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**2020 U.S. Elections**

## The "Two Americas" in Contention Today



August 28, 2020. Demonstration of over 70,000 in Washington, DC, under conditions of the pandemic, on the 57th anniversary of the March on Washington. (Karey)

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### **2020 U.S. Elections**

## **In This Issue**

This issue of *TML Weekly* and its Supplement are devoted to the U.S. election which will be held on November 3. The aim is to provide readers with views, commentary and analysis, and information to help them grapple with what is pertinent and what is not in the election and to go to the heart of the matter of what is taking place in that country. It is crucial to lift the veil on the disinformation aimed at keeping the people disempowered.

*TML Weekly* calls on its readers to not get caught up in the disinformation which is being ratcheted up a hundredfold as the U.S. election draws near. Reject all discourse which leaves the people out of the equation or blames the people for the outcome or declares that the vote counts or that the people confer a mandate or that the military should intervene in any way.

The contradictions in the ranks of the U.S. rulers have become sharper as they strive to restructure all hitherto known arrangements to directly seize hold of the political power and not permit any arrangements to stand in their way. Canada's state is integrated into that of the U.S. imperialists and their imperialist system of states. The developments and conflicts of interest in this country are an extension of the civil war raging within the U.S. ruling class which the election will not settle. Thus, the dangers facing not only the people of the United States but also the Canadian and Quebec peoples and the peoples of the world increase. Only the people's striving for empowerment to bring a modern democratic personality into being which puts the people and their decision-making at centre stage can avert the dangers and bring about the kind of change the people need.

The U.S. democracy is in deep crisis because it is not rule by the people, of the people and for the people. Elections are a fraud from A to Z because U.S. citizens do not select the candidates, set their agenda or even vote for them and there is no way the rulers can be held to account.





On the occasion of the 2020 elections taking place in the United States, *TML Weekly* salutes the fighting people of the United States. We take this opportunity to hail their courageous and relentless resistance against racism, police brutality and impunity, and for equality and justice.

It is the people's determination to exercise control over all the decisions which pertain to matters of concern to them which counts. It is the fight of the New against the Old. We are confident that this presidential election, no matter its outcome and the dangers which lie ahead, will not divert the broad people's resistance from achieving its aims. This resistance is based on a determination to achieve

justice, accountability and redress -- most worthy demands which are consistent with the call of history and the needs of the day.

*TML Weekly* urges its readers to actively participate in finding out what this year's election to the presidency of the United States is all about. We welcome your views and contributions. Please send to [editor@cpcml.ca](mailto:editor@cpcml.ca).

(Photos: VOR, Layayette County Democrats)

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## The "Two Americas" in Contention Today

- Kathleen Chandler -



**October 27, 2020. Protest in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania against police killing of Walter Wallace Jr. in that city days earlier.**

The 2020 U.S. elections to be held on November 3 are presidential elections, as well as elections for the entire House of Representatives of 435 people and one-third of the 100 Senators. The elections are occurring in conditions of unprecedented crisis for what is called "the greatest democracy in the world:"

- more than 220,000 people have died of COVID-19 and more than 8 million people have been infected;
- a few billionaires increased their wealth by \$930 billion in the last six months during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- close to 62 million people have lost their jobs;
- some 98,000 businesses have permanently closed;
- more than 12 million people have lost employer-sponsored health insurance;
- 22 million people reported not having enough food; and
- one-sixth of all renters reported being behind on rent.

More than 20 million people have been engaged in a continuous protest movement demanding accountability and redress since May 2020 when George Floyd was killed by police. The broad and persistent resistance, fighting to block racist police violence and for justice, equality and accountability has brought forward a profound questioning of the existing justice system, or as many call it, the injustice system. There is broad recognition that the existing policing, courts and mass incarceration are racist to the core, are unequal and incapable of holding policing agencies accountable, whether at the local, state or federal level. Demands are not limited to securing the firing of a few police, but that far more significant change is needed, with control by the people a central element. Meetings and debates are already occurring to re-imagine safety and security that include issues like poverty and rights to housing, health care and jobs, especially in COVID-19 conditions. There are organizing efforts focused on budgets and people having a say in how public funds are being spent, whether for policing, militarization, incarceration, wars, health care and housing.



People are not fooled that elections are an avenue for change. Blocks to participation in elections reveal that it is not the people who elect whoever is brought to office. Blocks to participation include having to register to vote, with large numbers of those qualified unable to do so. African Americans have long been especially targeted for exclusion on this basis. Each state has different requirements for registering, different requirements for running for office, different requirements for registering a political party, and so forth. The entire process is undemocratic and unequal. Even so, where conditions permit, anti-war candidates or third-party candidates are running for office to give expression to the people's drive for empowerment.

Media coverage focuses on opinion polls and speculation on who is going to win the election. Or, put another way, who will the people vote for? We can say with certainty that the ruling class will win the election. We can also say that the people will continue to organize and fight, finding the ways and means to counter the pressure to be silent on issues of police impunity, injustice, impoverishment, inequality, the environment and war and peace. They will continue speaking out in their own name; expressing their concerns and demands.

