our families, every other

conversation is about the war, about those who are currently serving, about how to help them, because the vast majority of those mobilised are ordinary workers. This has become the union’s priority. But at the same time, labour legislation is being suspended, social spending is being cut, and children of businessmen and officials are having fun abroad. Is this fair?” - Yuriy asks.

The appeal has already garnered support from a diverse group of trade union, civic, and student activists from various regions of Ukraine. They share a common dissatisfaction with the lack of interest in employee issues and firmly believe that their collective voice is the key to change. They see

the potential audience of the appeal as friends of Ukraine and allies of workers, in Europe and around the world.

Oleksandr Skyba, leader of the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers at the Darnytsia depot, points out that since the war’s onset, labour rights have been significantly curtailed. He argues that most of these changes have not bolstered defence capabilities, but rather weakened them. “Allowing employers to arbitrarily suspend labour relations and the provisions of collective bargaining agreements is a severe blow to the role of trade unions and the foundations of democracy,” he asserts. Oleksandr underscores his

confidence in the power of unity and mutual support in the struggle and looks to his foreign comrades for solidarity.

Appeal to political representatives of the people of Europe and the world

Given that our fate often depends on your decisions, we, Ukrainian trade unionists and activists, would like to address you directly and emphasize the following:

While the international community is stuck in indecision, Russian occupation troops are gladly stepping up their offensive. Our comrades are dying on the frontline, forced to fight without enough arms supplies, and in the absence of proper air defence, our power plants, factories, and homes are being hit by devastating strikes. With truly “unwavering support,” this would not have been inevitable. However, for now, we have to face the aggressor mainly on our own.

The resilience of Ukrainian society depends on ordinary workers, who make up the majority of the armed forces and ensure the functioning of the home front in logistics, production, and maintenance of critical infrastructure. At the same time, there is an increasingly visible social divide, where public goods exist just for the elite and the rest are left with only duties. This demoralises and threatens the country's defence capability and its future. While we continue to get paid peanuts, work overtime, and live under the constant threat of being put on the street, our government is much

more concerned with deregulation and creating favourable conditions for business owners.

The safety and well-being of our families and friends are absolute values for us; they make us hold on. Yet it is painfully clear that post-war Ukraine will lack opportunities for a decent life if wage-earners do not get the leverage to solve their problems. It is with horror that we realise that we will probably have to seek a better life abroad, working day and night, competing for starvation wages from greedy masters.

It is also no secret that your elites are freezing wages, raising prices, cancelling holidays, and cutting social spending, justifying all these as a necessity to support Ukraine while at the same time continuing mutually beneficial trade with Russia; your money and technology is supporting their military capacities. This policy is extremely dangerous for the solidarity and trust between our peoples.

We understand that only together can we defend democracy and social justice from the invasions of imperialists, the pressure of dictators, the appetites of oligarchs, and the demagoguery of the far right.

Therefore, we call on you to:

1. Stop weapon exports to third countries and prioritise the supply of arms and ammunition necessary right now for defence to Ukraine. Our war should not become a pretext for profiteering by security salesmen!
2. Make it impossible for Putin's

regime to circumvent sanctions. This requires, among other things, closing shady schemes used by Russian, Ukrainian, and other oligarchs. Every transaction and spare part provided allows Russia to continue the war!

3. Write off the unfair debt and ensure your money is not spent on anti-social experiments in our country! International support should help to restore and expand universal healthcare and education, rebuild affordable housing and public infrastructure, and ensure decent jobs and working conditions.

4. Establish contacts with Ukrainian trade unions and civil society organisations, lobby for their involvement in decision-making at all levels, and insist on the importance of collective bargaining and freedom of associations! In a deformed political system, this is almost the only way for ordinary people to claim their rights.

5. Expose the use of solidarity to cover vested interests! Confiscate Russian assets, shut down offshore companies, and tax the super-rich/ Do not present your people with the false choice of sacrificing the fate of Ukrainians or taking away from the most vulnerable at home!

14 May 2024

Source:

<https://rev.org.ua/to-foreign-politicians-justice-for-ukrainian-workers/>

On the original site, the call for signatures is intended for Ukrainian activists, for international signatures
<https://forms.gle/6zPRQ8eBYmYw2Qj88>.

Auto Workers' Loss at Mercedes-Benz Slows the UAW Organizing Drive, but Won't Stop It

20 May 2024, by Dan La Botz

“We fought the good fight and we’re going to continue forward,” said Fain. “I believe workers want unions, I

believe they want justice, and we’re going to continue doing what we can do. Ultimately these workers are going

to win.”

The vote held from May 13 to 17, was 2,045 for the union and 2,642 against

out of 5,075 workers eligible to vote. In fact, in the South which has few unions, where the politicians are fiercely anti-union, and where Mercedes conducted an intense campaign against the UAW, it is not a bad result.

The UAW had been on a roll, having won the first national strike against all three big U.S. auto makers—GM, Stellantis and Ford—and then a successful organizing drive at Volkswagen in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Now they've been slowed, but not stopped.

Alabama Governor Kay Ivy had urged workers to vote against the union. "We may soon face another watershed decision when the U-A-W asks nearly 50,000 Alabamians: Do you want continued opportunity and success the Alabama way? Or do you want out-of-state special interests telling Alabama how to do business? For me, the choice is clear."

Federico Kochlowski, who became the president and CEO of Mercedes-Benz U.S. International (MBUSI) on April 30, 2024, led the vicious campaign against the UAW. He oversaw distribution of anti-union videos and mailings and captive-audience meetings where company managers

argued workers would be foolish to join the union.

The UAW has filed unfair labor practices charges with the National Labor Relations Board, accusing the company of engaging in coercive statements and coercive rules to prevent workers from exercising their right to a free and open union election. The UAW also accuses Mercedes of laying off and refusing to hire pro-union employees.

The UAW has also filed charges with the German government, alleging that Mercedes violated the country's Act on Corporate Due Diligence Obligations in Supply Chains. The Biden administration also spoke to the German government about the UAW's allegations of union-busting.

While the union lost this one, it is expected to fight on. Harley Shaiken, a labor professor at the University of California, Berkeley, explained that the UAW lost twice at the Volkswagen plant in Tennessee, and that in an earlier loss at VW in 2014, 53% voted against the union. But then this year 73% voted for the union. "I have no doubt they will continue organizing and eventually try for another vote," he said.

One Mercedes worker told Labor Notes, "We'll try to figure out what we did wrong, where we missed the mark," said Robert Lett. "We'll try to figure out how to shore up for the next time. Because there will be another time. We're not just going to shrug and walk away. We know this company. We know the company values their profits more than they value their employees."

The UAW has allocated \$40 million for organizing and is looking to organize other plants in the South as well. The union must become larger and stronger if it is to confront the industry as it makes the transition to electric vehicles. The union has organizing drives under way at a Hyundai plant in Montgomery, Alabama and Toyota Motor in Troy, Missouri. Republican governors in the South have united in opposition to the union while President Joe Biden has praised the UAW. Presidential candidate Donald Trump has ridiculed UAW president Shawn Fain calling him stupid while insisting that he loves auto workers and that the UAW had better endorse him or it will disappear. A lot of bluster. But, no matter, Shawn Fain says the UAW will not be deterred.

19 May 2024

The resistible rise of the far right in Europe

19 May 2024, by **NPA Antifascist Commission**

European overview

In Italy, the far right, with Giorgia Meloni's *Fratelli d'Italia* party and the Lega (formerly the Northern League), have together led the government since the parliamentary elections of 25 September 2022, in addition to the right-wing Forza Italia party of the late Silvio Berlusconi.

In Sweden, two weeks earlier, the Sweden Democrats (SD) were among the winners of the parliamentary elections of 11 September 2022. [2]

Winning 20.5%, the SD became the country's second largest political force in terms of votes, behind the Social Democratic Party (30.3%), now in opposition. The Moderate party (classic right, 19.1%) then succeeded in forming a coalition with the Christian Democrats, the Liberals and the SDs. Although the latter party did not hold any ministries, it did have a governmental parliamentary majority dependent on it and a seat on the "coordination" committee of the coalition parties. The governmental agreement largely bears its signature

on immigration and security.

In Finland, following the parliamentary elections of 2 April 2023, the True Finns party became the second political force with 20.1% of the vote, nipping at the heels of the traditional right-wing party, the National Coalition Party (20.8%). Here, the far right has entered the government of the conservative Petteri Orpo, occupying ministries alongside the main right-wing party as well as the Christian Democrats and the Swedish minority party. The True Finns hold the ministries of Economy,

Finance, Interior, Justice and Social Affairs. Remarkably, since the summer of 2023, Finland has been gripped by a succession of strikes and university protests against the anti-social "reforms" implemented by this government, the latest of which was a strike described as political (even though a draft law is intended to ban so-called political strikes) lasting fifteen days from 11 March 2024, against new employment legislation.

In other European countries, the far right is in a strong position. In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders, founder in 2008 (and legally the only member to date) of the Party for Freedom (PVV), emerged as the leader of the leading electoral force in the last parliamentary elections on 22 November 2023, with 23.49% of the vote, after having obtained 10.79% in 2021. Although the PVV subsequently failed to form a government with Wilders as Prime Minister due to a lack of parliamentary support, the Netherlands appears to be moving towards a coalition government with the PVV as the leading force. In addition to the PVV, a future coalition is expected to bring together a farmers' party that protests against environmental standards (the BBB), a right-wing liberal party (the VVD) and a split from the Christian Democratic Party.

In Austria, the fragile federal government has brought together the conservative right (ÖVP) and the Greens since January 2020. But the far-right FPÖ party is expected to win the forthcoming general election in autumn 2024, where it is projected to receive around 30% of the vote. [3] In the meantime, the FPÖ is currently in government in three of the country's eight regions.

In Eastern Europe, while the national-conservative PIS party lost the parliamentary elections in Poland on 15 October 2023, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Hungarian Fidesz party, in power since 2010, still governs in Budapest. The two parties cover a spectrum that, in France, would encompass both the right and part of the far right. In Hungary, they are joined by a far-right party that is not part of the government, Jobbik ("The Best"); this party has tried to

refocus in the most recent period, but at the risk of splitting off from a harder, more extremist current that gave rise in 2018 to the Mi Hazánk ("At Home") movement. The polls currently forecast Jobbik's share of the vote to fall to less than 3%, compared with 6.34% in 2019 and 14.67% in 2014, but the new Mi Hazánk formation is expected to break through with more than 8%.

Two groups in the European Parliament

The far right in the European Parliament is represented mainly in two separate groups. On the one hand, the Identity and Democracy (ID) group, created in 2019, which includes the French Rassemblement national (RN), the Italian Lega, the Dutch PVV, the Austrian FPÖ and the German AfD party. [4] On the other, the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group, whose backbone was initially made up of the British Conservatives until they left the European Parliament following Brexit, which includes Fratelli d'Italia, the Swedish Democrats, the True Finns and the Spanish party VOX. The Polish PIS is now the largest force.

However, in March 2021, Fidesz left the European People's Party (EPP, which brings together the classic bourgeois right) and is negotiating to join other groups, including the ECR and ID. The Hungarian party could play a pivotal role, bringing these two groups closer together. Although there are noticeable divisions between the ID and ECR, particularly on economic issues, the majority of ECR members are more or less neoliberal on economic issues, even if part of the ID group emphasizes populist social demagoguery like the French RN - at least as long as these parties are in opposition in their respective countries.

Lastly, the French *Reconquête* party, which is also presenting a list for the European elections but is not guaranteed to pass the 5% vote threshold required to enter parliament, currently sits in the ECR

group with its only outgoing MEP, Nicolas Bay, elected in 2019 on the RN list. However, in addition to belonging to different parliamentary groupings, there are deep divisions - apparent or real - running through the far right "family".

Cleavage over Russia

The majority of these parties in the European Union, especially in the western part and in Germany, were historically very supportive of, and even explicitly linked to, the Russian regime in the years after 2000. But this position has become much more difficult to assume publicly since the start of the war against Ukraine.

The French RN is currently one of the most outspoken critics of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The reason is simple: France's main far-right party believes it is so close to coming to power nationally that it cannot afford to adopt a stance that would put it at odds with majority opinion. As during the 2022 presidential election campaign, when, after the announcement of the start of the war in Ukraine, the RN was forced to throw out 1.2 million copies of an eight-page leaflet because it was illustrated with a photo showing Marine Le Pen with Vladimir Putin to demonstrate her qualities as a "stateswoman". In the days that followed, Marine Le Pen claimed that Ukraine was a positive illustration of a "national liberation struggle", claiming that her party was following the same logic.

Other parties, structurally allied to the French RN, are not taking the same position. This is the case of the FPÖ, which has also had a formal cooperation agreement with Putin's United Russia party since 2016. Some of its representatives now claim that the agreement was "only formal". However, Karin Kneissl, the foreign minister appointed at the end of 2017 at the suggestion of the FPÖ (although she does not hold a party card), invited Vladimir Putin to her wedding in August 2018. In September 2023, Kneissl announced that she was moving to St Petersburg. Moreover,

since the arrest on 29 March 2024 of a former agent of the Austrian National Security and Intelligence Directorate for spying for Russia, the Austrian state apparatus has been rocked by revelations of pro-Russian activities.

At no time has the French RN questioned its alliance with the FPÖ, which is a pillar of its policy of European alliances. Worse for the RN's current official position, their parliamentary group (ID) expanded its ranks at the end of February 2024 to include the Bulgarian party Vazradjane ("Renaissance") and the Slovak National Party (SNS). Both are close allies of Vladimir Putin's regime within the European Union. As far as the Bulgarian party is concerned, three of its deputies took part in a United Russia meeting in Moscow on 16 February 2024. As for the SNS, in Bratislava it is part of a coalition government which, along with Fidesz in Hungary, has the most pro-Russian foreign policy of all the member countries of the European Union.

Pseudo-cleavage on "remigration"

Another, largely artificial, divide emerged in February 2024. Since mid-January 2024, there had been massive demonstrations against the German AfD party, with over a million people taking part in various German cities. The motive was the publication on 10 January 2024 of a report shot on hidden camera about a meeting held behind closed doors between AfD

party executives, members of the identitarian movement, representatives of the most right-wing wing of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union, classical right-wing) and a section of the employers' association. At the conference, the Austrian identitarian activist Martin Sellner - who has since been banned from entering Germany - spoke out on the subject of "remigration". [5] Sellner had fantasized about deporting two million people, including German nationals who were "poorly integrated" or "complicit in mass immigration", to an unidentified model state in North Africa that would take them in.

Marine Le Pen then distanced herself from the German party, publicly questioning whether she should continue to work with it in the European Parliament. The co-president of the AfD party, Alice Weidel, wrote her a public letter, citing translation errors and claiming that her party was only calling for convicted foreign criminals to be deported "in accordance with the law".

The fact remains that this divide is largely imaginary, with Marine Le Pen's public stance due solely to her desire to put on a good show in the eyes of public opinion, wishing to avoid any "extremist" appearance. However, one of the pillars of the ID group in the European Parliament, the FPÖ, and in particular its president Herbert Kickl - who was Austrian Minister of the Interior from 2017 to 2019 - has been shamelessly using the term "remigration" for years, without

Marine Le Pen having found fault with it, until now.

Another Europe, free of fascism

The real divisions are not within the far right, whose positions can be very elastic, but between the far right and its opponents. European leaders need to revive and reorientate their national economies (budget cuts; increased exploitation; "structural" unemployment), against a backdrop of a race to war. In the face of popular discontent, reactionary, patriarchal and xenophobic demagoguery, combined with the repression of mobilizations, leaves plenty of room for the far right, which often appears to be the only real opposition party. In this sense, the necessarily neoliberal policies of the European Union are a stepping stone for European fascism.

