

U.S. Midterm Elections

Alarming Civil War Scenario Openly on Display

The U.S. midterm elections are an open display of the civil war raging in the United States.

The use of the word midterm indicates that the elections take place at the mid-point of the president's term in office. This reflects the centrality of the presidency in the U.S.-style democracy and explains why the 2022 midterm elections have become a vicious fight between Donald Trump and Joe Biden and their respective camps.



On November 8, the entire 435 member House of Representatives is up for election, as are one third of the 100 member Senate and Governors in 36 states, including Florida, Texas, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, and California. Even though many seats are up for election, at the federal level it is likely that only about 25 are competitive and the rest will be won by incumbents. State and local elections of various kinds also take place at the same time.



Both Biden and Trump and their respective camps are presenting the elections as crucial "to save the country." Trump is putting forward his Make America Great Again (MAGA) appeal and Biden's campaign slogan is to "save the soul" of the U.S. and "preserve democracy." "Democracy is on the ballot," Biden repeated over and over in a November 2 speech. It is necessary to vote to "preserve democracy," he keeps saying, meaning voting for those who back and support Biden against Trump.

The public for their part increasingly see the failure of government at all levels to meet the urgent needs of the people, for health care, housing, education, equality, peace and justice. There is growing recognition and anger with existing government institutions, including elections, Congress and the courts. All have shown themselves to be dysfunctional and incapable of resolving problems.

Both Biden- and Trump-backed forces want to divert the people's anger from taking the path of resistance and demands for a new direction for the country, a pro-social anti-war direction. Everything is focussed on getting the people to line up on one side or the other of the Biden/Trump divide. People's role is to choose sides and candidates who are part of one camp or the other. It is a civil war scenario from which a large number of U.S. voters stay away. Together with the large numbers of people who are blocked from voting because of the racist U.S. laws, this makes up a large section of the U.S. population which is seeking a way forward which favours them.



The World Watches the U.S. State and U.S.-style Democracy Unravel

The reporting on the midterm elections is from the vantage point of the rich and their candidates. The only role given to the people is to get drawn into a debate about them and choose a camp - either the Trump camp to Make American Great Again (MAGA) or Biden's "preserve the democracy."

Some of the reporting deals with the deteriorating conditions on every front in the U.S. but all of it is disinformation to deprive the working people of decision-making power over the issues that impact their lives. Issues such as the disastrous war economy, unsafe and unacceptable working and living conditions, vicious government racism and brutality against women, against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples and those which pertain to war and genocide are kept outside their purview.



Biden's talk about democracy and preserving the constitutional order and Trump's talk about how to make America great again by trampling on the constitutional order and making sure rights have no standing whatsoever, hide two critical facts. One is that irrespective of which president has been in power, including Trump and Biden, the current U.S. government is a government of police powers, without regard for rule of law. Police powers are all the prerogative powers exercised by the President and his cabinet agencies, and executives in general, such as Governors.

There is presidential dictate that tramples on rule of law and is not concerned with legitimacy, as can readily be seen in the lawlessness exercised within the United States as well as against the peoples abroad, be it in Europe to wage war against Russia to the last Ukrainian and expand NATO control over the peoples of the continent, or against Cuba, Venezuela, Haiti, Palestine and other countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.



Drone warfare and use of Special Forces is increasing now in Africa with the use of the military's AFRICOM, which is completely illegal and against the sovereignty of nations yet it has consistently been broadened, especially by Obama and every president since. Actions against immigrants and refugees, such as long-term detention of women and children, are also illegal but carry on. Racist police killings remain widespread. The rule is not of law, but of police powers characterized by executive dictate, impunity, and a complete lack of accountability.

The second thing not discussed is that Biden's first two years in office show the failure of his presidency to sort out any problem and in fact he draws the U.S. into deeper and deeper crises both at home and abroad. The world has watched as the U.S. state unravels. U.S.-style democracy with its striving for world hegemony and rule as "indispensable nation," dictating to one and all, is

failing. This includes the failure of the electoral process itself and of elections to resolve conflicts among the rulers.

What is needed is to look at the midterm elections from the vantage point of the peoples, in the U.S. and abroad, which means looking at how best to advance the battle in the U.S. for a people's democracy, a democracy of the people's own making that empowers them to govern and decide all the affairs which affect their lives.