The heroic resistance movement has been carrying on without let-up despite the violence of federal, state and municipal forces pitted against the people, who are undaunted by their criminalization and the criminalization of their various forms of participation in the affairs of the polity. The battle of "Two Americas" is not between the vision of Biden and the vision of Trump -- both essentially the same. It is between the vision of the people and the vision of the rulers. These are the "Two Americas" in contention today.

One is of the rich and their war economy and war government with its violence and brutality, and the other is the vision of the people who uphold the rights of all on every front as they oppose inequality, police violence and impunity.

In the discussion about the U.S. election, the issues raised by the corporate media constitute diversion, meant to divide the people and line them up behind one faction of the rulers or the other. Investigation and debate are instead needed on what a modern democracy that empowers the people would look like. How is equal membership in the polity sorted out? How can we have relations that put individual and collective on a par? These are some of the questions which require answers today to fulfill the striving of the people's movement for empowerment.

*(Photos: R. Melgarejo, We Are California, T. Phon Quang, Minnesota DOT, Karey)*

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## A Moment of Reckoning

- Pauline Easton -



**July 29, 2020. Wall of Veterans, and behind them Wall of Moms, form the front lines in protest demanding end to police violence and impunity in Portland, Oregon.**

The experience of the resistance movement in the United States and with the Trump presidency reveals first and foremost how decision-making takes place in the United States and who controls the decision-making process. This was also revealed by the presidencies which preceded this one, no matter what period of history or circumstances, or the personality of the president or style of his rule or political party which was said to have come to power.

Nonetheless, with the advent of the neo-liberal arrangements after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, a virulent counterrevolution moved in to occupy the space for change. The demand of the imperialists prevailed that all those who do not espouse a market economy, a multiparty democracy and human rights as defined by the imperialists, are rogue and illegitimate. This counterrevolutionary drive of the imperialists, in turn, exacerbated all the contradictions inherent in a system based on relations of production which can no longer contain the productive forces or control them.

Violence became the preferred method of control and to quell all opposition. States of exception

and rule on the basis of emergency powers have become permanent, all in the name of preserving the liberal democratic institutions, bringing the coronavirus under control, peace and other justifications which prove themselves to be as irrational as they are unsustainable.

Despite the U.S. declaring itself the "indispensable nation" and the U.S. democracy "the most advanced in the world," the material conditions do not abide by the wishes of the rulers.

Today, the clash between the governing authority and the people over where the country is headed is deepening in an unprecedented manner. As the persistence of the resistance to U.S. rule shows, the demands for equality, justice and accountability cannot be silenced or stopped. Everywhere people are making clear that the elections will not decide these issues; they will be settled by the people and their fight for rights to be recognized on a modern basis.

### **Rejection of the Juridical Viewpoint**

In this regard, people are rejecting the juridical viewpoint pushed on them to salvage the anachronistic democratic institutions which perpetuate the existence of an authority which rules over them. This juridical viewpoint is one of the obstacles facing the people of the United States at this time which they are rejecting.

A main feature of this viewpoint is for problems to be looked at as being legal or illegal. This viewpoint is intended to draw everyone into providing solutions that defend the existing anachronistic democratic institutions and draw everyone into a pro and con debate. This also directs attention to, and often reliance on, the courts and state agencies to settle the issues.



It is a limited and narrow view stuck within existing arrangements which have led to an unprecedented clash between the conditions and the authority, between the Old striving futilely and irrationally for immortality and the New striving to be born so that a new authority is established which is consistent with the conditions today.

The juridical viewpoint leaves the people and their drive for empowerment out of the equation altogether. They are not seen as the force for change. Their discussion and organizing for empowerment are not to occur. The monopoly media play their role in taking and keeping debate for or against Biden or Trump, all to stymie the broad discontent with the whole set up that exists in the U.S. and suppress the people's striving for change which favours them, not the rulers who are clearly not fit to govern.

Similarly, attempts to use the sentiment against Trump to draw people into this pro and con debate confine discussion within the existing arrangements rather than elaborating that the system is dysfunctional and new arrangements of people's empowerment are needed and what they may be.

### **A Period of Transition**

We are in a period of transition. The old arrangements do not function and do not serve us -- while the New is yet to be born. Organizing must be directed to facilitating that birth and to uniting all who are favoured by empowerment to join these efforts to develop modern institutions, modern collective forms where the people themselves are the decision-makers.



Fidelity must be to the ensemble of human relations and what they reveal, not to the old arrangements of the U.S. Constitution and what is called civil society. As we join our counterparts in the United States by fighting within our own country on all the issues which concern civil rights, our vantage point -- how we look at problems -- cannot be a juridical vantage point. We do not limit ourselves to defending civil rights. Unlike the rulers, we say the conflicting interests involved as concerns individual and collective interests in relation to the general interest; and all individuals and all collectives in relation to the common good can be harmonized. Individual and collective interests can be put on a par by providing democracy with a modern definition suitable to the needs today. A modern definition of democracy, in content and form, is required to accomplish this. The

endeavour to bring that definition into being will constitute the modern democratic personality which suits the world today.