It is up to us to fight on the basis of fundamental positions, rejecting their ideas, which remain unacceptable in all forms. We demand open borders and a Europe-wide redistribution of wealth. Immediately, we are in favour of a European minimum wage and equal social rights for all. This means breaking out of the shackles imposed by the EU, and will require major victorious mobilizations across the continent.

April 2024

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

Rafah and El Fasher: Genocidal War and Duty of Solidarity

18 May 2024, by **Gilbert Achcar**

In both cases, the local population faces a genocidal war: one is waged by a Zionist army inspired by a Jewish racist project that aims to control the

entirety of Palestine and is based on genocide accompanied by ethnic cleansing, while the other is waged by armed gangs motivated by tribal and

Arab racist ambitions aiming to control the entire Darfur region (which is approximately twenty times the area of Palestine between the river

and the sea) and is also based on genocide accompanied by ethnic cleansing.

As we face the horror of the ongoing Zionist genocidal war in Gaza, which has caused after seven months and one week nearly 45,000 deaths (taking into account the unidentified bodies still under the rubble, numbering 10,000 by the lowest estimate), we are facing a war that is no less horrific in Darfur, if measured by the number of deaths that fell last autumn in the city of El Geneina alone in West Darfur, where a UN report estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 were killed at the hands of the Rapid Support Forces out of a total population of 150,000. This percentage is a warning that the death toll in El Fasher could reach between 60,000 and 100,000 if the aggressors occupied it, especially since the genocidal war fought in Darfur under Omar al-Bashir, starting in 2003, left a number of dead that reached 300,000 according to UN estimate. This is not to mention the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe, which in Sudan surpasses that of Gaza, as the number of displaced people inside and outside Sudanese territory exceeds 8.5 million, a great portion of whom are threatened by a famine no less horrific than the one that is now threatening the people of Gaza.

If the Zionist army occupied Rafah after besieging it without any of its residents and those displaced there daring to leave for fear of being slaughtered, as is the case in El Fasher, the death toll would be no less than what awaits the capital of North Darfur. But international pressure on Israel, including pressure from its US partner in the war on Gaza - influenced by the amazing global movement in solidarity with the

people of Gaza, including the movement that started from US universities - has forced the Zionist state to seek to reduce the number of potential victims of its attack on Rafah by calling on the Gazans to leave the city and move to the expanded "humanitarian" Al-Mawasi coastal area, west of the city of Khan Yunis. However, unlike Gaza and Rafah, there is no global movement around the ongoing war in Sudan nor any interest in the fate that awaits El Fasher, except for some rare articles in the world press.

This difference of interest is interpreted by Israel's supporters as stemming from "antisemitism" in the sense of holding the "Jewish" state accountable to higher standards than those by which other countries are held accountable. The truth is that the Western world cares about Israel by "narcissistic compassion", as it sees the Zionist state as a Western wedge in the flank of the Arab East. It is this "narcissistic compassion" that leads the Western media to pay much more attention to the victims of September 11, who numbered approximately 3,000, and the victims of October 7 who numbered 1,143 on the Israeli side, than it pays to the millions of victims who have fallen and are falling in wars in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. But Western identification with Israel, which is basically "narcissistic compassion", backfires against it, as people of good conscience in Western public opinion hold it accountable just as they hold their own governments accountable.

Thus, the movement against the US war on Vietnam in Western countries greatly exceeded the movement against the Russian war on Ukraine. This is because those who are antiwar

in the West saw that the responsibility for the former fell on the most powerful Western country, while they do not feel a similar responsibility for what the Russian state is doing. The reason why their interest in Israel's onslaught on Gaza is much greater than their interest in what is happening in Darfur is their awareness that the Zionist state is an organic part of the Western camp, and that its aggression against the Palestinian people would not have been possible without US participation. This is what Mahmoud Darwish meant when he told the Israeli poet Helit Yeshurun, during an interview she conducted with him in 1996: "Do you know why we Palestinians are famous? It's because you are our enemy. Interest in the Palestinian question flows from interest in the Jewish question. Yes. People are interested in you, not me ... ! The international interest in the Palestinian question merely reflects the interest people take in the Jewish question."

This is the truth, but it does not absolve us, Arabs, from the guilt of "narcissistic compassion" in showing interest in what the Zionist state is doing to our Palestinian brothers and sisters, using weapons provided by the United States of America, but indifference to what Arab gangs are doing to non-Arab African people in Darfur, using weapons provided by the United Arab Emirates. People of good conscience who adhere to humanistic values must denounce the crimes taking place in Darfur and Sudan just as they denounce the crimes taking place in Gaza and Palestine.

Source: Translated from the Arabic original published in [Al-Quds al-Arabi](#) on 14 May 2024 for [Gilbert Achar's blog](#).

A look back at the doctors' strike in Kenya

17 May 2024, by **Paul Martial**

The doctors' strike, called by the Kenyan Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union

(KMPDU) on 15 March, has just ended, following an agreement reached with the Ministry of Health.

Debt versus health

The strikers' demands covered several points. Respect for collective agreements, because the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) signed in 2017 and its 2021 memorandum of understanding have never been applied, working conditions, the assignment of trainee doctors (interns or junior doctors) and the refusal of the reduction in their salaries decided authoritatively by the authorities. However, as Muinde Nthusi, Chairman of the Kenya Medical, Dental and Pharmacy Interns Liaison Committee, points out, these interns represent 70% of the workforce in public establishments.

These demands are part of a wider popular protest movement against the austerity policy that William Ruto, the new president elected in September 2022, is trying to implement.

He was elected on a populist platform and also likes to be noted for his stance in defence of the global South. But the reality of his policies in the

country is quite different. To remedy Kenya's indebtedness, Ruto has signed an agreement with the IMF and is applying to the letter its recommendations, which are based on the old recipes of structural adjustment policies.

The argument of a lack of money to justify the policy of social regression against health workers is undermined by the government's choice to repay the interest on a colossal debt of over 65 billion dollars at any cost.

Repressive and corrupt

Before the High Court of Justice in Nairobi ordered the authorities to negotiate, William Ruto's response to the demands of the health workers, apart from contempt by declaring that the workers must learn to live within their means, was repression. Union leader Dr Davji Bhimji Attellah was seriously injured by a bullet to the head fired by the police during a rally. Nearly a hundred doctors have been dismissed. Ruto is no stranger to violence. During demonstrations against his austerity policy, the crackdown resulted in several deaths

and hundreds of arrests.

Kenya's anti-corruption commission ranked the Ministry of Health second only to the Ministry of the Interior for its "unethical conduct". One example is the embezzlement of more than \$17 million in the fight against Covid.

The agreement

Although, according to KMPDU secretary Attellah, "the highly controversial issue of the secondment and remuneration of trainee doctors has still not been resolved", since the matter is now in the hands of the courts, progress has been made on working and training conditions, the payment of salary arrears resulting from the application of the 2017 CBA and the lifting of all sanctions linked to the dispute.

The results of this strike have a double positive effect, showing that it is possible to force the government to negotiate and that austerity policies are not inevitable if the path of struggle is taken.

11 May 2024

Translated by *International Viewpoint* from *Afriques en Lutte*.

The "Antisemitism" Smear Weaponized

16 May 2024, by *Against the Current* Editors

Because of this movement's moral authority and power in the face of a monstrous slaughter funded by U.S. tax dollars, it's not surprising that it has come under attack from multiple directions including reprisals by campus administration and violent police action against students and sympathetic faculty members.

We want to focus here on a specific smear against the movement: that it is "antisemitic" or advocates "genocide of the Jewish people." This lie is endlessly cycled through much of the media, in the spectacle of

Congressional hearings and now legislation mandating "antisemitism watch" offices at universities, and of course through the "pro-Israel" lobby groups spearheaded by AIPAC (America Israel Political Affairs Committee) and the Anti-Defamation League.

Much of the hysteria in Congress and media is propelled by far-right MAGA elements who, of course, had little to say about the torch-carrying "Jews will not replace us" white-supremacist marchers in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017. It's actually part of a broader

Republican campaign to discredit and ultimately crush any progressive expressions in college education, especially liberal arts.

The "antisemitism" smear against Palestine solidarity makes a convenient opportunist addition to existing targets such as Diversity-Equity-Inclusion programs, Critical Race Theory, gender studies, anything "woke" and other perceived threats to what the right wing regards as western civilization. Not coincidentally, it's also a pretext to slash huge holes in protections of free

speech and to purge academic institutions.

This includes a drive to literally criminalize slogans of “Free, free Palestine” and “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.” (No one proposes to outlaw the statement from Israel’s ruling Likud party and prime minister Netanyahu, “from the river to the sea, total Israeli sovereignty.”) Whatever these phrases might mean to different people in different places, there can be no excuse for banning them as so-called hate speech or “genocide of the Jewish people.”

In this climate it’s necessary both to defend Palestine solidarity activism and to state clearly what antisemitism is – and isn’t. Antisemitism is an ideology of hatred and contempt for Jews, as a people and as individuals. While it has centuries-old roots in religious bigotry, for the past 150 or so years, beginning in Europe, antisemitism has taken the form of pseudo-scientific racial theory. Like all forms of racism it is irrational, and in the specific case of antisemitism it ascribes to Jews various schemes to control finance, politics, media etc.

In its most extreme forms, of course, antisemitic ideology and myth fueled the Nazi extermination machinery that almost wiped out Jewish life in much of Europe. At less visible levels it persists and tends to arise at moments when racism in general raises its ugly head – as for example in the United States in the anti-Black backlash following the election of president Obama and the ascendancy of Donald Trump.

Antisemitism as a set of racial anti-

Jewish stereotypes is not to be confused with critical analysis of the Israeli state. Israel’s “crimes of apartheid and persecution” (as called by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch) against the Palestinian people are no more immune from scrutiny than those of the United States in Vietnam and Iraq, Russia in Ukraine or China against the Uyghur people, the Indian government’s Hindutva campaign against Muslims, etc. Israel’s ideological claim to act as the “nation-state of the Jewish people” falsely – and dangerously – seeks to make all Jews responsible for its criminal acts.

Under these conditions, and with live-streamed genocidal atrocities in Gaza growing by the day, it may be surprising and encouraging that so few actual antisemitic incidents have actually occurred. More of these have occurred off campus than on, such as the Proud Boys gathering near Columbia or one hate-speech ranter outside the gate. (One campus protest organizer musing about “killing Zionists” was immediately repudiated.)

In the notorious case of Northeastern University in Boston, administration called police onto campus after “Kill the Jews” chanting was reported – which video footage showed coming from an apparent counterdemonstrator carrying an Israeli flag.

There have been many more physical attacks and threats against Palestinian, Arab and Muslim than against Jewish students. All of them, of course, are vicious and absolutely unacceptable on campus or anywhere

else. Attacks on Jewish students are both morally repugnant and damaging to the Palestine solidarity movement.

It’s important however to emphasize a point made by Columbia and Barnard professor Nadia Abu el-Haj, who herself has been a target of Zionist smear campaigns during her academic career. Everyone on campus, she states, has an absolute right to be safe. That does not give anyone a right to shut down speech or protest just because they don’t feel safe.

In fact, part of the purpose of the right-wing attack – joined deplorably by much of the center-liberal establishment – on the pro-Palestine campus struggle is aimed to make Jews feel unsafe. Weaponizing Jewish insecurity in this way, as a tool against an anti-genocide struggle, can be seen itself as a manipulation of antisemitism.

Is real antisemitism increasing in the United States today? Probably so (although unfortunately the once-useful statistics compiled by the ADL are now entirely unreliable since it acts as a propaganda and intelligence outpost of the Israeli state). It needs to be resolutely fought, along with all other expressions of racism. It is not to be confused with denunciation of what must be understood, again, as the joint Israeli-U.S. genocide in Palestine.

Here is the [Statement from the Concerned Jewish Faculty Against Antisemitism](#)

9 May 2024

Source [Solidarity](#).

Six takeaways from the local and mayoral elections

15 May 2024, by **Dave Kellaway**

1. Tory support is not recovering with Sunak.

In the run-up to these elections, Sunak tacked to the right. The government

televised a roundup of migrants preparing for Rwanda flights. Sunak

dramatically announced the threat of extremism after Galloway won Rochdale. He warmly welcomed the anti-trans Cass report. The Tories inaccurately attacked Labour as a party wanting to give amnesty to immigrants. They cut National Insurance to fool voters they may be better off amidst a cost of living crisis fuelled by huge rent and mortgage rises.

Sunak is not a great political operator or campaigner. Suella Braverman urges him to go further right by leaving the European Convention on Human Rights and setting a more brutal cap on net migration. Some of her allies are trying to cajole former Prime Minister Boris Johnson back into a front-line role. Damian Green and Andy Street, representing the shrinking one-nation conservatives, call for Sunak to return to the political centre. The hard right has deferred replacing him before the general election, as the pretenders likely want to avoid getting tainted by leading the Tories to a big defeat. Everything is being prepared for a major post-election reconfiguration on the right. Nigel Farage may be keeping his powder dry for now, aiming to mop up both the Tory Right and the Reform UK Party into a new outfit he can lead. The election results show that racist dog whistles, pro-motorist rhetoric and anti-woke hysteria are not resonating with the electorate. Susan Hall, the pro-Trump London mayoral candidate, led the Tories to an even worse defeat than last time.

2. The Thrasher national vote projection of a hung parliament is not reliable.

Sunak desperately clings to the dubious national vote projection by Professor Thrasher, an election specialist who predicted Labour would fall 30 seats short. John Curtice, known for his solid track record on elections, and the Ipsos team have both sharply criticised this projection.

People vote differently in local elections compared to national ones. Small parties are more likely to get a bigger vote share as winning a council seat is easier than a parliamentary constituency. Up to 25% of the vote in these elections went to independents,

residents' associations, and smaller parties. When choosing the next government, these parties' votes get squeezed. Even the significant Gaza protest vote may not retain its impact in a November election. The projection also excludes Scotland, where Labour could win back up to twenty seats. Labour performed well in many of the Red Wall seats it lost to the Tory/Farage Brexit coalition in 2019. It also gained in the Blue Wall of the South, for example, by winning an area containing the garrison town of Aldershot. Reform UK is hurting the Tories, not Labour, unlike UKIP in 2019. The Liberal Democrats' vote recovery is also more likely to cost the Tories seats than Labour. Starmer is content with an unofficial pact that gives the Lib Dems a relatively free run in Tory/Liberal marginals.

The Labour leadership is happy to run with this projection as they want to avoid fostering complacency and can argue that a tight vote requires them to maintain a very moderate line to win over Tory voters.

3. Reform UK performed well and is hurting the Tories.

In Blackpool South, Reform UK narrowly missed second place by around a hundred votes. Where it stood against the Tories, the government support loss was approximately 5 or 6 percentage points greater. Its score in the West Midlands mayoral election offset Labour's vote leak to the pro-Gaza candidate. In London, it compensated for any Labour losses on the ULEZ (ultra-low emission zone) question in the outer boroughs. Although it only won a single London Assembly seat and one other seat, it achieved a vote share in line with recent national polls at 15%. Tice, the Reform UK leader, appears to rule out any deal similar to the one Farage made with Johnson. He states his aim is to 'destroy the Tory party'.

One risk of a resurgent far right party like Reform UK is how such an outfit could garner support in a crisis or dissatisfaction arising under the Starmer government. Its rise usually combines with the strengthening of actual neo-Nazi groups. John McDonnell has already warned of this

danger.