Biden's "Good Fight to Fail Better" Will Not Fare Well

The midterm elections are supposed to serve as a gauge of how the Biden presidency is doing. It is a presidency that has not served in any way to lessen the intensifying conflicts within the ruling factions. Indeed, when Biden failed to pass his signature *Build Back Better Act*, the dysfunction of Congress and the presidency were fully revealed. Since then, massive funding has been approved for the Pentagon and war to isolate Russia and instigate conflicts elsewhere. Many have dubbed Biden's efforts to embroil people in supporting his Build Back Better campaign, the "good fight to fail better."

U.S. workers are bearing the brunt of government failures, whether it is COVID, or further impoverishment with wages lagging far behind inflation, or the environment, such as contending with the summer heat wave, fires, and then hurricanes. Yet everyone is called on to continue to support Biden and do a better job at failing.

Biden's failures are not only on the home front. Despite long-standing efforts in the U.S. to separate domestic concerns from foreign policy, this concept too is crumbling. There is a relation between the two, including the relation between civil war and imperialist war, the one giving rise to the other.



The appearance is given that Biden is succeeding on the foreign front, said to be uniting NATO and Europe against Russia using the conflict in Ukraine. Certainly, tens of billions of dollars have been provided in weapons and war materiel. But NATO remains divided. Germany is militarizing at a rapid rate and organizing to go against the norm since WWII that it would have no troops external to the country. The German question, since the end of WWII, and part of the reason for NATO to exist, remains, which is to keep Russia out, Germany down, and the U.S. on top. Instead, Germany is strengthening itself and conflicts like that over the Nord Stream pipeline

and oil continue.

Japan is also striving to break its constitutional mandate against troops abroad and participating in the many U.S.-dictated war games, such as the recent one with the U.S., Japan and south Korea targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Add in plans by the EU to have its own

armed force, and conflicts concerning Brexit and the broadening crisis in Britain, and it is evident that contention among these major powers is high. And all face the peoples' anger and resistance to the NATO meetings, war games and massive war funding and demands that their rights be met.

This is the context for the midterm elections, yet the issue of war and demands for peace are silenced. It is not among the questions raised in polls or media reports. So too is the fact that in their millions in these past few years, working people across the country have taken their stands against government racism and imperialist war and for equality, justice, peace, and democracy. This includes anti-war demonstrations in October in more than 60 cities.

Health care workers and teachers are also striking and demanding rights. Young warehouse and retail workers, such as at Amazon, Trader Joe's, Starbucks and elsewhere are coming forward to organize their own unions and participate in the fights around COVID, for safe working conditions and protective equipment and against the racism evident in lack of care and disproportionate deaths of Black people, for example. This organized resistance through strikes, demonstrations, meetings, and campaigns of various kinds and more continues.



Consciousness is growing that elections and reliance on the state and its elections to bring about required change will not solve the pressing problems humanity is contending with. This too is another failure of the rulers, that despite all their claims about democracy and government for the people, illusions along these lines are being eliminated. Recognition of the need for the people to rely on themselves and devise a democracy of their own making is increasing.

The existing constitutional order has always been a compromise with slavery and monarchy, which is why the presidency has such prerogative powers to "execute the Office of the Presidency," as the oath states. It is a structure of inequality, which keeps the people out of power and their voice silenced. Elections are part of this structure of inequality. While there may be candidates one could organize to support, what is key is doing so in a manner that favours the people.



The elections are one area where the drive for peoples' empowerment can be strengthened. But only if that is taken as the starting point. That is, how can elections be used to strengthen the drive of the people for a people's democracy, where the people are the decision makers? How can the voice of the people be heard, rather than silenced? How can energies be directed to strengthening resistance and building alternatives, not choosing sides? These are the questions to raise in designing organizing. The debate is not so much which candidate is more or less right-wing but strengthening our unity and organizing for alternatives that serve our interests and occupy space for the people to speak in their own name, with their solutions.

Discussion groups, webinars and house meetings on these matters and building alternatives to put decision-making in the hands of the people, contribute to this direction now and after the elections.



Efforts to Divide the People Failing Despite Biden/Trump Dangerous Brinkmanship

– Kathleen Chandler –

There are numerous examples indicating that people in the U.S. are united in demanding that government uphold its responsibility to meet their claims for safe water, protection from heat waves and hurricanes and funding for losses, for housing and education for all, for safe working conditions and wages commensurate with the work done, for peace and an end to U.S. wars. Polls repeatedly show that a large and growing majority think the country is headed in the wrong direction. Through various means like strikes, demonstrations, Zoom meetings, petitions and more, many are demanding a new direction, one that serves the interests of society, its many collectives, and individuals, that harmonizes human relations, rather than further antagonizing and destroying them.