Harmonizing interests is the act of being of the democratic personality. A modern democracy is a means by which to ensure that such a democratic personality can flourish.

Rights are not privileges which rulers can give or take away based on whether the giving or taking benefits them. They cannot be sacrificed on the altar of elections. Equality is not a god-given inalienable right interpreted as a social construct subject to manipulation by those who rule. It is linked to membership in the collective body and belongs to all as a matter of their objective being. As an attribute inherent to its modern definition, equality confers on all members of the body politic the right to participate in arriving at the decisions which affect their lives and to implement them, sum up the experience of their implementation and trace a path forward from there. Only if the fundamental principle of equality is recognized on a modern objective basis can those who violate the decisions of the collective be held to account.



The current election in the United States imparts nothing akin to equality. It is the ongoing and broadening struggle of the working people of all origins and creeds which imparts the equality conferred by membership. A modern democracy will enshrine such an equality which bans racism, discrimination and all abuse of the human person and of the social and natural environment. It will ban the use of force in settling conflicts within and between nations, provide economic well-being and protect the social and natural environment.

People are expressing their deepest desires through their demands. In order to realize their aims, they are drawing the warranted conclusion that forms of struggle from the past, based on the

Constitution and what it informs in the way of definitions and ways and means, have to be changed. New forms are needed so that the working people can grasp and fight for the realization of those demands which could improve their situation, bring peace, democracy and justice, and protect the natural and social environment. The new situation demands a new approach and solutions that working people want.

In this regard, at this time, the usual election efforts and propaganda to embroil the people by lining them up behind one candidate or the other of the two main cartel parties vying for power, Republicans and Democrats, convince no one that they can rely on the politicians of the rich and their rule to resolve the problems they face. Government at all levels has shown itself to be racist and thoroughly undemocratic. This is evident in the elections themselves, as voter suppression of various kinds is widespread and the whole set up is racist and discriminatory and obviously designed to maintain the relations which keep the narrow private interests in power.

The crucial part of the reckoning taking place is that people see the necessity to keep matters in their own hands and are organizing for a democracy of their own making.

The example of the nurses across the United States organizing vigils the week before the election to mourn the dead and fight for the living shows the consciousness which has imbued the movement. The nurses are targeting all elected officials for their failures concerning COVID-19. Many others have planned actions for after the elections as well.

The stand is firm: it is the people and their fight for the rights of all which achieve accountability and redress. A modern democracy must be brought into being which invents arrangements suitable to the working people no matter what their race, national origin, gender, creed or belief.

Security lies not in better use of police powers but in the fight for the rights of all. It is a moment of reckoning across the country; a time when the effects of all the past injustices have caught up with those who form the ruling class and have benefited from them.

After these elections, nothing will remain as it has been. The people's will must prevail to make sure the outcome favours them, not imperialism and all reaction.

*(Photos: S. Malgarejo, N. Glaros, T. Phan-Quang)*

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## **Broad Demands for a New Direction for Politics and the Economy**

As election day draws near, people are bombarded by poll after poll and reporting of all kinds as to who might win the presidential contest. The campaigns and media are part of an effort to derail the ongoing mass movement with its aim for change that favours the people. However, the scope and determination of the resistance is such that youth and workers are keeping matters in their own hands and pursuing their fight against government racism, COVID-19 failures and for equality, justice and accountability. This is evident in various actions being taken.

Nurses, for example, on the initiative of National Nurses United (NNU), joined with community organizers to hold vigils across the country from October 26 to November 1. They honoured and mourned the more than 2,000 health care workers who have died from COVID-19, while taking the stand to fight for the living. The names of the 2,000 dead, including 232 nurses, were compiled by the nurses themselves. While the military keeps record of its dead and wounded, the government will not do the same for health care workers and all the other frontline workers who have upheld their social responsibility despite facing illness and death.





**October 29, 2020. Nurses at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles hold vigils for health care workers who have died of COVID-19.**

Health care workers have remained on the front lines despite the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and being targeted for speaking out for their rights. Their vigils took the stand that all elected officials and big hospital employers must be held accountable for their failures. They brought out that African Americans, Latinx and Filipinos are disproportionately impacted, with a significantly higher infection and death rate. They are demanding that the economy be geared to meet the needs of all workers for safe working conditions, including sufficient PPE, staffing, testing and sanitizing and 14-day paid sick leave for quarantining.



Nurses are calling on the federal government to use the *Defense Production Act* to greatly expand production of all the PPE that workers and the public more broadly require. Commonly the Act is used for war purposes. Nurses are demanding instead that the Act be used to ensure production to meet the needs of the people. They are also calling on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to provide a National Safety Standard for pandemic conditions that all private and public workplaces must uphold. OSHA so far has said regulations already in place are sufficient. In demanding accountability from the federal government, and all elected officials, health care workers are also indicating their desire for a new direction for politics, where government agencies and officials are responsible for the well-being of the people, not the monopolies and their narrow private interests.