4. The Greens performed even better than expected and won votes from Labour.

In London, the Greens nearly tied with the Liberal Democrats at around 6% in the mayoral race. Previously, they had beaten them into fourth place, but the change to a First Past the Post system with no second preferences meant many progressive voters opted for Sadiq, fearing Susan Hall might sneak in on a reactionary agenda. In the past, many Green voters would give their second preference to Labour to keep the Tories out. Looking at the London Assembly elections, the Green vote held up, and they retained their three seats. In some areas, like North East London or City and East, they reached 20%. Clearly, many progressive voters chose Sadiq in the mayoral race but voted Green for the assembly and list vote. Relatively speaking, the Greens gained the most new seats compared to the ones they were defending in this election. They added a third to their total number of councillors, whereas Labour added a fifth. In Bristol, they are now the largest party, winning all the council seats in their target constituency of Bristol Central. They have picked up disillusioned Labour voters over Gaza and Starmer's U-turn on green energy plans. Former Corbyn supporters have flowed into the Greens for some time now. Although the undemocratic electoral system makes it very difficult for the Greens to replicate this progress in a general election, they appear to have a greater chance of holding their current seat and perhaps winning another.

5. Labour is winning from the centre but losing votes to its left and on Gaza.

Around 60 pro-Gaza councillors, most of whom are ex-Labour, now sit in council chambers, primarily in areas with large Muslim communities. In the West Midlands, the very good vote (11%) for the pro-Gaza candidate meant the contest came down to about a thousand votes. Although a few align with Galloway's Workers Party, nearly all are independents and unlinked to any left wing current.

Starmer, for the first time, has now acknowledged that the Gaza question affected the Labour vote. He talked about 'listening' and having 'heard' the disquiet. There was no reference to the genocide or solidarity with the Palestinian people. His very weak, caveated ceasefire call remained unchanged. He made no mention of British arms supplied to the Israeli army. He gets concerned about losing votes among the Muslim community because it might slightly complicate his passage to becoming Prime Minister. He refuses to heed Muslim Labour activists' call for an apology and a different perspective on Gaza. No doubt there will be much more manoeuvring to highlight Labour's two-state solution and 'supporting the international community's efforts to find a solution.' Humanitarian aid will be on the agenda. Do not expect any Labour leadership to campaign to stop the Rafah assault or demand the opening of aid routes. It is a tribute to the mass campaigning around Palestine that the issue has become central to these elections. Activists outside the Labour Party have done much of the organising. The radical left has played its part.

Tory support is collapsing, but there is no great enthusiasm for Labour. Expectations about politicians' promises are indeed very low. Starmer's project even plays into this by emphasising that the situation is so dire that not much can really be done. Some left activists fear that without the activist army seen under Corbyn, a Labour majority is at risk. So they call for Starmer to look back to the left and bring it back on board. These elections show that Labour can win in the current circumstances without the foot soldiers. Canvassing teams have been very scant, bolstered only by councillors getting out. Just today, Hilary Schan, a Momentum leader, left the party to work in left wing networks outside. She is going to work with Owen Jones, who also recently

quit over Labour's position on Gaza.

The London result shows that Labour can win without caving into the centre on every issue. Sadiq's ULEZ policy was openly attacked by the Labour leadership, and his call for a ceasefire came months before Starmer shifted his position. His policies also sometimes go beyond the official Labour line, for example, on rent controls or extending free school meals. These mayoral positions give those Labour politicians a certain relative autonomy and profile. Andy Burnham, the Manchester regional mayor, today noticeably called for a ban on council house sales, which is certainly not Labour policy. While most of the other mayors are handpicked Starmer loyalists, both Sadiq and Burnham could pivot for some internal and public opposition to Starmer as Prime Minister.

6. Building a left-leaning electoral alternative is very difficult.

Jamie Driscoll, a popular Labour mayor from the Corbyn Left, had his candidature for the new North East region ruled out by the Labour leadership because he had shared a platform with Ken Loach. Driscoll stood, set up a broad activist campaign, and got a very respectable 28% vote (Labour won with 41%). First Past the Post (FPTP) makes it extremely difficult to challenge what is essentially a two-party system.

Some on the left have gotten very excited about the possibility of left candidates, particularly given the scores for pro-Gaza candidates in these elections. However, although the left can build alliances with these councillors, they do not politically claim to be a left alternative. Galloway's Workers Party of Britain only won two seats on the Rochdale council, where he had won as an MP, and took another one in Manchester.

The Socialist Party, through its Trade

Union and Socialist Coalition front, stood 280 candidates (as they like to put it, making them the 'sixth biggest party'). One of their people got 32% in a ward in Southampton, and Hasan Tuney got 31% in Preston. But most of their candidates got very small votes. In London, two of their candidates got around 2.4% in the assembly elections. The TUSC fails to go much beyond a party front and is probably useful for its party building, but it is not the basis for a broad left coalition.

Attempts to unify or network these sorts of candidates are ongoing, with meetings of the No Vote No Ceasefire network and Owen Jones promoting We Deserve Better. Galloway has refused any real coalition and plans to stand even against decent left wing Labour MPs. It may still be the case that there will be a number of left wing Labour candidates worth supporting, such as Jeremy Corbyn. Even if left candidates do not win their campaigns, they can help develop resistance networks that will be important as the Starmer government fails to resolve the crisis in our society. However, these elections do not provide much evidence that we are close to even a network of credible candidates.

The left should actively intervene in the coming general election campaign, but in most areas there will not be a credible left-leaning Labour candidate. We should support Labour there to kick out the Tories, but at the same time keep all the big issues like Gaza at the centre of the campaign. We can organise public meetings independently, with activists both inside and outside Labour. We can link into the various national initiatives around policies we want a Labour government to implement. At the same time, we can win activists to organise an alternative to Starmer's Labour.

7 May 2024

Source: *Anti*Capitalist Resistance*.

Argentina at the rendezvous with its history

14 May 2024, by Nicolas Menna

The 2001 crisis in the country ended with the affirmation, for about fifteen years of a so-called progressive project: the center-left national-popular sector of Peronism consolidated itself as the dominant force. More than a party, it is a conglomerate of groups, organizations and movements, all united under the umbrella of their adherence to the figure of Perón and his strategies of political construction. In one way or another, this is still the preferred form (or refuge?) of organization by the popular masses (including the proletariat) in Argentina.

This does not mean that the bourgeoisie, inextricably linked to imperialist interests, has agreed to move towards a development model based on investment and the strengthening of the internal market, as proposed by Presidents Kirchner (Nestor and Cristina). From 2012 onwards, faced with economic stagnation, these conservative sectors began to regain ground, until the victory in 2015 of Mauricio Macri's neoliberal right, which led to a social regression without managing to impose itself in the long term. Macri was not re-elected in 2019, and was once again replaced by a Peronist government, that of Alberto Fernández, which failed to reverse the trend or emerge from economic crisis.

A situation of deadlock

This situation is representative of the impasse in which Argentina has found itself for 75 years: neither of the two conflicting political projects has been able to fully impose itself against the other, whether it is the agro-export model defended by the right or that, more focused on the development of the domestic market, supported by centre-left Peronism. As Antonio Gramsci had noted, this polarisation and immobility of political forces has led to the exhaustion of both sectors and opened the way to a third actor,

the ultra-neoliberal and authoritarian right of Javier Milei and the libertarians. Based on the elimination of state intervention in all areas except its repressive component, the libertarian project is not new.

It advocates:

- A strong deregulation of the economy, through the elimination of all state controls. This includes the liberalisation of prices, including those of basic necessities.
- A compulsory fiscal balance, accompanied by a significant reduction in the state's participation in the fields of social security (pensions, health, education, scientific research), and a reduction in the number of workers within its structures.
- The dollarization of the economy, with the elimination of the peso and the privatization of the Central Bank.
- The removal of all export restrictions.
- The privatization and fiscal austerity measures specific to the neoliberal state.

This project was first and foremost driven by Decree 70 ("Decree of Necessity and Urgency"). It corresponds to a radical version of the austerity program already championed by previous neoliberal governments, which has led some to refer to the Milei phenomenon as the "fourth neoliberal wave" in Argentina. This underlines its continuity with the dictatorship of 1976-1983 and the democratic governments of Menem and De la Rúa (Justicialist Party - PJ - and Radical Civic Union - UCR, from 1989 to 2001) as well as that of Macri (Republican Proposal - PRO - from 2015 to 2019) that preceded it. The originality of this government, however, lies in its authoritarian dimension, i.e. its contempt for the fundamental norms of liberal democracy, established in Argentina after the dictatorship, and its decision to radically abandon any social welfare role attributed to the state. First of all, this has had an impact on

the living conditions of the popular masses, through the dismantling of all support and development programs, but also on the endowments of the various provinces (autonomous regions), through the cessation of all economic transfers and collaboration with them, in order to guarantee the payment of the foreign debt and the profits of the multinationals.

The government's first measures were introduced by Decree 70 and the "omnibus law". [6] They have already caused enormous damage to the people: a 120% devaluation, inflation at 70% in three months, the elimination of social assistance programs, the opening of export markets, the halt of public investment in infrastructure as well as the closure of many public bodies. These measures have led to thousands of redundancies (150,000 in the construction sector alone, 15,000 in the civil service) and the closure of many companies, causing a snowball effect on economic activity. At the moment, the lack of management of the dengue epidemic that is wreaking havoc in the country accentuates the inability of the state to guarantee the protection of the population in terms of public health.

A neoliberal and authoritarian ethos

We are clearly facing a government that is trying to definitively resolve Argentina's historical impasse, breaking any capacity of the popular masses to resist. It is understandable, despite its poor results, that it still enjoys the favor of big business (national and international), the IMF and the United States, which are multiplying declarations of support. What is more difficult to understand is the support it still enjoys among the popular layers (about 53%, according to surveys). This could be explained by multiple factors:

- The first is, without a doubt, the persistent economic crisis, which has continued to grow since 2012. The stagnation of the economy has increased precarious work; inflation has hit the popular classes hard, and the pandemic has only exacerbated shortages.

- Another factor is the fact that the outgoing Peronist regime had shown an inability to solve the most pressing problems of the population. It had also shown a willingness to manage the system "as it is" (i.e. in its capitalist and neoliberal form), while integrating progressive elements, such as the fight against SGBV, which have however proved insufficient to improve the living conditions of a large majority of the population.

- Finally, another factor is the inability of the left (governmental and "extra-parliamentary") to adapt to the new realities and its failure to propose credible and desirable alternatives.

In this context, a small part of the popular sectors has lost its historical bearings, moving away from Peronism without approaching the left, and has therefore shifted to the libertarian project.

Resistance

The inability of President Alberto Fernández and Sergio Massa, his Minister of Economy and candidate to succeed him, to manage economic and social problems, to control persistent inflation and to restore the purchasing power of the popular masses foreshadowed Massa's defeat in the elections.

The popular reaction to the reactionary government of Javier Milei, on the other hand, was unpredictable (and in a way remains so). It is difficult to know what capacity the popular masses can develop to mobilize to thwart the government, especially since the government has resorted to repressive and intimidating measures to discourage resistance.

However, there are several positive signs that show a state of mobilization, if not general, at least of readiness for significant change. From the government's first actions, protests

emerged, thanks to the mobilizations of people affected by the reforms but also to the emergence of organizations such as neighborhood popular assemblies, a means of self-organization for the inhabitants of large cities, especially in Buenos Aires, as well as social movements in the suburbs or factory committees. In this perspective, the scale of popular mobilization has prevailed, surprising even its organizers, which could foreshadow a cycle of intense struggles in the months to come.

First general strike on 24 January

After two mobilizations of unexpected magnitude on 20 and 27 December 2023, the unions broke their inertia and organised a first day of general strike on 24 January 2024. The aim was to pressure the National Assembly to reject the first "omnibus bill", a package of measures aimed at granting broad powers to the executive to deregulate the economy and impose reforms by decree, without debate in parliament - where Milei's government is clearly in the minority.

Although the strike was poorly supported, the mobilization was a remarkable success, bringing together more than a million demonstrators in the country and about 300,000 in the capital. Its intensity has created the necessary conditions to constrain the room for manoeuvre of the dialogue wing of the opposition and thus push the government to back down and withdraw its project.

8 March, day of strikes and feminist revolt

In the face of a reactionary government that has not hesitated to make misogynistic and anti-feminist remarks and has even considered repealing the law on voluntary termination of pregnancy, the call for a global feminist strike on 8 March

has taken on particular importance in Argentina. Feminist collectives denounced the attacks on organizations fighting against discrimination and racism and the elimination of programs to support female victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

The call, aimed at defending the gains made and fighting against the oppression of women workers, met with a massive echo. The mobilization was commensurate with the situation, with hundreds of thousands of women occupying the National Congress Square and surrounding streets, as well as numerous demonstrations throughout the country.

Social movements in action

From its first measures, the government cut off all aid to the poorest social sectors. This concerns the inhabitants of "villas miseria" (slums) and working-class suburban neighbourhoods, where the organisation of soup kitchens is crucial as a social support mechanism. In Argentina, the state guarantees access to food, while voluntary work is normally carried out by "social movements": political, social and unemployed organizations, often very divided between those that claim to be Peronist, leftist or Christian.

The current situation has begun to force unity in the struggle. It had its baptism of fire on 18 March, a day marked by more than 500 street blockades and mobilizations to denounce the abandonment of the state in a context where more and more people are seeking help.

The movement was repressed by the police, who applied an unconstitutional "anti-blocking protocol", denounced by the United Nations. Despite the repression, this day marked the significant entry of popular organizations into the protest against Milei's government.

24 March, memory without unity

March 24 is an important historical day for Argentine society, marking each year a mobilization against the dictatorship, for democracy, justice and human rights. This year's event was particularly significant because, for the first time in Argentina's 40 years of democracy, a government that claims the legacy of the dictatorship is in power and seeks to destroy the social consensus built by the historic struggle of human rights organizations and social organizations against state terrorism. It is also a day on which a democratic and inclusive model of society is defended, albeit vaguely.

As predicted, the protest was massive, mobilizing millions of people across the country. This year, Peronist unions, including the powerful CGT, which do not usually participate in the 24 March organization, also took part in the event.

This new configuration unfortunately prevented the construction of a unitary demonstration; As in previous years, it split in two with, on the one hand, some organisations of the extreme left such as the PTS having decided to march separately and, on the other side, the other political, social and trade union components.

Government defeats conceal partial victory

Although the mobilization is beginning to be felt, pushing the Assembly to reject many anti-social measures, the

government nevertheless retains the initiative thanks to various institutional tools: Decree 70, the most important, remains largely in force until its examination by the National Assembly. For the time being, the government, which had to deal with the Senate's rejection of the order-in-council, has managed to delay its consideration. It has also bought time (and initiative) by presenting the opposition with a new draft agreement called the May Pact, which is beginning to be discussed (and approved in principle) by the provinces governed by Mauricio Macri's PRO.

As long as Decree 70 continues to be implemented, even partially, Milei's government retains the necessary tool to continue its project of dismantling the state and destroying the social gains won over a century of struggles. It is therefore continuing its offensive, without showing signs of weakening: 15,000 redundancies have already been announced among state employees with the promise of reaching 70,000, while new cuts in public spending and new anti-popular measures are looming.

The crisis of Peronism

Alberto Fernández's disastrous management and the accumulation of his political failures have led some observers to note the loss of support for Peronism among a part of the Argentine popular classes. If for the moment they remain orphans, they are already the object of a new hegemonic conflict. This situation of political vacuum is currently benefiting the far right, although this change is not yet definitive.

What is certain is the current state of great weakness of Peronism, which is expressed by its great difficulty in reacting, in a context of frontal attacks against the popular masses it claims to represent. Disoriented, "Pan-Peronism", conceived as the aggregation of different Peronist currents, is now living in a state of crisis with no apparent way out, at least in the short term. As a result, it struggles to influence conflicts and is often overwhelmed by the autonomous action of social bases.