However people may vote November 8, their striving for this direction is evident in the broad public support across the country for health care workers as they strike and organize for the safe staffing, protective gear, and safe working conditions they and their patients and communities require. The same can be said of repeated stands and actions, including hunger strikes, rejecting the government's inhumane and brutal treatment of immigrants and refugees, especially women and children. As it has been put by many, "No Crimes Against Humanity in Our Community."

There are growing efforts among younger workers, such as those at Amazon, Trader Joe's, Apple, REI, Chipotle and Starbucks not only to organize at the workplace but to also organize Zoom meetings and conferences to unite and exchange experiences.

Many are also joining various political actions against government racism, its refusal to uphold standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, against racist police killings, attacks on Indigenous rights and more.



It can be said that the majority have common demands and in their millions are organizing for their rights and joining various efforts to defend the rights of all, at home and abroad.

The rulers on the other hand are deeply divided, with their dysfunctional and outdated institutions no longer serving to resolve conflicts within their ranks and provide for the peaceful transition of power. They are also concerned about the fact that the people are angered by government impunity and refusal to solve the most basic problems such as clean water and reliable electricity, heat, and housing for all. As the Amazon workers, for example, indicate, there is recognition by working people of the necessity to rely on themselves, not the government, and to look for alternatives to the

fraud and failure of the U.S.-style democracy of Biden and Trump.



It is in the context of the continuing failure of the U.S. state, including the first two years of the Biden presidency, that Trump and Biden have engaged in a bitter and dangerous brinkmanship as the ruling factions they represent vie for the power of the presidency. Even before the 2020 elections this was evident in Trump's claims about election fraud. Since then, there have been the efforts of the House of Representatives' January 6 Committee, which most recently subpoenaed Trump to provide records and testify. He has so far refused and may not ever

testify if the Committee is disbanded because of losses by the Democrats in the midterms.

There have been both civil and criminal prosecutions against Trump forces by New York State and criminal investigations, but no charges yet, by the Justice Department. There was the FBI raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago home and his countersuits against the government actions.

There continue to be various claims and counter claims concerning Russia and China. Both camps are acting to try to keep the U.S. on top as "indispensable nation." Biden has carried out provocation after provocation against China while also trying to crush Russia using the war in Ukraine -- both efforts failures while increasing the danger of more aggressive U.S. wars.

What is also further evident now, in part through the January 6 hearings, is that there are sufficient grounds to bring criminal charges against Trump and others, but the Justice Department so far is refusing to. It is considered by many among the contending ruling factions that doing so could trigger open, violent civil war, something all are trying to avoid. However, lack of action further exposes the President, Justice Department, and the policing agencies as an illegitimate force -- contributing to people's anger and dissatisfaction with government and a striving for alternatives. Why should people accept the use of violence against them by the state, whether through mass incarceration, police attacks against demonstrators, police racist killings and more, when their rule is no longer legitimate and the fraud and impunity evident for all to see?

Biden and Trump have been on the campaign trail. Biden has emphasized that "democracy is on the ballot" and said in a speech last week, "In a typical year, we're often not faced with questions of whether the vote we cast will preserve democracy or put us at risk." His forces routinely refer to the "extreme right-wing," of the Republican Party, often called the MAGA Republicans. Trump continues to discredit the elections and refers to "radical left-wing maniacs," telling crowds that "every free and loving American needs to understand that the time to stand up to this growing left-wing tyranny is right now."



What is the aim of discrediting the elections on the one hand and claiming democracy is on the

ballot on the other? They are two sides of the same coin, which is preserving rule by the rich oligarchs while keeping the people out of power. There is an effort to inflame passions to divide the people and prevent them from building their unity and the political battle for a people's democracy that serves their interests. The divisions of the rulers are to be imposed on the people.

The claims of "left-wing" and "right-wing" extremes are aimed mainly at the peoples resisting and to criminalize their struggles and justify repression. The danger also lies in the fact that the rulers do not control the situation and act to destroy what they cannot control, even if it means violent destruction and division of the country itself. While they try to avoid such an outcome, the brinkmanship and failures will bring more anarchy and violence. That the U.S. could resort to more imperialist war to avoid civil war remains a serious threat. So too does the possibility of violent civil war at home. Both are grave dangers for the peoples of the world.

Whatever the results of the elections, what stands out is that U.S. rulers are no longer fit to rule and serve only to further divide and disinform the peoples while striving to hold onto their power. New relations of power are required, the time for democracy of the peoples' own making that empowers them to govern and decide is now. Stepping up the fight for rights and building an alternative, new institutions, new constitutions is urgent and necessary.