A number of unions filed a lawsuit against the federal government October 8 along similar lines. The unions include the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), the Transport Workers Union (TWU), the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), the Communications Workers of America (CWA), and United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). The unions collectively represent more than 15 million workers in front line industries that have suffered thousands of deaths and hundreds of

thousands of illnesses from COVID-19, many as a result of insufficient PPE.

The lawsuit calls on Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf to act immediately to ensure the manufacture and distribution of PPE. Both agencies failed to respond to an August petition from these same organizations, along with others, demanding emergency action to supply PPE to workers. Warehouse, meatpacking and cannery workers have also organized walkouts and other actions demanding that their right to health and safety be respected.

Postal workers and teachers have been organizing for safe conditions. They have been an integral part of the Black Lives Matter demonstrations and are fighting efforts to privatize the post office and public schools. Teachers are standing up for education as a right and a public service, and postal workers for the post office to be expanded as a public service. This drive reflects a general recognition of the public and the concept of public good, something the current direction of the economy and politics are eliminating. With COVID-19 closures and remote learning, many teachers, students and parents are looking into organizing education anew, in a manner that favours all and puts control and decision-making in their hands.

The persistent movement against racist police killings and violence and for equality, justice and accountability has sustained itself without let-up since May. More than 20 million people from all walks of life have directly participated. Control over policing and, more generally, a new direction for what constitutes safety and security in cities and communities, is a main focus of demands across the country.



People are fighting to be empowered to decide these matters. They are calling for an economy geared to eliminating poverty and politics that guarantees rights to housing, health care and a livelihood -- recognized as important to safety and security. They want control of budgets, which invariably provide far more funds to policing, and the violence and racism it entails, than to social services and meeting the needs of the people. And perhaps more significantly, as the people's actions have persisted and the government violence and lack of accountability has as well, discussion is taking place about the existing political set up, that its constitution and election fraud do not serve the interest of the people and block the development of a society that does.

Various organizations, including Veterans for Peace, are calling for a peace economy, demanding an end to the massive funding of the Pentagon and the militarization of life. Veterans have been integral to the movement against government racism and violence, including organizing to protect the youth from police. The connection between U.S. wars and aggression abroad and state violence against the people at home has long been made. People are calling for an end to all the state violence, at home and abroad, and for non-violent political resolutions of social problems. This includes the demand for an anti-war government and peace economy.

*(Photos: California Nurses Assn, American Postal Workers Union)*

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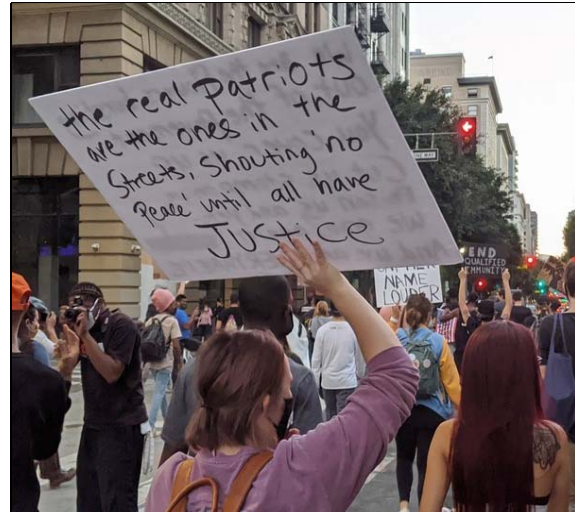
## Behind the Mobilization of Racist Militias

Reports in the corporate media are promoting armed racist militias, saying they are prepared to interfere at polling places on November 3 and to take action after the election if Trump loses.

A lot of attention is focused on Trump's call for an "army for Trump" which is enlisting people to be at the polls -- something considered by many to be intimidation of voters and poll workers. In

addition, note is taken time and again of Trump's comment during the first debate with rival Joe Biden that groups like the racist, anti-Muslim, anti-people "Proud Boys" should "stand by" for action if he loses in what he has called a "rigged" election. Other groups like the so-called Oath Keepers, KKK and various Hitlerite groupings are also said to be at the ready.

Many of these militias include current or former police, sheriffs and members of the military and have secured military-grade weaponry. They are known and often infiltrated by agencies like the FBI, as has long been the case with the KKK and neo-Nazi forces. They are not "independent" and separate from the state as is being promoted, but rather an arm of the racist state to implement its violence.



The concern among the ruling circles about these militias and control of them is such that the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a leading council that brings various ruling factions together to work out relations, is calling the mobilization of these militias "an extraordinary danger to U.S. democracy." The CFR says that these armed groups include those calling for sedition and "a new American civil war."

The CFR ties this in with its concern for the "nearly 13,500 demonstrations and protests that have occurred throughout the country since the killing of George Floyd." While it says that "the overwhelming majority [...] have been peaceful," they "have exacerbated tensions and polarized political positions."