A necessarily partial conclusion

In this context of the crisis of Peronism, certain sectors of the far left are delighted to see the left take the lead in certain struggles, sometimes even as a driving force in them. This may be an overly optimistic but encouraging conclusion. If we also consider that the social movements are beginning to mobilize and gain courage, that within the unions (including the bureaucratic structures) the date of the next general strike is being discussed, and that this month students are starting to go back to school, these conditions still allow us to nourish a little optimism.

However, the left will have to travel a long way in building a favourable balance of forces: unifying the class against Milei will be its fundamental mission.

April 2024

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

Palestine Solidarity Student Movement in the USA: An Overview

13 May 2024, by Dan La Botz

The large, diverse, decentralized, non-violent movement has been driven by young people's horror at the genocidal war being carried out by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza. This has clearly been a humanitarian movement expressing solidarity with the Palestinians, calling for an end to the war, for stopping U.S. provision of arms to Israel, and demanding that universities stop investing in Israel's arms industry.

Many university administrators, politicians, and the media—pressured by the Zionist lobby—lied about the students and their activities calling them pro-Hamas, and anti-Semitic, and even characterizing them as terrorists in order to justify violent police attacks that injured and, in some cases, hospitalized students and professors. Not since the National Guard massacre at Kent State (4 killed) and police murders at Jackson State (2 killed) both in 1970 have we seen such violence against student protesters.

What altruism we have seen. Some students have jeopardized their college education, their graduation, their student visas if they are immigrants, and risked their health and safety in the face of violent

attacks by Zionists, rightwing organizations, and the police. The student protests, sometimes led by Students for Justice in Palestine (JS) and Jewish Voice for Peace, were passionately opposed to Israel's war, but were not anti-Semitic.

Each of the student encampments has been different. Some have been run and organized in a top-down manner by small, self-appointed leadership groups, while others have been open and democratic, with large committees or entire encampments making decisions. The construction and maintenance of the encampments, getting tents, providing food, organizing study groups, and establishing camp rules absorbed a great deal of time but also created a sense of community.

For most of the students, this was their first experience in a social and political movement such as this. On some campuses students engaged in ultra-left actions that provoked police intervention, though police have also attacked even the most peaceful groups. In other places students engaged in negotiations with university administrators. Some of those administrators made promises, more symbolic than significant to placate students and end the protests.

The Young Democratic Socialists of America and some other socialist have been active alongside JSP and JVP, but the left has not played a dominant role. Most of the student movement has not had time to discuss many of the central political questions in any depth. The groups have not taken positions on the nature of Zionism, on the politics of the Palestinian resistance and Hamas, and on the question of the relationship of the movement to American politics and the coming election. Nor has the movement developed clear plans for the summer much less the long term.

The Palestine Youth Movement, which has ties to the campist Party of Socialism and Liberation, has called for a People's Conference for Palestine in Detroit on May 24-26, 2024: Whether or not it will be a democratic conference capable of representing the social, cultural, and politics diversity of the movement remains to be seen. This student movement, like others in the past, will have an enormous impact on the lives of those who participated, on the organizations involved, and on the future of the American left.

12 May 2024

European Union: "One foot in the institutions, a hundred feet in the street"

12 May 2024, by Hélène Marra, Miguel Urbán Crespo

Could you introduce yourself and tell us about your political trajectory?

I am Miguel Urbán, Member of the European Parliament since 2015 and an activist in *Anticapitalistas*. I have been involved in political activism since 2013. I have been involved in

different movements: student, anti-colonial, for the right to housing, the occupation movements or the anti-war movements. I was one of the founders of Podemos. I also write regularly in various media outlets, from Spanish media such as *El País* and *Público*, to international media such as *La*

Jornada in Mexico. I am also a member of the experts committee of the journal *Viento Sur*.

The issue of the media seems to be very important in your activism?

Yes, it forms part of it. I have always tried to combine activism with

political reflection, I have written, co-authored or coordinated a dozen books published in Spain and abroad. I have just published "Trumpismos neoliberales y autoritarios. Una radiografía de la extrema derecha internacional" ("Neoliberal and authoritarian Trumpisms. An X-ray of the International Far Right") with Fondo de Cultura Económica, the Mexican publishing house. So, I have always tried to combine my political activities with the construction of public debate not only through opinion pieces and columns but also through media interviews. These are fundamental tools in the political work that we have done over the years, using the institution as a kind of megaphone and also as a way to enter certain spaces where it would otherwise be very difficult to have access.

A month ago, I spent several days at the Rafah border: it took me almost two months of negotiations with the Egyptian embassy to gain access. When they surrounded and attacked the city of Diyarbakir in Kurdistan for 98 days, I was able to enter, even though the press did not enter, because I was an elected member of the European Parliament.

When Berta Cáceres, the feminist, indigenous, environmentalist and anti-capitalist leader, was murdered, Gustavo, the main witness, a Mexican comrade who was with her and who managed to escape because he was presumed dead by the assassins, could not leave Honduras because of the involvement of the Honduran government at the time in the assassination. I went to the country and, with a committee, although I was the only member of Parliament, we managed to get Gustavo out of the country.

We have followed the issue of the fight against repression, both in the North and in the Global South, using the status of the MEP to attend trials, to exert political pressure on issues of criminalisation or on threats against human rights defenders.

When the military was on the streets of Chile during the 2019 uprising, I was the only non-Chilean elected official to visit the country. I was able

to accompany the military checkpoints at night; we held a press conference that had a lot of impact in the country, exerting strong international pressure on the case of repression in Chile.

I was on search and rescue boats in the Mediterranean when Salvini was closing ports, preventing rescued people from entering. I spent more than a fortnight in the Mediterranean without being able to enter the port, despite my status as a Member of Parliament, but in the end, we managed to disembark and be welcomed in Spain.

We were able to visit all the borders, both in Europe and in the South: we went to Sudan, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, all countries that we would not have been able to visit if we had not been members of Parliament; I accompanied the first migrant caravan that left Honduras to Tijuana, Mexico. I was able to participate in the international committee in support of the audit of the Greek debt during the first Syriza government. We were able to follow the situation in all the exiled persons' camps that existed at the time, in Idomeni, Lesbos, Moria, and other Greek islands. We have obtained, for the first time in twenty-five years, the recognition by the European Parliament of the humanitarian emergency in Morocco, criticising and denouncing the situation of detention in the case of Omar Rádi, a comrade linked to the Fourth International.

So you used the institution in an unconventional way?

Yes, we have chosen not to lock ourselves into the institution by pretending to be the best parliamentarian possible, but we have used the parliamentary institution in the best possible way to do things that they do not want us to do, such as denouncing free trade agreements, trying to build networks with the countries of the South precisely to reject these agreements, all this with money from the European Union! With varying degrees of success, we have tried to be a kind of "Trojan horse" within the institutions, also denouncing the institution itself, the militarism that is now so important. We have tried to have internationalist

activity by exploiting this space to support struggles in the Global South. And we paid for it: I was detained by the Mossad when I was a member of parliament, I was denied entry to several countries such as Morocco.

Eduardo Bolsonaro, Bolsonaro's son and the main leader of *Bolsonarismo*, released a twenty-one-minute video threatening me precisely because of all the work being done against the far right in Brazil. They entered my house to threaten me, my children and my partner; I have been the victim of several attempted attacks at the doors of the European Parliament and outside them.

Of course, all this does not serve to achieve improvements in the European Union's directives and, moreover, the European Parliament is not even a Parliament: in the best of cases, we co-legislate, but we do not have our own legislative initiative without the Commission. I think that this is a very strong democratic flaw in this anti-democratic system that is the European Union, but I also think that the correlation of forces prevents us from having anti-capitalist proposals that can be presented to Parliament. So, we made a lot of use of the institutions themselves and the space that we had and, most importantly, we created our own space.

Do you mean that all the internal work, of the committees, of the parliamentary groups is not that important, that we can't change Europe from within?

Far from it. In order to build a real European, socialist, ecofeminist project, we must get rid of the European Union, not hope to be able to reform it. Since Maastricht, the European Union has become the tool for constitutionalizing neoliberalism, which is presented as the only possible policy. When the Syriza government relented by signing the memorandum after the referendum, Weber, the spokesperson for the European People's Party in Parliament, ended his speech by saying that "the example of Greece shows that it is not possible to have a left-wing government in the European Union, and that this will serve as a lesson to Podemos and Spain." I agree

with him.

I think that we must continue to pursue a left-wing policy in an internationalist logic of disobedience to the European Union treaties and the construction of an alternative European project, in opposition to the logic of identitarian closure proposed by the far right.

How can we break with the European institutions?

The institutions are built against us and against our interests. Having said that, I think the logic, and we have always said this as anti-capitalists, is to put one foot in the institutions and 100 feet in the street. The challenge for us is to use our foot in the institutions to promote the processes of struggle and self-organization. For example, there is a programme in the European Parliament that provides for one hundred and ten trips per year to bring citizens to the European Parliament in order to bring them closer to the institution. So, there are one hundred and ten trips a year, they pay for all the tickets, the food, the accommodation, and then they show them the European Parliament for two hours, and then a Member of Parliament usually makes a short speech.

We used all these trips to bring conflicts, strikes, unions, repressed people, to be able to use Parliament as a loudspeaker for the struggles and offer them media coverage. Bringing striking workers into a place where they are not usually found attracts the media, it gives legitimacy to these struggles. We even brought comrades from the libertarian, anarchist unions, who don't believe in institutions but who participated because they saw that it was useful, and that we weren't trying to gain a political advantage. We brought in Extinction Rebellion, all the comrades who are criminalised in Europe for practising climate civil disobedience.

When we brought collectives into struggle, we tried to coordinate them with other countries, with other unions or with other European collectives, to use the European Parliament as a means of coordinating struggles. For example, we have

worked with Turkish trade unions through a company called Dielinke; we then worked on issues of solidarity with Spanish companies that were violating workers' rights in Turkey, organised rallies, and even a strike in support of them in Spain, linking Spanish unions with Turkish and Kurdish unions.

That does not mean that we have not done parliamentary work. We wanted to show that we could do parliamentary work contrary to what they say, but that it was not the only work that could be done, quite the contrary. In this sense, we have even been disturbing in the way we dress, violating the dress code of the institutions. I remember the first speech in the European Parliament, when Syriza won, when I called Mario Draghi, then President of the European Central Bank, a financial terrorist and asked him how he could sleep at night with what he was doing. The only thing the *Financial Times* reported was that Mario Draghi had been interrupted by a man in a T-shirt!

Another example: the first activity I did when I took office as a Member of the European Parliament was to go with the comrades of the European coordination to block the European Central Bank, to participate in the Occupy Frankfurt actions, this was the first formal activity I did as a newly elected MEP at the time and, from there, that's what marked the activity we had.

You have mentioned the experience of Podemos and Syriza several times, what is your assessment of it today?

I was one of the founders of Podemos at the time. I think that at the end of 2015, when Syriza won, a slogan was created in Greece "Syriza, Podemos, we will win": this is what was said at the time, because the Greeks were aware of the need not to be the only government that criticised austerity. In this context, I think that the fear that Podemos could take power and make an alliance with Syriza in an anti-austerity, albeit not anti-capitalist, framework played a very important role in the effort to discipline Greece. I think there was an attempt to discipline Greece in order

to discipline the rest, to give an example of what could happen to anyone who tried to make a policy different from the one the Troika demanded at the time. I think that Syriza's defeat in 2015 has not been analysed properly, precisely because it was a defeat for the entire European left. It changed the political cycle we were living in.

At that time, there was a rise in the processes of struggle not only in Greece and Spain, but also in Portugal, where the Bloco and the PCP (Portuguese Communist Party) won 23% of the vote in the elections. There had been very large mobilizations all over Europe, such as that of the Portuguese collective "Que se Lixe a Troika" ("Fuck the Troika"); in Italy, there had also been a very interesting process: the Five Stars also represented a certain annoyance of the people with the anti-democratic and austerity policies of the Italian technocratic governments. In France, there was the launch of La France insoumise and the Nuit Debout movement. All of these movements were disciplined through the Greek defeat. The left failed to properly read what was at stake in the Greek battle. If this was experienced as a very solitary battle on the part of the Greek comrades, their defeat was not solitary, their defeat was global. This has changed the political cycle in such a way that the anger, the protest, the protest vote has shifted to the far right. With a different outcome for the situation in Greece, we might not have had Brexit in the UK. The defeat of Syriza thus prefigured the defeat of Podemos by provoking internal divisions during the campaign.

When the majority of the left broke with Syriza, Iglesias went to campaign for Tsipras while I went to campaign with Unidad Popular (Popular Unity): two members of the Podemos executive were therefore running two different campaigns at the time. The defeat of Popular Unity was also a defeat for the most left-wing theses. At that time, the situation was very difficult and we tried to relaunch Plan B, which was an initiative to try to learn the political lessons of the defeat in Greece and promote greater European coordination, through different initiatives: the first one in

Madrid, which worked quite well; we had also carried out actions in France, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, and so on, but we did not succeed in stabilising a coordination framework different from the classic reformism of the European Left Party. The reading of the Spanish population, but also of several Podemos leaders, was that the Syriza hypothesis of winning power and trying to break with austerity was not possible. This encouraged the attempt to reach an agreement with the Socialist Party to co-govern and to be more "respectable" in the eyes of the establishment, so that they would hit us less and be able to achieve reform or any improvement. And this was the framework that determined the break of *Anticapitalistas* with Podemos, because the strategic hypothesis on which Podemos had been founded, that is, non-subordination to social liberalism and therefore to the Socialist Party, was eliminated.

This is what has happened in other European countries, in France with France Insoumise, which is now trying to refocus, and in Italy with the process of institutionalization of the Five Star Movement.

Yes, but, in the Spanish context, the Socialist Party is the guardian of the monarchy and the political regime of 1978, born of the pact with the Francoist elites, which has an even more regressive connotation in our country than in other social liberalisms such as in France and elsewhere. This is not only an ideological issue: subordinating us to them also eliminates us electorally, not only socially and politically. In other words, we think that the two great risks faced by Podemos were to moderate and normalize, to resemble a party like any other that governs in a minority with the Socialist Party.

Finally, I think that part of Podemos' defeat and subsequent capitulation must also be read in a European logic of cycle change in the face of the defeat of the anti-austerity moment, illustrated by the experience of Syriza in Greece.

How do you see the European elections? It is undeniable that there is a very strong reactionary

surge, accompanied by militarization and new conflicts such as in Ukraine or the genocidal war in Palestine. How do you see things?

The situation is very bad for humanity, it is very bad especially for the popular classes and it is very regressive for any anti-capitalist or simply anti-neoliberal project. Since 2015, we have witnessed a sharp shift to the right of the entire European political arc. We are living in a moment of global disorder; we are facing a real crisis of the capitalist regime by the junction of the neoliberal crisis and its authoritarian mutation with the ecological crisis and the logic of scarcity that this entails. The decline of the US empire and the emergence of a kind of new period of inter-imperialist conflicts at the global level, for increasingly scarce resources, also generates a neo-extractivist and neo-colonial logic. Indeed, 80% of the raw materials we need for a so-called ecological transition to "green capitalism" in Europe are outside our continent. In this sense, Europe, faced with competition and the need for new inter-imperialist confrontations, has embarked on a logic of rearmament. As Mr Borrell, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, says, Europe must be able to speak the language of power, not the soft power of human rights but the language of weapons, the language of war. To sustain the European Union's fever and mercantilist and commercial pressure, armies are needed in Africa, so that they can be moved to territories in dispute with other powers, old or new. This rearmament process is therefore not so much about disputing the Ukrainian chessboard with Russia as it is about disputing the world chessboard, disputing Africa more than Ukraine, because Africa has much more of the raw materials needed by Europe than Ukraine. The problem, then, is that Ukraine is being used as a pretext by European elites to strengthen their own interests as elites in this framework of inter-imperialist conflicts.