(Voice of Revolution)



Evidence Underscores Dysfunctional Electoral System

Election dysfunction for the midterm elections is serving to increase the harassment of the people while further deepening the crisis of legitimacy of the electoral system itself. Local election workers whose job is to verify the eligibility of voters at polling stations and keep ballots secure, are being harassed as never before, photographed, their license plates recorded and many receive death threats. Since the 2020 election, more than 1,000 messages to election officials have been documented across the country intimidating them, including more than 120 that could warrant criminal prosecution.

The threats are not based on any actions by the election workers but rather fomented by widely promoted stories by elected officials in the monopoly media concerning the 2020 "Big Steal," or "Big Lie." Groups like "First Amendment Auditors" in Maricopa County, Arizona, which includes Phoenix, for example, circled the elections department building, in tactical gear. They photographed county workers, and their vehicle license plates. In other cases, individuals stalked workers and used social media to threaten county election officials.



The promotion of the "Big Steal" propaganda and its counterpart that elections are "free and fair," serve to hide the long-standing fraud of U.S. elections, while fomenting these divisions at the local level. What is not discussed is that working people have no say in selecting candidates, or setting

the agenda, or having their solutions heard and discussed. Voter suppression and the negative campaigns and the millions and billions needed to run for office are all par for the course and mean that elections are routinely stolen and far from fair.

The first-past-the-post method of counting votes also means presidents and other congressional representatives are elected by a small percentage of the eligible vote.

A further indication that elections are being used against the people while also not resolving conflicts among the rulers is the fact that many Trump-backed forces are running for the position of Secretary of State. Since the *Help America Vote Act* (HAVA) was passed after the fraud of the 2000 Bush/Gore election, the Secretary of State is responsible for giving final approval of the vote count and certifying corresponding electors for the Electoral College. While electors are supposed to reflect the popular vote, the Secretary of State can use the police powers of the office to challenge and reject the count, certify electors for a different candidate, call for audits and recounts, etc., as was demanded by Trump in various states like Georgia and Arizona in 2020.

Indiana, Arizona, Michigan and Nevada, considered among the presidential battlegrounds, have candidates running based on using the office to help ensure Trump wins while also greatly limiting the right to vote, such as eliminating mail-in ballots, early voting, etc. The Biden faction is openly expressing concern that for the 2024 presidential election, there are actions by election officials to refuse to certify the vote, it "could set off a constitutional crisis." They are pumping tens of millions of dollars into these races.

In states like Pennsylvania, Florida and Texas, where the Secretary of State is appointed by the Governor, the election for Governor is playing a similar role.

The reality is that there is already a constitutional crisis as the constitution has failed to block the dysfunction of existing governing institutions. Its prerogative powers paved the way for the current deepening of the crisis. Since the Bush/Gore elections it is anarchy that has been raised to authority, as reflected in the many contending authorities evident in the elections, in dealing with voting rights, immigration and more.



With a government of police powers, not only do elections and institutions like Congress, the courts and presidency lack legitimacy, the rulers no longer even concern themselves with legitimacy. Their concern is to succeed in usurping the power of the presidency. As the many on-going conflicts within their ranks show, the rulers are acting to ensure the chaos and divisions unleashed are increased, so as to divert from their impunity and inability to solve problems. Instead, they can blame the existing set-up and justify use of yet greater police powers and impunity as necessary to "restore order," and protect "national security."

Given current conditions where violent civil war is brewing, the efforts by both factions are to block the peoples from developing an effective political movement in their own interests, and instead line up pro and con for one faction or the other. Biden claims "democracy" can be preserved by defending the constitutional form while breaking its bounds using police powers, while Trump promotes disregarding the constitution all together as necessary to "save America." Both preserve

the existing war economy and pro-war actions of the ruling class as a whole, both call for use of police powers with their impunity, lack of accountability and criminalizing of resistance, both strive for U.S. world hegemony, simply using different tactics.

The problem before the people is not lining up behind one or the other or being drawn into debates as to which is worse but persisting and broadening the fight for peoples' empowerment. The election is one arena for this, but so are the many other battles being waged to defend the rights of all, which put the interests of the people front and center and demand a democracy that does the same.

(Voice of Revolution)



Competing Authorities at State and Local Level Increase Danger of Violent Civil War

Elections for Governor in 36 states takes place November 8. These include many of the most populous and influential states, particularly as it relates to vying for the presidency. They include Texas, Florida, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Illinois, and California. Both Texas Governor Greg Abbott and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis have presidential ambitions and plan to run against Donald Trump, who is expected to announce after the midterm elections. California Governor Gavin Newsom is also considering a run against Biden, who has yet to confirm if he will run in 2024.