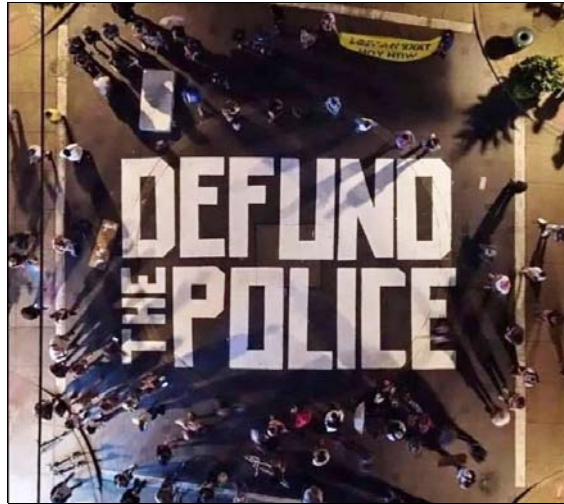


What is left out is that the tensions exacerbated are those between the broad majority of people from all walks of life and nationalities who are supporting the resistance -- and the government and their policing agencies. More than 20 million people have directly participated in protests and stood firm against police violence. The "polarized positions" are those among the rulers, as the factions representing narrow private interests vie for power. These private interests are not interested in resolving their

conflicts since any reconciliation would interfere with their achieving the total control they require to be able to dispose of all the natural and human resources as they wish. Far from the election serving to reach a kind of settlement between the factions, no such settlement is in the offing. On the contrary, concerns about civil unrest and use of the militias is ratcheting up the tensions and blocking rational inquiry and deliberation on what the unfolding events reveal about the problems in which the U.S. democracy is mired.

The threat of civil war is of grave concern to the rulers who would like to preserve the union and avoid open violent conflict. They all recognize that big states like California, Texas and New York could easily become independent. Regional alliances are also being cobbled together, such as between New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, and they too could constitute independent states. The increasing conflicts between the states as currently constituted and the Office of the President -- over COVID-19, immigration, funding and the use of policing agencies -- indicate the extent of the deepening of the conflicts of interest.

With the military and many federal, state and local policing agencies also divided, the rulers cannot predict whether such forces would submit to Trump as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, or oppose him in the event he loses and refuses to leave office. Or, as Biden has said, would they agree with using the military to remove Trump from office and repress the resistance in the name of a "peaceful democratic transition" and preserving the union.



But the rulers' biggest concern is that the largest faction, the people -- also referred to as "the mob" -- is relentless in its pursuit of its demands for justice, an end to police brutality, impunity, racist discrimination and for equality. The fight of ever broader sections of the people has the imprint of being increasingly conscious and organized. Expression is given every day to the right to speak in one's own name, to provide the rights of all with a guarantee and for control over the decision-making power. There is widespread recognition that front-line workers together with all workers can do a far better job of providing non-violent political solutions and accountability than those currently in power.

The mobilization of the racist militias has more to do with attempts to divert people's anger from the racist U.S. state to these groups. It is to stir up anger so as to pit people against each other, while the state appears to be "above the polarized people," acting to protect them, rather than the source of the racism and violence which plagues U.S. society. Of course, it is also to have these groups "at the ready" to disrupt and attack the resistance, as has already occurred, so as to justify an even greater federal and military intervention after the elections. A possible "national emergency" using such groups and resistance to them could also occur between election day and the inauguration in January.

The mobilization of militias is not mainly about Trump the individual but, rather, about the character of the U.S. state and its ability to retain power and remain undivided in the face of ruling class divisions and the broad rejection by the people of the current direction of the country. It is the state that is mobilizing the racist militias and the state that is organizing for far greater violence and repression against the people, using these groups to achieve the suppression of the people and provide it with a justification.

*(Voice of Revolution. Photos: S. Devol, D. Kruauthamer, Radical Graffiti)*

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## **Attempts to Make Change a Casualty Once Again**

**- Hilary LeBlanc -**

The campaigns of Joe Biden and Donald Trump have focused on the presidential election being decisive for the future. People are to vote as though "your lives depend on it" (Michelle Obama), and "the stakes have never been higher" (Vice-President Mike Pence). This focus serves to remove the people, with their broad and persistent resistance, as the decisive factor in shaping the future. It hides the existing relations of power that guarantee a government of, by and for the rich, which cannot also be a government of, by and for the people.

That is the reality life has repeatedly revealed. And it is precisely because there is a growing reckoning among the people -- as seen in demands of millions for equality, an end to government

racism and human rights for all -- that this election is being presented as decisive. It is to divert the movements for empowerment, where people are taking matters into their own hands and speaking out in their own name, with their own demands.

At the National Democratic Convention Biden specifically appealed to the youth, "For all the young people who have known only an America of rising inequity and shrinking opportunity. They deserve to experience America's promise in full."



Barack Obama specifically focused on the resistance movement, "I am also asking you to believe in your own ability -- to embrace your own responsibility as citizens -- to make sure that the basic tenets of our democracy endure. Because that's what's at stake right now. Our democracy. So they're hoping to make it as hard as possible for you to vote, and to convince you that your vote doesn't matter. That's how they win. That's how they get to keep making decisions that affect your life, and the lives of the people you love. That's how a democracy withers, until it's no democracy at all. We can't let that happen. Do not let them take away your power. Don't let them take away your democracy. Make a plan right now for how you're going to get involved and vote."