It is also in this context that what is happening in Palestine must be interpreted. This crisis of the capitalist

regime also means a crisis of the regime of the liberal model of governance born after the Second World War; Everything about the international human rights framework, the international legal framework is being shattered. There is no longer an entity, everything is a fiction: what we saw at the Mexican embassy in Ecuador, where the Ecuadorian government allowed sovereignty and the Treaty of Vienna to be violated, is precisely an example of this breach of international law.

The signing of the European Migration Pact puts an end to the right to asylum and is part of the same crisis of regime where what is being called into question is precisely the model of liberal democracy, of separation of powers. At the same time, we are witnessing the emergence of an increasingly strong authoritarianism on a global scale, with a questioning of the right to protest and the use of increasingly repressive tools.

The only thing left of liberal democracy is to vote every four years; For the rest, what exists is a veritable dictatorship of the market, it is the element towards which we are increasingly clearly moving because it is the easiest element to compete with, in this intermediate imperialist model marked by scarcity and ecological emergency. In this context, the far right will most likely become the leading force in nine European Union countries, several of them being central countries such as France, which has already been the leading force in the European elections since 2014, and Italy again, where the leading force, in the 2019 elections, was Salvini with 34% and now it will be Meloni. The escalation that Netanyahu is provoking in Palestine and in the region, Iran, Ukraine, what is happening in Latin America, all this is part of a whole, of this crisis of regime and the increase of intermediate imperialist conflicts. In addition, in this year 2024, there are elections in half the world. In particular, the US elections are going to be very important because Trump's victory could lead to an acceleration of all these processes.

We cannot rule out that the chain of imperialist conflicts at the regional

level could eventually drift into an open global conflict, and that would be a third world war with nuclear weapons, which would lead to a devastating scenario.

What would then be our main task?

I think that at the moment the main task is not so much to think about elections, but rather to think about how we can rebuild an anti-militarist internationalism that breaks with all imperialisms, that is independent of imperial interests and distant from our empires or competitors, that can have class independence and argues that one of the most important elements at the moment is an ecosocialist anti-militarist policy; to also reflect on the link between the climate crisis and the

increase in war and armed conflicts. There is nothing that accelerates a world in flames more than remilitarization and war; there is nothing that accelerates the climate collapse scenario more than investing scarce resources in raw materials essential for a so-called transition, in weapons.

Therefore, I think it is necessary to have an adequate reading of the all-important historical context we are facing in order to understand that today the main contradiction that arises is that of capital or life, and this is what is now in play; it is no longer even capital versus labour, the opposition is now between capital and life. The coronavirus crisis has been a test of what we could face, a test we

have lost: we have been subjected to a real shock doctrine, we have not even been able to question the private ownership of some pharmaceutical multinationals in the face of a common good for people's lives. This should make us pause: either we confront the temple of private property and start talking about access to common resources, strategic controls of sectors of the economy and a peaceful world, or what we will do is throw more gasoline on the fire and accelerate this unbridled train to the climate and ecological suicide of life itself that capitalism has become.

April 2024

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Crisis in Mali - the position of the radical left

11 May 2024, by Paul Martial

SADI believes that the jihadist insurgencies in Mali are above all linked to social problems. Most of the jihadist fighters come from the rural proletariat. Their motivation in this war is first and foremost determined by their social situation and the deterioration in security, largely due to the repressive actions of the state. The religious question accompanied the conflict, serving as justification and encouragement.

The crisis has been exacerbated by the grabbing of land, particularly in the centre of the country, by the Malian bourgeoisie, which has destabilised a regulatory system based on the synergy between breeders and farmers. This land grab has led to an increase in poverty among farmers, while livestock breeders have had to pay more and more for access to pasture for their animals.

Armed regulation

of disagreements

The opening of a dialogue between jihadist fighters and representatives of the State was therefore the solution that would enable the war to be brought to an end and measures to consolidate the peace to be adopted. All the more so because during the exploratory meetings held in 2012, in which Omar Mariko took part, religious demands were never put forward. The dialogues could not take place because of France's absolute opposition. It forced the Malian authorities to cease all peace talks with the jihadists. At the same time, the French services were entering into negotiations with the Islamists with a view to securing the release of hostages held by Al Qaeda groups.

The leader of SADI insisted on the way in which the junta came to power. It used the major popular mobilizations against the corruption of the then President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta to usurp power by using part of the political class, part of the opposition

coalition Mouvement du 5 Juin - Rassemblement des forces patriotiques (M5-RFP). This junta can therefore in no way be considered as the emanation of popular struggles. If it uses sovereignist logorrhoea, it is in an attempt to consolidate its legitimacy. The five putschist colonels are pursuing a policy aimed at creating divisions within the country by designating the Tamasheq populations as enemies of the nation in order to distract the population from the military failures. This is how the capture of Kidal, controlled by Tuareg organizations, is presented as a victory for national sovereignty, when in fact it was primarily a feat of arms by Wagner's mercenaries rather than an operation by the Malian armed forces. As a result, tens of thousands of civilians have fled Kidal for fear of reprisals, seeking refuge near the Algerian border.

Solidarity with

SADI

The junta has embarked on both a headlong rush into security, responsible for numerous atrocities against civilians, and a dictatorship by suspending civil society organizations and political parties. The putschists have launched legal proceedings to

ban the SADI party and its network of Kayira radio stations. Omar Mariko had to go into exile in view of the serious threats to his physical integrity.

For the SADI party, the fight against the junta is part of a dual mobilization against imperialism and the local comprador bourgeoisie. This agenda is in line with the position of the NPA,

which from the outset of the crisis in Mali has spoken out against the French intervention, Serval, and its extension with operation Barkhane, and has expressed its full solidarity with all the activists and journalists who have fallen victim to the colonels' repression.

30 April 2024

Kanaky - put a stop (really) to the time of colonies!

10 May 2024, by Jeff Castel

At a moment when a constitutional law is reaffirming the colonial project in Kanaky, it is more than urgent to oppose the manoeuvres of the French state against the Kanak people and to promote solidarity. Let us look back at a fight for self-determination and emancipation... which is continuing.

When France took possession of Kanaky in 1853, the archipelago was inhabited by a people of tens of thousands, a people who had been living on these lands for 3,000 years, with their culture, their economy, their social organization. The repression and the massacres of Kanaks opposing land dispossession, as well as diseases, endangered the survival of the Kanak people. Confined in reserves, the Kanak used these spaces to rebuild their social organization, their economy, their cultural (and political) life.

The anti-colonial struggles, the national liberation movements in Algeria, Vietnam, Cuba, found an echo in the population. Priests and seminarians (Tjibaou, Machoro, etc.) left the church, students in France participated in May '68 and established relationships with anti-colonialist activists from all continents.

The settler-colonial policy of the French state

Worried about this politicization and the first actions and demands for independence, the French state decided in 1972 to engage in a policy of increasing the population by encouraging the settlement of French people. The Kanaks were at that time the majority of the population.

In 1981, when Mitterrand and the left came to power, the Kanak people only represented 40 per cent of the population. But that was the time of hope. The innate and active right of the Kanak people to independence was enshrined in the governmental Common Programme. A minority sector of European settlers agreed to form a local government chaired by Jean-Marie Tjibaou.

The majority of the colonial right became radicalized, and denounced being abandoned by the state. Its members identified with the *pieds-noirs* of Algeria (victims of the abandonment of Algeria by De Gaulle), and supported the Afrikaners of South Africa. Weapons were circulating, *barbouzes* (including many ex-OAS) were recruited, militias were formed. In 1983, the Territorial Assembly was

stormed and separatist elected officials were beaten up. The state did not react: it prepared a new statute. In 1984, it presented its draft statute, with new institutions, land reform and greater autonomy.

The problem was that the French Constitution only recognizes one people within the territory of France: the French people, composed of free men and women who are equal in law. Thus any metropolitan resident passing through or having just arrived has the same rights as a Kanak to decide on the future of the archipelago. In the National Assembly, the left-wing deputies, in the majority, rejected the amendments tabled by the only Kanak deputy... The settlement policy could continue.

From the creation of the FLNKS to the Nouméa Accords

Condemned to become a small minority in their own country, the Kanak people were becoming radicalized. In September 1984, the FLNKS (Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front) was created, and a provisional government was formed. On November 18, the day of elections

to the new institutions, there was the start of the insurrection, Éloi Machoro broke his village's ballot box with an axe. The photo went around the world. In France, thousands of activists were organizing solidarity.

From 1984 to 1988, there was a revolutionary situation in the archipelago, which lastingly transformed the country. The Kanak people did not have the means to get rid of French colonialism militarily, but they had the capacity to paralyse the country and create a permanent state of insecurity. The state responded to the actions of the FLNKS with repression and gave the militias free rein. Dozens of activists were killed, hundreds imprisoned, in particular in what became known as the Ouvéa cave affair. France was singled out at the UN; the General Assembly reinstated New Caledonia on the list of territories to be decolonized. From now on Kanaky was under the gaze of the UN, and France had to answer for its actions. The FLNKS was recognized as the legitimate representative of the Kanak people.

In 1988, then in 1998, taking advantage of the balance of forces created on the ground, the FLNKS negotiated agreements with the colonial right and the French state aimed at liberating geographical, political, economic, cultural and diplomatic spaces, and occupying them, in order to develop policies preparing the country for independence.

The Nouméa Accords of 1998 established, in Kanaky, in France and before the international community, the readiness of the French state to initiate a policy of decolonization, the outcome of which would be the accession of the country to full sovereignty. But above all it was constitutionally recognized. The Kanak people were recognized as the central pillar of the country, which was also open to the inhabitants who had been resident in the country for at least ten years at the time of signing the agreement. Together, they aimed to become citizens of the sovereign country.

Three referendums (in 2018, 2020,

and 2022) were organized to consult citizens on the country's accession to full sovereignty. In 2018, 47.3 per cent voted for independence, in 2020, 47 per cent. In 2022, the state imposed the holding of the third referendum in the midst of the Covid crisis. The heavily affected Kanak people buried their hundreds of dead and more than 90 per cent boycotted the referendum. The result, with a turnout of 43 per cent, was a 96 per cent vote to remain a French colony.

Since 1998, the FLNKS has been in the minority in the central institutions of the colony (congress, government). It is the majority in two out of three provinces. Equipped with considerable powers (economy, culture), the provinces have allowed the FLNKS to gain a foothold in strategic economic sectors, such as nickel, tourism, and transport. But the bulk of the country's economy remains in the hands of a few multimillionaire families associated with multinationals. The parties of the colonial right represent their interests. They use the political power they hold in government to implement a mixture of ultraliberal policies thanks to financial transfers from the motherland and the euros obtained from tax evasion thanks to tax exemption laws.

Economic growth of the years 2000-2010

Driven by high nickel prices and the French state's chequebook, the country experienced a high rate of economic growth until 2015. We saw the construction of two metallurgical factories, an airport, a hospital, and numerous infrastructures: roads, electrical networks, a new town, etc. The crisis in France turned off the tap that supplied the euros, and nickel prices collapsed. This led to an abysmal debt, three factories in near bankruptcy, social systems in bankruptcy.

During the elections in 2020, the FLNKS won seats but remained in the minority in the congress. A new political force emerged; the Oceanian

Awakening, representing the Wallisian and Futunian community. Wallis and Futuna is a French colony located in Polynesia. As part of its settlement policy, the French state organized the migration of thousands of people to work in construction, mining, public works, etc. For a long time this community was used by the right as a strong-arm force against the Kanaks. The Oceanian Awakening is the expression of the emancipation of the community from the colonial right.

In 2021, the FLNKS and the Oceanian Awakening formed a so-called Oceanian majority in the congress. This alliance made up the majority of the new government chaired by Louis Mapou, activist and historic leader of the FLNKS. For the first time since the Tjibaou government in 1983, the Kanaks were in power.

Since the formation of this new majority, the colonial right has continued to radicalize: the big families are withdrawing their capital, the nickel multinationals are disinvesting in Kanaky to the benefit of Indonesia. To deal with the Covid crisis, the state subsidized all local authorities but imposed a loan on the government of New Caledonia at a rate higher than that of the market. The population is suffering the consequences of the crisis: unemployment, high cost of living, failing public services, etc.

Emperor Macron

In July 2023, Macron came to Kanaky, escorted by two Rafales. The two planes, after having performed their circus over the country, flew to Australia to participate in military manoeuvres alongside NATO forces in the Pacific. The enemy was China. In Kanaky, Macron invited the Caledonians to join as an ally of France in the construction of an Indo-Pacific axis (from Mayotte to Papeete, including India, New Zealand, and Australia) aimed at opposing Chinese influence in the region. In this construction, the FLNKS does not appear as a reliable ally. In the Pacific, at the UN, it is a thorn in the side of French diplomacy. If there was no money for the Covid crisis in Kanaky, there is money to try to

distract the countries of the region from their support for the FLNKS: creation of a military academy, cooperation agreements, etc.

Besieged by the colonial right, faced with a French government determined in its imperial aims, the Oceanian alliance resisted, and since then the country's government has tried to take measures to deal with the crisis. The timid tax reforms which affect the interests of the wealthiest and the employers were the subject of fierce resistance from the colonial right and the employers.

In March 2024, the bosses of the road transport sector, supported by all employers and the right blocked fuel depots, threatening the country with paralysis. The state, responsible for maintaining order, allowed this to happen. Right-wing elected officials left Congress and government, declaring the institutions they had led for decades illegitimate and undemocratic.

To reduce tension, Louis Mapou announced the withdrawal of a tax on fuels, aimed at making up for the chronic deficit in electricity production and distribution, at the origin of the blockade. Despite this withdrawal, the blockade continued,

and the right called for a march on the congress. It took the mobilization of hundreds of FLNKS activists determined to have the blockades lifted for the road transport bosses to send their trucks back to the garage.

After having imposed the holding of a referendum in the midst of the Covid crisis, endorsing the result despite the boycott of the Kanak people, the government wants to guarantee the colonization of Kanaky by modifying the electorate, by opening it to anyone living for at least ten years in the country, making the Kanaks definitively a minority.

Fighting the new constitutional law

The constitutional law, initiated by the government and supported by the local right, is a break with the agreements made in 1998. It is contrary to the numerous UN resolutions which oppose colonial settlement policies. Like in 1983, the only Kanak senator elected to the Senate is leading the fight to oppose this law. His amendments have been rejected.

On 23 and 24 March 2024, the FLNKS

held its congress, open for the occasion to the entire independence movement. Unanimously, the 700 activists and delegates (which in France would correspond to a congress of 140,000 people) present called for mobilization against the constitutional bill, in support of the Louis Mapou government, and the opening of discussions with the state aimed at the accession of Kanaky to full sovereignty.

The putschist policy of the colonial right, the passivity or even complicity of the French state in the face of its actions and threats, demonstrate that there is no place for a territory governed by the Kanaks within the French Republic.

On Thursday 28 March, the colonial right called for a march on the congress. The FLNKS called for a march against the constitutional law.

Anti-colonialist, and anti-racist activists, in solidarity with the struggle of peoples for their liberation, in Palestine, Ukraine and Kurdistan, must be ready to mobilize in solidarity with the Kanak people.

2 May 2024

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Amidst Violent Attacks, Pro-Palestine Protests Go On, Disrupting Graduation Ceremonies

9 May 2024, by Dan La Botz

Many graduations would not be normal this year. At the University of Indiana, some students walked out of the commencement event. The University of Southern California moved its graduation ceremony off campus to the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Other graduate protests are expected this month.