The significance of these elections this year lies in the fact that Governors, as state executives, operate as contending authorities with the federal government and between the states. They also control considerable armed forces, including state National Guard and state police. In conditions of a government of police powers at the federal level, based not on law but on impunity and exercising prerogative powers, through executive orders for example, the legitimacy and authority of the federal government gets called into question. Governors are also using police powers, often using executive orders.

The contention by Governors challenging federal authority, and that among the states themselves, is a factor increasing the danger of open, violent civil war. One arena where this is playing out is that of immigration.

In July the Pentagon extended for another year deployment of an estimated 4,000 U.S. armed forces at the border with Mexico. They were originally put in place by Trump in what was supposed to be a temporary assignment but has now lasted four years. In addition, Texas Governor Abbott has sent about 5,000 state National Guard to the border, under his command. In June, he, and Governor of Arizona Doug Ducey sent a letter to all 48 other states requesting they send their state National Guard to Texas for reinforcements. Several states did, including South Dakota, which used a private billionaire to finance the deployment. Arizona, Iowa, and Arkansas also sent state National Guard troops, while Ohio, Nebraska and Florida sent their Highway Patrol or other state law enforcement agents. Texas is using both.

National Guard troops come under the authority of the Governor of each state, unless federalized by the President, with permission of the Governor, as occurred for deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. Having both state National Guard and federal armed forces, and federal Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and state police all deployed and contending along

the border creates conditions for confrontation and contention. This is especially true given Border Patrol and ICE forces tend to favor the Trump faction and all are operating with impunity and great brutality against people at the border. Certainly, it is not a recipe for providing for the rights and needs of the immigrants and refugees, many being unjustly held in detention camps.

As conditions of civil war intensify, the problem of uniting the military (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force) and the federal policing agencies (including ICE, FBI, DEA, CIA, and more), and bringing state and local policing agencies (such as the massive ones for New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles) under federal control, is a major problem for the rulers. The elections for Governor will be an indication of just how these conflicts will play out in the coming years and how divisions along regional lines might emerge.

In addition, over the summer Abbott and DeSantis sent busloads of mostly refugees to Chicago, New York City, DC and Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. They said these states, all three being sanctuary states for immigrants and refugees, could better provide for their needs. Abbott has bussed about 7,900 migrants to DC since April, while sending 2,200 to New York and 300 to Chicago. Arizona Governor Doug Ducey has bused more than 1,800 migrants to DC since May.

The Mayor of New York City (NYC), Eric Adams, responded by saying it was criminal, kidnapping, etc. and called on the federal Department of Justice (DoJ) to prosecute. Governor Newsom of California, also called on the DoJ to prosecute. In addition, the DoJ July 30 filed a lawsuit against Abbott for his executive order barring non-governmental agencies from transporting undocumented immigrants in cars. The ACLU filed a similar suit calling for an injunction to stop implementation of the executive order, which a federal judge granted.

These are but a few of the examples where state authorities, especially Governors, are contending with the federal government and among themselves. In general, the disputes are persisting in various forms, including not only immigration but voting rights and COVID mandates. The impunity and arbitrary nature of governments of police powers undermines the legitimacy of government authorities at all levels, serving to eliminate the relations among the various federal and state authorities and unleashing anarchy and chaos, within their ranks and for the people.

In addition, all the media attention focused on actions by Abbott and DeSantis served to hide the brutal, racist, and inhumane treatment of immigrants and refugees by all. New York City, for example, gets many thousands of people from El Paso and other border cities that are unable to contend with the numbers of people coming in. Homeless shelters in New York City are already overflowing so Mayor Adams initially said he would provide a tent city to house the immigrants and refugees. Before it was even finished it was flooded out, as housing activists predicted.

As a result of fierce struggle, New York City has a "right-to-shelter" law, which guarantees a bed to any homeless individual. Housing and immigrant rights activists have been demanding that empty office and apartment buildings be utilized for housing, but Adams has refused. Now he is considering using cruise ships.

Housing is a serious problem that could be solved using solutions people are putting forward. But these are not heeded as the people are not the decision makers and their solutions, whether for housing, immigration, education, healthcare, have no place in the elections or any other time. The lack of political power is being felt as an immediate issue across the country and securing people's empowerment is the problem to solve.

(Voice of Revolution)