Using sleight of hand to shift from "our" to "your," Obama is trying to equate "the basic tenets of our democracy" -- meaning those of the U.S. Constitution that keep power in the hands of the descendants of the "white men of property" who constituted the United States of America in the first place -- to "your democracy" and "your power." In this way, the power of the youth supposedly lies in voting for the very ruling class forces responsible for the current crises, whether it be the failures of providing for the people during the pandemic, the racist police violence and killings, the unemployment, evictions and poverty, or the climate disasters and continuing wars of aggression.

The presumption is that power is not imparted by collective united action in defence of the rights of all. What is called the responsibility of citizens then is not to advance and harmonize individual, collective and social interests so as to move society forward and modernize the democracy. It is not to fight for a new direction for the country which puts political and economic affairs in the hands of the people. No, the responsibility of the youth is to vote for a system that has never provided equality or guaranteed the rights of all, but only promises to do so.

There is a striving by the youth and workers rising up today to be decision-makers over all political and economic matters that impact their lives. There is a drive for empowerment of the people to govern and decide. That is the new direction that can provide for a democracy where all are equal members of the polity and where there is accountability -- not the ongoing impunity, racism and inequality inherent in the "basic tenets" of U.S.-style democracy.

The effort to both divert and divide the people based on who they vote for and whether they vote, and to direct energy and resources into voting, is to blame them for whatever happens next. The issue for the people is not who gets elected but rather how best to further advance the current struggles for rights and empowerment and how to use elections to further unleash this fight for the New: new arrangements, a new direction, a democracy of the people's own making.

*(Photo: F. Zuccarella)*

## Trying to Present Biden As a Stalwart Who Will Unify the Country

This election to secure the presidency of the United States -- a main source of power and resources for the financial oligarchs -- has become a vicious fight between coalitions that fluctuate while simultaneously doing their utmost to convince the people to save the outdated democracy which no longer serves anyone. While Trump continues to espouse his brutal "law and order" agenda, Joe Biden has been presented as the one who can quell the resistance movement raging across the country and unify the warring factions within the ruling circles.

The Trump administration has obliged the demand of the financial oligarchs that the president be able to act with impunity, without regard for the law or existing constitutional arrangements. They want no limits on their ability to serve their narrow private interests. To achieve this, Trump positioned himself and was positioned as an outsider, someone who was not a member of the "Washington establishment" and associated perceptions of corruption, cronyism and self-interest. "We have ended the rule of the failed political class," Trump said. This portrayal has been seen as necessary to contend with the fact that the existing institutions, such as Congress, are dysfunctional. Every effort has been made to end the prerogatives of Congress and extend those of the President.



This was also evident during the Republican National Convention when both Trump and his wife spoke from the White House to emphasize the power of the presidency. The same can be said when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke from Jerusalem while on a state visit. A Secretary of State is not even supposed to intervene in the campaign, let alone blur the line between campaigning and governing. Such actions serve to indicate that the rulers are no longer even trying to hide the fact that they have completely usurped the prerogative powers of government to serve their private interests. There is no longer any line in the sand, if ever there was one, as there is no regard for what has in the past constituted "the public" or government in the service of a "public good."



Biden and the Democratic Convention also had little to say about the role of Congress, and, like Trump, he focused on the presidency being decisive. He also made clear that he is "a stalwart," loyal to the status quo who will also use the presidency to provide unlimited resources to the oligarchs while keeping the people out of power.

"None of the things I'm talking about are inconsistent with a free market, not inconsistent with capitalism," Biden declared. He has announced plans to provide more than \$1 trillion in government handouts to the oligarchs, especially the oligopolies involved in war production based in auto and steel. Massive

amounts of public dollars are promised to the private financiers to finance debts incurred.

Recurrent themes in Biden's speeches include: "We have to unite America;" "If we can't unite America, we're done;" "we're dead;" "I've long said America is at its best when we act as one nation, one America."

Certainly the many millions demonstrating and the many millions more who support them do not see their America, their fight for change that favours the people, as "done" or "dead." This morbid preoccupation with defeat and death mainly refers to the threat posed by the sharpening conflicts and divisions within the ranks of the rulers and the possibility of violent civil war. Biden is putting himself forward as the champion who can unite the military bureaucracy and overcome divisions between federal, state and local elected officials and policing agencies. This distinguishes him from Trump who has failed on this score and merely resorts to repeating that everything can be achieved on the basis of law and order suppression. How Biden will achieve the miracles he promises is of course where the rub lies. He stresses addressing criminal justice reform, voting and cyber security for elections. He says that by first setting the democracy straight at home, he can then deal with it abroad.

His image as someone who "can bring people together" brings with it the implication that he will work first at uniting the industrial and civil authorities, such as those at the state and local level. His choice of Kamala Harris as Vice-President in part serves this purpose. It is hoped that her extensive ties and knowledge of state's attorneys general and policing agencies will serve to peacefully unify state and local forces under federal leadership.