Over the past week, the pro-Palestine student movement spread to 43 college campuses in 25 states, the largest such student movement in decades. These protests often initiated by Palestinian students, were supported by progressive Jews and many others. The students on most campuses were asking their universities to divest from Israeli

companies, especially those producing military equipment, to cut ties with Israeli institutions, and support a ceasefire. They set up encampments calling for solidarity with Palestine and by and large their demonstrations were peaceful, didn't disrupt the campus routine, or threaten other students. While anti-Zionist, they were not ant-Semitic, though there was

some anti-Semitic speech.

Many university administrators, under pressure from politicians and their donors, called in police, leading to some 2,300 arrests nationwide. At Columbia University where the movement began, 112 people were arrested; at the University of Texas at Austin 135; at the State University of New York at New Platz, 130; at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, 100; and at Northeastern, Boston, 98.

At the University of California at Los Angeles, where violent counter-protestors attacked the pro-Palestinian camp, some 200 were arrested. The mother of one student, who had gone to UCLA to be with her son, described the scene in an email we received.

"The 'counter protest' was actually a joint rally of raging Zionists and white

supremacists, a couple of thousand of them. Following that, for three nights, gangs of Zionist men and their Proud Boy allies attacked the protesters all night long, blasting loud music, shining bright lights, spitting, screaming racist and homophobic epithets, throwing wood and iron pipes, spraying mace and bear spray. The cops were there. Right there. But they did nothing. A couple of dozen kids hospitalized. The administration used the attacks as an excuse to clear the encampment," wrote the mother. "I am very proud of my kids and all the tens of thousands who have protested and the 200 who have been arrested. This is not over. Free, free Palestine!"

Not all college administrators called in the police. Several administrators said that their job was to protect free speech and maintain a campus where it could take place. They negotiated with students, generally agreeing that

the students' demands would be presented to the college board of directors, including at Vassar, in New York, at Brown University in Rhode Island, at Northwestern University in Illinois, at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, at Rutgers University at New Brunswick in New Jersey and at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

President Biden spoke about protests. "First is the right to free speech and for people to peacefully assemble and make their voices heard. The second is the rule of law. Both must be upheld." But, said Biden, the protests would not change his position.

Students say they will go on with their protests. But after graduation, the campuses will empty. If the movement is to go on, students, now back at home, will need new strategies.

5 May 2024

From civil war to active support for Gaza in Yemen

8 May 2024, by Édouard Soulier

The Houthis have repeatedly stated that they will only stop these attacks with the end of Israel's war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Between 18 November and 13 January, more than 27 commercial vessels sailing in the southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden were attacked. Faced with this situation, Washington set up a multinational naval force in early December to protect merchant ships in the Red Sea, through which 12% of world trade passes. The main objective is to ensure one of the most essential maritime corridors for international trade. A few days later, the U.S. and the U.K. carried out another round of airstrikes against the Houthis. In addition, Washington has imposed sanctions targeting the Houthis' financing channels, targeting several individuals and entities in Yemen and

Turkey. Throughout January and early February, U.S. and British military forces launched new attacks.

Despite the strikes, the Houthis continued their attacks in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden on Israel-linked ships in solidarity with Gaza and said they would not stop until the war ended. The impact on global trade is hugely significant, diverting traffic via southern Africa, increasing delays and costs, creating a significant shortfall for Egypt and the Suez Canal.

The United States and Britain are therefore once again bombing this country of thirty million inhabitants in the south of the Arabian Peninsula, after having militarily supported a coalition including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates against the Houthi rebellion. Over the past ten

years, this "civil war" has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and reintroduced episodes of acute famine in some parts of the country. However, the situation and the front line had stabilised with a Houthi victory over half of the country since the beginning of 2023.

Yemen, a colonial history

The situation in Yemen is quite complicated to follow because it has its roots in the colonial division of that country, religious, ethnic and political heterogeneities, and the interference of neighbours such as Saudi Arabia. Colonial history has been instrumental in determining the political, economic and religious configuration of the

region. Yemen is historically a grouping of two Yemens: North and South. In southern Yemen, a British colony since 1864, the port of Aden was considered a vital strategic asset for the British Empire. While the north of present-day Yemen, which was once part of the Ottoman Empire, was ruled by a local royal family after 1918. Reunification took place in 1990, but the country remains deeply divided.

Given the history with the United Kingdom, there is something nostalgic about resuming the bombing of Yemen. Indeed, the people of Yemen have been bombed by the British for almost a century. By the 1920s, military doctrine was evolving, and aviation was beginning to replace the use of troops throughout the British Empire in the Middle East. Thus, villages and tribes that refused to obey their colonial masters were bombed to gain their submission. This method, which was much less expensive than the use of troops, resulted in virtually no military casualties for the British.

Moreover, the British didn't just bomb targets in southern Yemen, they regularly bombed the north, wherever their interests were at stake. In 1928, for example, the British air force attacked targets on both sides of the border of the two Yemens: it dropped nearly 70 tons of bombs, 1,200 incendiary devices and fired 33,000 machine gun shells, most of which targeted towns and villages, killing dozens of people. In March 1934, for a week, the Queteibis tribe was punished by attacks by the British air force, which this time dropped more than 28 tons of bombs on inhabited villages, with an average of 166 bombs per hour aimed at totally defenceless people. This method of colonial repression continued in the 1950s and 1960s to almost universal indifference.

Yet, in the 1950s, the British were confronted with a powerful trade union movement led by the Aden Trade Union Congress and the Socialist People's Party. Despite general strikes, a forty-eight-day strike in the docks in Aden, a series of demonstrations and protests, the British were determined to hold out. The rebels turned to armed insurrection and guerrilla warfare in

the mountains. During the 1960s, a nationalist guerrilla movement developed, which confronted the British with an insurgency in the Radfan Mountains (in the southeast). Once again, the Empire bombed to defeat the newly created National Liberation Front (FLN). In May and June 1964, bombing raids on rebel positions crushed the Radfan insurgency. But the FLN extended its influence: in 1964, a guerrilla war broke out in the port of Aden and the resistance movement spread to much of the rest of South Yemen.

At that time, North Yemen was controlled by a secular nationalist movement that had seized power and created the Yemen Arab Republic. This Arab republic supported the rebels in the south against the colonial entity. The British responded by unleashing a brutal crackdown on the streets of Aden, including the establishment of an interrogation centre charmingly known as the "nail factory". Torture, beatings and summary executions had become so commonplace that a wave of international outrage erupted. Meanwhile, across the border in the Yemeni Arab Republic, the British, Saudis and Israelis were supporting an Islamist revolt against the secular nationalist government. British mercenaries – the former SAS special forces – help train Islamist groups and sometimes fought alongside them. The Israelis supplied weapons to these rebels and the Saudis paid for everything. This period marks the beginning of a long period of interference by these countries in Yemen's political and military affairs. In the end, the level of resistance made it clear that the British position in South Yemen was no longer tenable, as the cost of remaining in Aden was simply too high. The British were therefore forced to evacuate the city at the end of November 1967. South Yemen later became the People's Republic of Yemen, close to the USSR.

From Reunification to

the 2011 Revolution

The reunification of the two Yemens in 1991, however, did not really bring the country together. And finally, power passed entirely into the hands of North Yemen and its dictator Saleh. Originally from the north, he was known for playing on the many divisions within Yemeni society in order to stay in power. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the realignment vis-à-vis the imperialist powers have had a major impact on Yemeni politics.

The Houthis – named after their former leader Hussein al-Houthi, who was killed in 2004 – emerged in the early 2000s as a military and political organization representing Yemen's Zaydi minority. Its development has been fostered by the rise of new religious currents within Sunni Islam, and in particular by the emergence of Salafism, a conservative current aggressively promoted by the Saudi authorities. It was initially in order to compete with the popularity of Salafist preachers that members of the Houthi family organized a religious youth movement in the 1990s, marked by the denigration of Zaydist customs and beliefs as "un-Islamic." But the politics of the Houthi movement are complex: their religious ideas stem from the Zaydi branch of Shiite Islam, which has been present in Yemen since the end of the 9th century. In many ways, the religious practices and beliefs of Yemen's Zaydists are very similar to those of Sunni Muslims, who make up a slight majority of Yemen's population. The two religious groups have coexisted in Yemen for centuries, using the same mosques for prayer.

The youth movement organized summer camps combining religious lectures and sports activities, attracting thousands of teenagers and young men. The revival of Zaydist religious beliefs took place against a backdrop of growing social contradictions in a region of Yemen that was relatively isolated until the early 1980s. For example, until the construction of the first paved road in 1979, the city of Saada (a historic Houthi site in northern Yemen) was a ten-hour drive from the capital Sana'a.

Initiated by the Houthi family, the movement morphed into a group of armed insurgents, engaged in a confrontation with the state. In the early 2000s, the U.S. government's "war on terror" provided dictators like Saleh with ample opportunity to acquire new weapons and dress up their dirty wars and internal repression as a global crusade against "Islamist terrorists." Meanwhile, many Yemenis were horrified to see US bombs raining down on Afghanistan and Iraq and outraged by US support for Israeli attacks on Palestinians. In 2004, when Hussein al-Houthi began channelling some of this anger into sermons and speeches, Saleh responded by sending troops to Saada, sparking an armed rebellion that continued for the next seven years. The Houthi movement has also relied on economic grievances to build a base, rallying support behind well-founded accusations of corruption against Saleh and his regime. Saleh's alliance with the United States played a crucial role in transforming this apolitical religious revival movement.

In 2011, Saleh's regime faltered. The Houthi insurgency played a role in this, but it was only one element of a much larger picture of growing discontent. Across Yemen, in both the north and south, the majority of the population has faced worsening poverty. Rural communities are being hit by the collapse of agriculture, while urban workers are struggling to make ends meet in the face of rising prices. The 2011 revolution was a struggle for dignity against an autocratic elite: it brought together rural and urban populations in a mass movement for change. But hopes for dignity and justice have not materialized. Yemenis had a new government that, backed by the West and Saudi Arabia, quickly became very unpopular, even though it had gotten rid of Saleh. Following the failure of the 2011 revolution, the country remained divided, and the Houthi rebellion contradicted the plans initiated by the West and Saudi Arabia. The Yemeni civil war had begun.

The civil war

The Houthi movement's leaders allied themselves with their former enemy, Saleh, who still enjoyed a great deal of support within the army. Despite their radical demands to fight injustice, they were happy to make a deal with the former dictator. Their goal: to launch a military attack on the Saudi-backed government at the end of 2014.

The Saudi-led coalition initially turned to its air power - supplied and supported by the US, Britain and France - to pound civilian infrastructure, massacre mourners at funerals and guests at weddings. The price paid by Yemeni civilians was extremely high: the United Nations estimates that between 2015 and 2021, the war killed 377,000 people, at least 150,000 of whom died as a direct result of the armed conflict. Weapons manufactured and supplied by the United States, the United Kingdom and France are responsible for much of this destruction.

However, this did not dislodge the Houthis from the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, which they had taken control of in 2015. The Houthis' alliance with Saleh was not an accident, but it did highlight the fact that the movement's vision for change was limited to a top-down process of replacing one elite with another.

For their part, the Saudi and Emirati generals then turned to their Sudanese allies to provide the missing troops. In 2016, up to 40,000 Sudanese troops were fighting in Yemen, recruited as mercenaries in areas such as Darfur in western Sudan through a mix of intimidation and economic coercion. Yemen's "official" president spent most of the war in exile in Saudi Arabia, while his Saudi patrons competed with their Emirati allies for influence over the fractured array of pro-government militias that dominated areas outside the Houthis' control. For example, the United Arab Emirates has supported Aidarous al-Zubaidi, a powerful leader of the Southern Movement who has been campaigning for the secession of southern Yemen from the north since 2007. Al-Zubaidi took control of Aden in 2017, further deepening divisions

within Yemeni society.

The division among their opponents has certainly helped the Houthis survive, but that's not all. Perhaps the biggest mistake made by Saudi and Emirati officials was to believe their propaganda that the Houthis were puppets of Iran. In fact, the movement's leaders have mobilized deep religious and social grievances behind their military campaigns, drawing on a decade of experience challenging the Yemeni state before they seized power in 2015.

That said, the Houthi movement is not really in a position to help the people. The actions against Israel demonstrate Yemeni society's support for the Palestinian people, but it is clear that the Houthi regime is using them to mask the loss of legitimacy and anger of the populations in the areas under its control. Regularly accused of being a puppet of Iran, it nevertheless has its own dynamic: the destabilization of the maritime zone in support of Gaza is on its own initiative and, even if they receive equipment from the Iranian regime, the Houthis have shown that they are capable of deploying their own military means.

Without having any illusions about this regime, which combines anti-American anti-imperialism with a very anti-Semitic hatred of Israel, the fact remains that the action of the UN-sanctioned coalition under the aegis of the United States to bomb this country - again - is inadmissible. The alternatives proposed by the Western powers are unacceptable to Yemenis, who must be able to live in peace without foreign interference, bombing and civil war.

The revolution of 2011 showed another possible path - democratic, inclusive and liberating. It also showed that local powers (Saudi Arabia, Emirates) and Western powers (United States, United Kingdom and France in the lead) have no interest in the emancipation of peoples, even at the cost of one of the most horrible civil wars of this beginning of the century.

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

International youth camp

7 May 2024, by Jonathan Simmel, Marta Autore

It was 1984 when the revolutionary youth camp in solidarity with the Fourth International took place for the first time in Europe. Since then, every summer hundreds of young militants meet for one week to learn, exchange their experiences and organize.

How the camp functions

The 2024 youth camp will take place in the middle of France, in Vieure, from the 20th to the 26th of July, and gather hundreds of young activists from France, Belgium, Denmark, Spanish State, Switzerland, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Italy. As in past editions, probably some participants from extra-European countries will also join, such as Philippines, Mexico, Brazil, US or Argentina.

The young comrades will try to build in the camp place the society that they fight for everyday in their contexts: anticapitalist, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-lgbtphobic and anti-ableist society of all and for all.

Every day at the camp the young activists will participate to educationals, theoretical and practical workshops, non-mixed spaces (feminist, lgbt, trans and racialized people's spaces), permanent commissions, following the program that has been collectively prepared in advance. Each day will be focused on one topic, although the connections between them will always be highlighted: living in a world at war, the strategical importance of the feminist, lgbt and antiracist struggles, the rise of the far right, the solidarity with Palestine, strategy ad party and the ecosocialist perspective: these will be the main topics that will be discussed, following a red line that leads from analysing the current status of capitalist society and of the movements to organize fightbacks and

find a common strategies to change overthrow it.

Discussions of 2024

While educationals in the mornings will provide some theoretical introduction to the topic of the day together with some concrete perspective, such as for "Anti-imperialism: how to build solidarity in times of war?", "Between progresses and reactionary attacks, how can we build a feminist response?" or "Lenin in Sainte Soline: strategie and tactics for ecosocialism", the workshops present a variety of approaches, from the more theoretical ones (such as "The role of the family in the oppression of LGTBIQ people" of "Imperialism: the highest stage of capitalism"), to the ones starting from specific experiences (such as "Kurdish movement's struggles against Turkish imperialism" or "The constitutionalization of abortion in France") to the practical ones (such as "feminist self-defence" or "how to build a tripod").

Moreover, delegations from different countries will have the chance to exchange experiences in a deeper way in the interdelegation meetings.

The whole campsite will be self-organized, from the kitchen to the bar, from security to cleaning, with shifts equally divided among delegations according to their size.

And - don't forget! - there will be time for leisure, social games and party, beause "If I can't dance, this is not my revolution!"

It's time to plan a revolutionary summer and live the revolutionary youth camp experience. Get in contact with your local organization and sign in to participate!