By presenting himself as a loyal and reliable force for the status quo, Biden also makes clear that nothing he is saying goes beyond providing opportunity. He regularly says that everybody deserves "just a shot," and that he will be sure it is "everybody" and not just some. "This is our moment to imagine, and to build a new American economy for our families and for our communities, an economy where every American, every American has a chance to get a fair return for the work they put in, an equal chance to get ahead," Biden says.

People are indeed demanding a new direction for the economy, one where the rights of the people take centre stage, such as the right to health care, education, a livelihood and housing for all, not just "access" and a "chance" which are nothing if not a repetition of what is inherent to the failed "American Dream." Biden himself states that "over 56 per cent of the American people think their kids will never, never reach the standard of living they had." People have reached this conclusion based on their actual experience that the existing economic and political relations cannot provide equality and rights to decide issues like policing, health care, war and peace, but this is totally ignored.

The "American Dream" of the rulers lies in tatters. The "America" the people were raised to believe in revealed its true colours as never before in the "shock and awe" aggression



against Iraq and the torture camps of the Bush regime which showed the essence of American democracy, freedom and rights.

Far from the Obama administration overcoming the humiliation, Americans then suffered the loss of their homes when the housing bubble burst and Obama responded by bailing out the criminals on Wall Street. The Obama doctrine of drone warfare to assassinate innocent civilians in far-flung lands in the name of catching terrorists and saving American lives did not restore faith in the American Dream nor did his role as Deporter-in-Chief -- a tyranny taken further by Donald Trump. The claims of the Biden camp that he will try to achieve the same thing in a manner which is more "fair" will come to naught. He is offering some public housing, for example, and repeating that there will be millions of "good paying union jobs." It is yesteryear all over again.

It is all pie in the sky so long as there is no role for the people in deciding how the promised massive investment in federal funds are to be used, who will pay for them and who decides -- all with no guarantee of the right to housing and jobs.

Biden is attempting to divert from the existing reality where an increasingly tiny group of powerful oligarchs have usurped power and use governments entirely for their own narrow private interests -- which are directly against the interests of the peoples in the U.S. and abroad. This old notion of equal opportunity as a solution is indeed dead and hardly likely to quell the growing demands for people's empowerment, for the people themselves to govern and decide.

As the people say, you have to be asleep to believe in the American Dream.

*(Photos: VOR, L. Bloom)*

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## **From the Party Press on the Significance of 2016 U.S. Presidential Election Results**

### **The End of "Business as Usual"**



**November 9, 2016. High school students in Berkeley, California hold walkout to protest Trump's election.**



*The following article was published by TML Weekly on November 12, 2016 following the election of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States. It shows what TML predicted would take place under his rule.*

The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) considers that the election of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States will represent the rule of the oligopolies through unfettered police powers. His election has plunged both the peoples of the U.S. and the peoples of the world into an even more dangerous situation.



On November 4, on the eve of the U.S. presidential election that took place on November 8, CPC(M-L) wrote the following:

"... the campaign has revealed the extent to which the U.S. state and system of governance operate through corruption and coercion as well as how people are deprived of political power." CPC(M-L) noted that how the people are deprived of political power is "the other very important aspect of the state power in the hands of the financial oligarchy. The ruling imperialist elite achieve this by depriving the people of an outlook, a way to look at the world and the problems

that have arisen so that they can be calmly sorted out and provided with solutions."

The same applies to the verdicts on the election results. Everything is being done "to deprive the people of an outlook, a way to look at the world and the problems that have arisen so that they can be calmly sorted out and provided with solutions."

What are the verdicts being pushed? From the side of the Clinton campaign, the verdict is that the result is the apocalypse, and the values and vision of Clinton remain all that stand between "you and the apocalypse" as she said during the campaign. From the side of the Trump campaign comes the explanation that he led "a movement" which is anti-establishment, wants the problems of the economy dealt with and an end to "all the bullshit." From both sides comes the agreement that now that the election is over, everyone's duty is to abide by the Constitution, ensure the transition of power is peaceful and unite America.

### **Clinton Concedes Nothing While Trump Sets Forth to "Make America Great Again"**

In Hillary Clinton's concession speech, besides the presidency itself, she conceded nothing, not even her defeat. Far from it, despite the fact that Clinton failed to unite America behind her vision and values, she said that going forward it is this shared vision and values which she will continue to push and she calls on her supporters to do likewise. This vision uses aggression and war as negotiation, blames the U.S. economic decline on China and maintains Russia as the main enemy of the United States. It was captured in her slogan that the U.S. is the "indispensable



nation," which, of course, makes all others dispensable. It was expressed by Clinton in 2008 when she said the U.S. could "totally obliterate" Iran, and in 2011 when she greeted the assassination of the leader of Libya with the phrase "We came, we saw, he died."