Programme of the 39th Fourth International Youth Camp

Day 0 (20 July):

18.30 - 20.00: Delegation meeting

20.00 - 21.30: Dinner

21.30 - 22.30: Welcome meeting and opening of the camp

Welcome meeting, speeches on the political context and the Olympic Games

Presentation of the camp and practical information

Day 1 (21 July): Living in a world at war

08.00 - 09.00: Breakfast at the camp

09.00 - 09.30: Delegation meeting

09.30 - 11.00: Educational: Anti-imperialism: how to build solidarity in times of war?

Imperialism

Colonialism

Remilitarisation

War and the international balance of power

Perspective of the global South

Responsibility of the main imperialist forces

How to organise solidarity

11.00 - 11.15: Break

11.15 - 12.30: Workshops:

Imperialism: the highest stage of capitalism

What solidarity almost two years after the start of the war in Ukraine?

The struggles of the Kurdish movement against Turkish imperialism

War and sexual violence. The case of

the Congo Homonationalism and heteronationalism Practical workshop: art against war	15.00 - 16.30: Racialised space: how to evolve and deconstruct in anti-racist and anti-fascist circles and give a voice to racialised minorities within the party, how to evolve as a racialised minority in a predominantly white political group and make social issues evolve.	at school and at work, how to combat lgbtphobia at school and at work?
12.30 - 14.00: Lunch and rest	16.30 - 17.30: Break	16.30 - 17.30: Break
14.00 - 15.30: Feminist space: Internalized sexism, how to detect sexist practices in our organizations and movements, what tools do we have to fight sexism and sexual violence in our organizations/movements?	17.30 - 18.30: Preparation for the feminist party	17.30 - 18.30: Palestine permanent commission: Exchange on strategies, drafting of a solidarity declaration, solidarity banner group
15.30 - 17.00: Palestine Standing Committee	18.30-20:00: Delegation meeting	18:30-20:00: Delegation meeting
The state of the international movement.	20.00 - 21.30: Dinner and camp coordination meeting	20.00 - 21.30: Dinner and camp coordination meeting
17:00 - 18:30: Meeting of delegations	21.30 - 22.30: Feminist meeting	21.30 - 22.30: Screening of the film 'Priscilla, madwoman of the desert
18:30-20:00: Break and games	Practical information about the evening What we need for a feminist party There's still a lot to do / Rape in wartime	Disco until 01:30
20.00 - 21.30: Dinner and camp coordination	22:30-02:30: Feminist party	Day 4 (24 July): LGBTIQ+ Marxism: as a strategic art
21.30 - 22.30: Social games	Day 3 (23 July): Resisting the rise of racisms	08.00 - 09.00: Breakfast
Disco until 01:30	08.00 - 09.00: Continental breakfast	09.00 - 09.30: Delegation meeting
Day 2 (22 July): Women on the front line, women in resistance!	09.00 - 09.30: Delegation meeting	09.30 - 11.00: Educational: When the queer movement and Marxism meet
08.00 - 09.00: Breakfast	09.30 - 11.00: Educational: The rise of fascism: racist policies at work	Identity politics Neoliberalism The challenges of an anti-capitalist LGBTIQ project How to organise
09.00 - 09.30: Delegation meeting	Racist policies Migration and security Anti-fascism and the role of racism in the rise of fascism How to fight racism	11.00 - 11.15: Break
09.30 - 11.00: Educational: Between progress and reactionary attacks, how to build a feminist response?	11.00 - 11.15: Break	11.15- 12.30: Workshops
Resisting a wave of attacks Trans-inclusive feminism Femonationalism Anti-punitivist point of view	11:15 - 12:30: Workshops : Anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism Immigration law in France Ordinary racism Anti-cellism and racism Populism and the rise of the far right Practical workshop: how to build a tripod	The role of the family in the oppression of LGTBIQ people The anti-trans offensive Reclaiming anger against pride Control and self-determination of the body Historical perspective of the lesbian movement Dynamic workshop: sex and sexuality in capitalism
11.00 - 11:15: Break	12.30 - 14.00: Lunch and rest	12.30 - 14.00: Lunch and rest
11.15 - 12.30: Workshops :	14.00 - 15.00: Inter-delegation meeting	14.00-15.00: Inter-delegation meeting
The constitutionalisation of abortion Psychiatry as a tool for the social control of women Anti-punitivism and cancel culture Rape and incest culture Practical workshop: how to get involved in the awareness team Practical workshop: feminist self-defence	15.00 - 16.30: LGBTIQ+ space: LGBTiphobia at school and at work, how to detect lgbtiqphobic practices	15.00 - 16.30: Trans space: The revolutionary approach to the trans struggle! Drawing up a 10-point TRANSitional programme
12.30 - 14.00: Lunch and rest		16.30 - 17.30: Break
14:00-15:00: Inter-delegation meeting		17.30 - 18.30: Preparing for the LGBTIQ evening

18.30 - 20.00: Delegation meeting	15.30 - 16.00: Break	Strategy
20.00 - 21.30: Dinner and camp coordination meeting	16.00-17.30: Workshops	Concrete experiences
21.30 - 22.30: LGBTIQ meeting	What is the purpose of having youth organisations?	- 11:15: Break
Practical information for the evening	The role of revolutionaries in elections	11.15 - 12.30: Workshops:
Our need for an LGBTIQ party/Watching the straight world fall apart	Anti-validism in the struggle	The food system and the mobilisation of farmers
Pink washing	Housing unionism and revolutionary strategy	The water crisis and touristification
22.30-03.00: LGBTIQ Party	Revolutionary organization: strategies and theories through the ages	The diversity of tactics in environmental mobilisation
Day 5 (25 July): Strategy and Party	Dynamic workshop: Can theft be a political tactic?	Ecofeminism and queer ecology
Morning for sleeping and chilling and playing at the beach until 11:00.	17.30-18.30: Inter-delegation meeting	Dynamic workshop: how do we imagine life after the revolution?
09.00 - 10.00: Breakfast	18.30-20.00: Delegation meeting	Practical workshop: how to organize a soup kitchen
11.00 - 11:30: Delegation meeting	20.00 - 21.30: Dinner and camp coordination meeting	12.30 - 14.00: Lunch and rest
11.30-12.30: Anti-validism conference: What are disabilities? Why is society validist?	21.30 - 22.30: International meeting	14:00-15:00: Palestine Standing Committee: End of the discussion, final work on the declaration and banner.
12.30 - 14.00: Lunch and rest	Disco until 1:30	15.00 - 15.30: Break
14:00-15:30: Educational: The urgent need for revolution: paths, limits and contradictions	Day 6 (26 July): Ecosocialism or barbarism	15.30 - 16.30: Interdelegation meeting
The working class today	08.00 - 09.00: breakfast	16:30 - 18:00: Delegation meeting
The need to organise, and how to do it	09.00 - 09.30: Delegation meeting	18:00-19:30: Tidying up (+Camp coordination meeting, camp report)
The role of the parties	09.30 - 11.00: Educational: Lenin in Sainte Soline: strategy and tactics for ecosocialism	19.30 - 21.00: Dinner
Hypothesis of revolution	Economic planning	21.00 - 22.30: Closing meeting and goodbye until next year (Camp report, statistics, space report, next camp)
The strike according to Bensaïd	Ecological Leninism	

Rwanda as the European Union's deputy in Africa

6 May 2024, by **Paul Martial**

Following their agreement, Rishi Sunak and Kagamé say they are impatient to see the first migrants from Great Britain deported to Rwanda as soon as possible, and so much the worse if this pact contravenes international law. If this demagogic and racist policy is in Sunak's electoral interests, what is it doing for Kagamé?

Money for migrants

The interests are primarily financial, and the Rwandan authorities make no secret of it. The first 300 migrants transferred should bring Rwanda 220 million euros. To this must be added €25 million financed by the EU as part of the 'emergency transit mechanism'

for migrants evacuated from Libya. In addition to the financial gain, Kagamé is tolerated for his systematic human rights violations. In fact, he will begin his fourth term in office in the presidential elections to be held in the summer of 2024, which he will win with the same Soviet-style scores as in previous elections. Human rights organisations have repeatedly denounced the assassinations of

opponents around the world, but nothing has changed.

Guilty indulgence

This leniency on the part of Western countries could be explained by guilt. The guilt of indifference to a genocide that was taking place before their very eyes. But above all there is Rwanda's military diplomacy. It is Africa's second largest contributor to peacekeeping operations. Nearly 4,600 Rwandan soldiers are deployed in UN missions in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. In the latter country, Rwanda sent its special forces in 2020 to save the regime. This is a relief for Europe, which fears that the country will once again fall into

chaos, with deleterious consequences for the stability of the region.

The new gendarme

Rwanda has made itself indispensable to France by intervening in Mozambique. Its soldiers have repelled Islamist fighters from Cabo Delgado and are ensuring the security of this strategic region for TotalEnergies. The multinational is investing nearly \$15 billion in the production of liquefied gas.

Kagame is a bit like the Wagner of the West. With the French army now unwelcome almost everywhere in Africa, the role of policeman seems to have devolved to the land of a thousand hills. Benin, for example,

which is suffering from incursions by jihadists from neighbouring Burkina Faso, has just signed a military agreement. This paves the way for intervention by the Rwandan army. If this operation is a success, there is every chance that other countries will be interested.

The Rwandan authorities are taking advantage of this new role to pursue their policy of aggression and pillage in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo by supporting the M23 militia, which is guilty of the worst atrocities against the population without any risk of being punished.

5 May 2024

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

No borders, no nations, no deportations

5 May 2024, by **Terry Conway**

The raid came less than a week after the Tory's notorious Rwanda Act finally received royal assent on 25 April after the House of Lords attempts to water down the bill finally ran out of steam. Perhaps more tellingly, it came the day before many local and mayoral elections in England. (There were no elections in Scotland on 2 May, and in Wales only elections for Police and Crime Commissioners.) Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was determined to try and stem the tide of support bleeding away from his chronically failing government by focusing minds on his determined anti-immigration stance.

On Sunday 27 April, the government had announced the Home Office would launch "[a major operation to detain asylum seekers across the UK in preparation for their deportation to Rwanda](#)", some weeks before they were expected to act. While immigration raids have been standard part of the British state's "hostile environment" long before the Rwanda

legislation was agreed, there was no doubt that this was an escalation and one happening with the electoral timetable in mind. Campaigners also received information that some asylum seekers were receiving notices mentioning possible removal to Rwanda.

Activists responded quickly through existing networks mainly built in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and the fight against the repressive Police Bill. Stalls were organised near immigration reporting centres to reach as many asylum seekers as possible and inform them, in a variety of languages, that despite recent legal changes, they do still have some rights. At the same time messages went out widely on social media alerting a wider network of people that they might be called on at short notice to block a removal.

For seven hours protestors blockaded the road outside the hotel where the asylum seekers are currently housed, with calls for additional bodies going out throughout the day. At [3pm](#) the

coach finally left - empty. Forty-five activists were arrested. Meanwhile campaigners in Portland Dorset where the barge is moored are also keeping a close eye to block any further arrivals.

But while May Day was a victory for international solidarity, on Friday 3 May at least two other raids took place in different parts of London - in [Hounslow](#) and in [Croydon](#). At the former, the coach was delayed for some time by activists but they were not able to prevent people being taken away in the end. It is not clear what happened in Croydon since the initial call out, but no doubt there will be increasing calls for action on the streets in the weeks ahead.

This is what solidarity looks like, as those fleeing the destruction capitalism has wrought to their homes are subject to yet further inhuman treatment.

For further information see the [Migrants Organise website](#).

5 May 2024

Deceptive elections in Chad

4 May 2024, by **Paul Martial**

Ten candidates are standing for the presidential election in Chad, to be held on 6 May. The election will take place at the end of a three-year transition period, which was initially scheduled to last 18 months. This transition, which was the result of a coup d'état, is headed by Mahamat Déby, who succeeded his father, himself a coup plotter.

Neutralizing the opposition

Of course, when he became president of the transition, Déby pledged not to be a candidate in the presidential election. Obviously, this promise was not kept. His three years in power have mirrored his father's thirty years. A mixture of ferocious repression, with dozens of deaths and hundreds of imprisonments during demonstrations, and co-optations of opponents into the government and various institutions. As a result, the main opposition figure Succès Masra has found himself, from exile, in the prime ministership.

The ten candidates thus include Déby and his current Prime Minister Succès Masra. Many Chadians suspect that there is a deal between the two to ensure that they remain in power. Another candidate is former prime minister Albert Pahimi Padacké, and others whose sole function is to act as stooges in a highly undemocratic election.

ground

Indeed, every measure has been taken to ensure that Déby wins. State resources have been made available for his election campaign. The National Election Management Agency, which is organizing the ballot, is headed by a member of the presidential party, the MPS. The Constitutional Council, which is supposed to monitor the electoral process, is chaired by Jean-Bernard Padaré, a former MPS spokesman. Radical opposition candidates are excluded from the campaign. The most dangerous opponent for Déby, Yaya Dillo, was assassinated in February.

Déby has also taken precautions internationally to ensure that his dynastic seizure of power is not condemned. His meeting with Putin in Russia was a clear signal to France that its three outposts with its thousand soldiers would not last forever. This message was well received, as Jean-Marie Bockel, Macron's special envoy to Africa for military matters, expressed, a week after Dillo's murder, France's "admiration for the process" that Déby had initiated. In addition, the Chadian authorities asked the US defence attaché "to immediately halt US activities at the Koseï air base". A warning to the United States, which has already been forced to dismantle its drone base in Niger.

economic crisis

During the transition period, while rights and freedoms have deteriorated, the social and economic situation of Chadians has also worsened. Fuel prices rose by almost 40%, causing inflation on all basic necessities. This has been compounded by more frequent and longer power cuts, putting a brake on economic activity. Exasperated, public sector workers at various general assemblies pushed the trade unions to call a general strike at the end of February. All the more so since many people are wondering what happened to the oil money that Chad has been extracting for the last twenty years. Chad is ranked 187th out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI).

At the end of the social conflict, which lasted nearly three weeks, the government undertook to pay wage arrears for 2023 and to increase the monthly cost-of-living allowance in remote areas of the country, but it remained adamant about raising fuel prices.

It is not certain that the electoral manoeuvres taking place in a deteriorating social and political climate will bring about the stability in Chad so desired by the Western powers.

2 May 2024

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

Preparing the

Social and

Euskal Herria: a new victory for EH Bildu

3 May 2024, by Buenaventura Soihartze

In the three provinces of *Hegoalde* (Spanish Basque Country), the *Eskualdunak* (Basques) elected the 75 deputies of the autonomous parliament, who appoint the *lehendakari*, the head of government of the autonomous community, who forms a government.

2022-2023: fall of the PSOE, victory for the PP

Elections for the autonomous communities have been held between 2022 and 2024. The 2022 elections were marked by the victory of the Partido Popular (conservative right) in Castilla-y-Léon and Andalucía, and this trend was confirmed in 2023 with its victory, increasing the number of autonomous communities governed from 3 to 10. The PSOE, then in power at national level, lost 6 autonomous regions and retained 3. The Partido Regionalista de Cantabria (autonomist left), allied to the PSOE, lost the leadership of Cantabria. Ciudadanos (liberals) lost the autonomous city of Melilla, and the Coalición Canaria (pro-independence right) came to power in the Canary Islands. The Partido Popular was not the only winner: it chose to co-manage 5 autonomous regions with the far-right Vox party, starting in the 2022 elections in Castilla-y-Léon. Podemos disappeared at regional level.

2024: last three autonomous elections

Although the Partido Popular also made progress in the legislative elections (from 89 to 137 deputies), it was unable to secure a majority in

parliament and did not enter into an alliance with Vox. The PSOE was able to hold on to power via a broad coalition comprising Sumar (reformist left) and various pro-independence parties. In 2024, the polls in Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia were to be held. Galicia confirmed a number of electoral trends: the Partido Popular held firm, the Socialist Party resisted, Podemos collapsed in favour of the Bloque Nacionalista Gallego (pro-independence left), which came second in this election.

In Eskual Herria, it is EH Bildu that is making progress. Founded in 2011 after more than a decade of bans on left-wing pro-independence parties, EH Bildu - accused of being close to ETA (Euskadi ta Askatasuna) - has gradually established itself on the Basque and Spanish political scene. The year 2023 was one of many victories for the Basque pro-independence party: a hundred or so mayoralties in the Basque Country and Navarre, including that of Iruña/Pamplona with the help of the Socialist Party, second in the legislative elections ahead of EAJ/PNV (pro-independence right), second in the general elections in the Basque Country.

The result of the elections on Sunday 21 April was a real surprise, with a tie between EAJ/PNV, the historic and hegemonic pro-independence party, and EH Bildu. Each won 27 seats in the Basque autonomous parliament. EH Bildu came first in two provinces: Alava and Gipuzkoa, while EAJ/PNV retained its stronghold in Bizkaia.

A PSOE that remains central

for the pro-independence movement

However, thanks to the 12 elected members of the PSOE, EAJ/PNV knows that it will be able to keep the Basque region, as the PSOE and EAJ/PNV refuse any local alliance with EH Bildu, raising the spectre of ETA to refuse to govern with them. Both the 2023 general elections and the elections for Basque autonomy were marked by attacks on the pro-independence vote from the right and far right. The PSOE was accused by the right and far right of wanting to sell off and carve up Spain, while EH Bildu was constantly linked to ETA, notably on 14 April 2024 when Pello Otxandiano, head of the EH Bildu list, found himself at the heart of a controversy after refusing to describe ETA as "terrorist" and taking two days to apologize to the victims and their families.

On 12 May, Catalonia is due to elect its members of parliament, with Esquerra Republicana Catalunya (pro-independence left) and Junts (pro-independence right) facing off after breaking off their local alliance in 2022. However, the PSOE is assured of their support at national level, as the Spanish parliament will vote on the amnesty law for those indicted in the 2017 referendum on Catalan independence at the end of May/beginning of June.

3 May 2024

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

Chaos Here and There

2 May 2024, by **Against the Current** Editors

We will explore here how dysfunction and looming chaos in U.S. bourgeois politics, and the existing and deepening global disorder, intersect and tend to magnify each other. Two genocidal wars and invasions occupy center stage — where in both Gaza and Ukraine, each day's monstrous atrocities are exceeded by the next — impacting both the United States and the mockingly named “rules-based” international order.

In the U.S. election, at the outset it's essentially not about “the economy, stupid” — at least in the conventional “big picture.” It's about lived experience. For all the uncertainty in the economic picture, overall statistics look decent enough in domestic GDP growth, consumer spending, government infrastructure investment, easing inflation rates and the rest. The U.S. economy under Biden looks pretty good compared to most of Europe, and certainly crisis-ridden China.

If that's not the daily lived reality for tens of millions of people, the cause isn't the macro economy but rather brutal inequalities and social dysfunctions — structural racism, disastrous public health, poor access to affordable housing and education — leaving behind major sectors of the population among young people, racialized as well as economically depressed rural communities, and contributing greatly to the opioid drug overdose catastrophe.

That disconnect is not unique to the United States, and it's a big driver of a global tide of authoritarian, far-right, racist and anti-immigrant forces. Recent electoral contests show mixed results, with the extreme right suffering setbacks in Brazilian, Polish and municipal Turkish elections, for example, while gaining ground in places like Slovakia, Indonesia, Argentina, Ecuador and El Salvador.

In the United States, what's driving much popular anger toward the Biden presidency are actually products of longtime bipartisan policies. The

massive migration and asylum crisis at the U.S. border and in our cities, first and foremost of course, is a life-and-death emergency for people undertaking those desperate journeys, and a nightmare for migrants being held in detention centers under brutal conditions. It's also an enormous burden on U.S. border communities and cities attempting to shelter new arrivals.

Contrary to rightwing and MAGA hysteria, this disaster has nothing to do with imaginary “Biden's open borders” or “catch and release.” It's the direct result of decades of “free trade” that destroyed Mexican and Central American agriculture; genocidal U.S.-backed dictatorships and counterrevolutionary wars, not to mention ruinous interventions in Haiti and devastating sanctions on Venezuela and Cuba; and perhaps most of all, the insane half-century “war on drugs” that predictably fostered a continental industry of drug gangs and cartels.

None of this is helped by brutal and authoritarian regimes in Asia and Africa. Mass migration and its political fallout can't be understood in the U.S. context alone. Close to 100 million people are displaced by world capitalist system failures expressed in wars and genocides, political collapses and environmental catastrophes. Countries in Europe face migration flows and appalling levels of deaths in the Mediterranean Sea. Anti-immigrant violence has spread to South Africa as well, underscoring the truly global scale of this crisis.

As they seek to exploit the racist backlash for political gain, the forces of the far right in Europe and the Trump/MAGA cult in the United States understand what they have in common, how they can group together under a banner of “saving white Christian civilization” — and the willing partner they have in Vladimir Putin.

Ukraine, Palestine and Beyond

The wars in Ukraine and Palestine highlight, among other things, the consequences of U.S. political gridlock and imperial cynicism. To state the case bluntly: Ukraine, without the weapons it needs to defend itself from Russia's invasion, would look like what Israel has done to Gaza with full U.S. support. Every Ukrainian city would already resemble Gaza City and Khan Yunis. And as for Gaza, without an immediate permanent ceasefire, what's been called “the world's largest open-air prison” has become a death and mass starvation camp.

For six months after October 7, the Biden administration supported Netanyahu's mantra of “destroying Hamas.” That means annihilating Gaza — and Israel's intention to irreversibly destroy Gazan society, and end any hope for Palestinian freedom, is as explicit as Russia's objective of eliminating Ukraine as an independent nation.

In the Washington cesspool, essential aid for Ukraine is bottled up by the pro-Putin Republican wing in Congress — and chained to billions more U.S. dollars supported by Democratic and Republican leadership alike, for Israel's Gaza genocide. This is happening just when a growing majority of the U.S. public supports a ceasefire to stop the slaughter in Palestine, and still supports aiding Ukraine's struggle for survival. (See [Howie Hawkins' dissection of the Ukraine aid struggle](#) in this issue of *Against the Current*.)

The depravity of “Genocide Joe” Biden's embrace of Benjamin Netanyahu's war is beyond description. The electoral hole he's dug for himself and the Democrats among Arab, Muslim, young and progressive voters may prove too deep to tunnel out — although it's not our purpose here to predict the eventual electoral consequences.

The powerful “Uncommitted” or blank votes in the Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Hawaii, Wisconsin and New York Democratic primaries showed the rage against American enabling of Israel’s Gaza genocide. So did the beautiful coalition of Palestinian, Jewish and antiwar activists in the street between the White House and Capitol, delaying the motorcade to Biden’s State of the Union speech.

Only after mounting protests, in the wake of the targeted Israeli massacre of the World Central Kitchen food aid convoy, did the Biden administration announce that the Gaza massacre is “disproportionate.” Meanwhile, as Donald Trump openly cheers on the genocide, it’s already clear on the world stage who anticipates Trump’s return to the White House: Netanyahu, Vladimir Putin, Hungary’s Viktor Orban, and other authoritarians and aspiring autocrats.

Not only does Russia’s President-for-life Putin believe his annexationist ambitions in Ukraine can be fulfilled, his puppet prime minister Medvedev projects Russia’s goal of carving up a defeated Ukraine among Russia, Hungary, Moldova and other neighboring states. (Does that remind us when wise U.S. politicians thought that carving up Iraq into three separate mini-states would be a Really Clever Idea?)

Is this extreme result likely? Not immediately — but without essential aid, Ukraine’s prospects are grim.

Expanded Conflict Looming

With deep future implications, there is one clear winner in the Ukraine war: NATO, with the accession of longtime officially-neutral countries Finland and Sweden. The consequences will long outlive the current crisis.

Much is made of the fact that without full U.S. buy-in, NATO’s other members can’t mount the production capacity to supply Ukraine against Moscow’s brutal advances. Further alarm in European capitals arises from Donald Trump blustering to his neo-

isolationist base about walking away from NATO and inviting Russia “to do whatever the hell they want.” These factors now play to Putin’s advantage to be exploited militarily as well as politically, both in Europe and in the U.S. elections. But NATO countries will begin to ramp up, not only for the support of Ukraine today but for the longer-term prospect of conflicts with Putin’s and perhaps post-Putin Russia.

Over the coming years a re-armed Europe may create the appearance of military “balance,” while actually exacerbating longer-range instability and war dangers. Hopes for lasting peace after the Cold War have been squandered in the twin triumphs of neoliberal and gangster-oligarch capitalist rule, in the West and post-Soviet Russia respectively. As for a possible Trump presidency, that prospect certainly emboldens the European far right — while also spurring NATO partners to escalate their military spending.

Whatever Trump’s verbal threats to the alliance’s future and whether or not he means them, breaking treaty obligations to NATO is not so easy, nor do we think that the imperialist U.S. ruling class would tolerate it. Above all, imperial strategic thinking looks much further ahead to future confrontations with China, in which the United States would need to have its major alliances in Europe as well as Asia well in line.

All this helps frame how, as we suggested at the outset, elements of U.S. political and global chaos feed into each other. The literally burning issues include capitalism’s inability to confront — indeed, the ways it worsens — spreading disasters of climate change, uncontrolled calamities in Sudan, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo to name just three, and now the emerging threat of military confrontation in space up to and including satellite-based nuclear weapons.

As horrific as they are in and of themselves, the Gaza and Ukraine wars bring into the spotlight what the Global South has experienced for a long time, mainly hidden from the headlines. Potential and actual

genocides are ever-present in the workings of that highly praised global order.

American Prospects

Returning to the U.S. arena, the encouraging signs include of course, the outpouring of support for Palestine’s survival; the resistance to outrageous assaults on abortion rights and women’s reproductive freedom; and the rise of labor activism in industry as well as among sectors from fast-food to higher education workers.

As for the coming U.S. election and the presidential contest that so few folks really want, we know that the outcome will resolve none of the fundamental conflicts in our society and its dysfunctional, unrepresentative and elite-driven political system.

Imagine — because we need to, not because we want to — a second Trump presidency with its assaults on women’s, workers’ and all non-privileged people’s rights, the destruction of all semblances of environmental and climate policy, the promised attempt to deport millions of people, wholesale crippling of small-d democratic and small-r republican norms and institutions, and potential unleashing of state repression as well as Proud Boys and Oath Keeper-type militias to terrorize dissident activity.

The forces behind Trump openly intend to rapidly implement savage social cuts, full-fledged judicial takeovers, federal as well as state-level abortion bans, DEI and trans rights bans among others, rightwing doctrinal transformations of K-12 and university education, voter suppression and more, hoping that their domination will be baked-in beyond democratic popular challenge.

All this would further embolden the global far right electorally, in the streets, and potentially in the staging of military coups against “left” or reform governments (e.g. Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia...). The consequences for Palestine and Ukraine among many others are ghastly to contemplate.

Liberals and Democrats aren’t wrong

to point to the magnitude of the threat. The problem is that their politics rule out any effective programs to defeat it.

Alternatively, against the nightmare for America and the world of a second Trump ascendancy, is the possibility that the cynical and morally compromised Biden administration squeaks through to a second term, with at best tiny Congressional and Senate majorities — or more likely minorities in one or both chambers.

In that case the right, far-right and white-nationalist forces will still be on the move, fueled by almost-certain new and old election-denial and Great-Replacement mythologies. The threat they represent may be slowed, if barely and temporarily, but certainly not defeated.

Electoral options for socialist and social-movement left forces in the United States will be discussed and debated in our pages and of course more widely. Certainly our movements do not control the electoral outcome in

2024, and may at most have some marginal influence in closely contested “swing states” and perhaps more in some important local races.

But either way our fundamental tasks revolve as they always have, on organizing the movements of resistance whether that’s for labor, for reproductive rights, for Palestine, for Ukraine — and for beginning the forging of long-needed, genuinely progressive independent politics.

Source: [ATC 230](#), May-June 2024.

Capitalism carries war and authoritarianism like the cloud carries the storm...

1 May 2024, by **Thomas Rid**

As the shadow of war spreads, our governments are preparing for it and intend to throw us into it with all their might. And behind them, the Bolloré, Dassaut, Peugeot and other gun merchants are licking their lips, calculating their next profits.

Capitalism, colonialism, authoritarianism and war

Globalized capitalism under the domination of the United States and its allies has entered a multidimensional crisis of inextricable contradictions. Environmental crises (droughts, floods, pandemics), financial and economic crises (subprimes, debt, etc.) and the crisis of hegemony of the capitalist system are combining and reinforcing each other. This economic system is on its last legs, reinforcing exploitation and inequality, and fanning the flames of hatred, racism and the far right... and war. The proof is in the rise in military budgets around the world, along with the authoritarianism of governments

and the rise of extreme right-wing ideas.

This situation gives wings to all forms of colonialism, starting with Israel’s colonial project, which consists of ethnically cleansing the Palestinians in order to seize the massive gas deposits on the shores of Gaza and the land and water on the West Bank. In Ukraine, Russia intends to get its hands on natural resources, immense arable land and nuclear power stations. In the United States, the war is concentrating financial and economic flows in order to maintain hegemony over globalization and remain the imperial centre. And in France, the return of a warlike imperialism is delighting the ‘captains of industry’ and financiers. For the French state, the aim is to regain a foothold in Africa and the Middle East, to regain the markets and positions it has lost over the last twenty years.

The war economy and bringing France into line

Before the war, the “war economy”

and “rearmament” had been called for by capital’s lackeys, court economists and prefecture intellectuals. It’s not their children who will live in misery and die under bullets. So Macron is opening gunpowder and cannon factories with great fanfare, while the champagne is flowing in the gilded salons of the Republic. He intends to spend €413.3 billion on the armed forces between 2024 and 2030. And to do all that, the people have to be brought to heel. You have to teach them discipline and sacrifice. Attal has therefore decided to lock up young people for 10 hours a day, every day, by turning secondary schools into barracks and introducing uniforms, following the introduction of the SNU.

Silencing dissent

For their part, Darmanin [Interior Minister] and Dupont-Moretti [Justice Minister] are hunting down any talk of environmental or social protest.

The repression is particularly zealous towards expressions of solidarity for the Palestinian people under genocide. At the end of January, the Ministry of Justice counted 626 proceedings for “apology for terrorism” in connection

with the war in Gaza. The secretary of the local CGT in the North has just been given a one-year suspended prison sentence for a leaflet; Rima Hassan, a candidate on the LFI list for the European elections, has been summoned by the judicial police for “apology for acts of terrorism”, as have activists from the Solidaires ÉtudiantEs section of the EHESS, SUD-Rail, journalist Sihame Assbague, our own publication director and dozens of others... and now MP Mathilde Panot.

Finally, because we’ll have to pay for the cannons and the champagne, Le Maire [Finance Minister] is announcing total austerity, with deep cuts in the education, health and social protection budgets.

But for how long? Will we agree to march in step and send our children to the slaughterhouse? Or will we turn our guns on our own generals? It is high time we raised our heads and refused censorship and repression. To

reject the authoritarianism of the Macron government and the war that is coming.

War on war! Solidarity and freedom for all peoples! Freedom for Palestine! Freedom for Ukraine! More anti-capitalist and internationalist than ever! That’s what we’ll be saying on 1 May.

24 April 2024

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