In his victory speech, Trump made sure to mention the large number of generals who support him, as well as the National Rifle Association and New York City Mayor during 9/11, Rudolph Giuliani and others who stand for the unfettered police powers Trump thinks are necessary to "Make America Great Again." The central points of his campaign were basically that the U.S. system is broken or rigged, that the U.S. has been weakened on the world stage and that only a man of Trump's force of personality is capable of putting things right. His strategy is to be "engaged" and says the art lies in how you make the deal. In his victory speech he said, "I've spent my entire life in business, looking at the untapped potential in projects and in people all over the world" and "That is now what I want to do for our country."

### **Blame the State, Not the People, for Racism, Sexism and Anti-Working Class Attacks and Outlook**

Following the election, the section of media and those pundits, commentators and celebrities in the U.S. and abroad who believe themselves to be progressive and civilized are filled with the kind of racist, sexist and anti-worker stereotypes which they ascribe to Trump. According to them, the U.S. is divided between educated people and uneducated people and the "white working class" is to be blamed for the defeat of Clinton in the election. According to their stereotype, the American working class is basically everyone without a college education and the "white working class" is racist, sexist, white supremacist, xenophobic, backward, uneducated and uncivilized. Human beings are treated as "things," not people.



Everything is done to hide that it is the U.S. state which is anti-worker, sexist and racist and anti-immigrant as well as profoundly anti-communist, which is why in the rendering of the election results, the defeat of Clinton is blamed on the working class.

Meanwhile, every state-organized and spontaneous white supremacist formation and unhinged individual and psychopath is given a green light to attack the targets of their personal hatred and psychotic nightmares. This is due to the boorish and inflammatory reality TV rhetoric on the basis of which Trump ran his election campaign, but also its ceaseless promotion by U.S. media, and especially the Clinton campaign. The Clinton campaign spent twice as much money as

Trump to make Trump the issue for the American people during the election. It is the Clinton media and entourage which now use every epithet in the book to portray the working people of the United States who voted for Trump as rabid, crazed zealots who are trampling the rights of the people in the mud.

It does not behoove those who devote all their energies to fighting for the rights of all to fall victim to this official propaganda which treats people as categories of "things" and divides them on that basis.

## All Out to Support the American Working Class and People Fighting for Empowerment and the Rights of All

CPC(M-L) denounces the attacks against the people which have taken place since the election, both those which are spontaneous and the ones organized by a crisis-ridden state which has now given itself a green light to govern through unfettered police powers. Police powers do not recognize members of a body politic made up of a civil society with a government of laws. Police powers do not recognize rights by virtue of one's membership in that body politic, let alone rights by virtue of being human. Police powers only recognize categories of "things" slated for some form of punishment. In scenarios which have been unfolding in the U.S. for some time, people are portrayed as "thugs," "protestors," "trouble-makers," "enemy aliens," "blacks," "Latinos," "Hispanics," "Muslims," "terrorists," "deviants" and other categories designed to dehumanize them and target them for attack.



CPC(M-L) takes this occasion to profoundly sympathize with all those in the United States who are targets of the racist, anti-worker and anti-people attacks and are waging valiant protests and acts of resistance proclaiming loudly that this is not their democracy, Trump is not their President and that attacks against the people are "Not In My Name."

*(November 12, 2016. Photos: G. Berenabas, R.J. Sangosti, BLM, Nite Images)*

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### For Your Information About the Elections

The 2020 U.S. elections are presidential elections. They are also elections for the entire House of Representatives, 435 members serving two-year terms, and one-third of the 100 member Senate, for six-year terms. The number of house representatives is based on state population, while each state has two Senators.

The Office of the President, the main source of power for the ruling oligarchs, is the focus of attention. It is where the police powers reside and control over the cabinet and its many policing agencies. President Trump is seeking a second four-year term and former Vice-President Joe Biden is seeking to oust him. The Vice-Presidential candidates, Mike Pence and Kamala Harris, are not actually elected but rather chosen by the presidential candidates and assume office as part of the presidential ticket.

The unequal nature of the U.S. set-up is evident in the fact that there are 22 other presidential candidates, most of them unknown to most voters and not everyone can vote for them. These candidates have been blocked from the debates by the Presidential Commission which is composed of Democrats and Republicans and part of the cartel party system that discourages and blocks participation of anyone else. There are no such things as all-candidates debates. As well, due to various restrictions and requirements in each state, they are blocked from ballot access. Large amounts of human and financial resources are required to get on the ballot, with some states requiring tens of thousands of signatures in a very limited time period. As a result, in Vermont and

Colorado there are 21 candidates on the ballot, Arkansas and Louisiana have 13 candidates each and all others have fewer than 13. In 12 states there are only three candidates on the ballot.

Candidates are also blocked by the first-past-the-post system, which is used in nearly every state (only Maine and Nebraska use proportional representation, dividing the electoral votes according to vote totals in Congressional districts). This is combined with use of the Electoral College, in the hands of Democrats and Republicans, with each state getting electoral college votes based on the size of their population. The effect can be, as occurred in 2016, that the candidate with more votes can still lose. The state's electoral college votes go to whichever candidate receives a plurality of votes -- not a majority but a plurality. To secure the election, 270 electoral college votes are needed.

For 2020, only two other candidates have gotten on the ballot in enough states to secure an electoral college win: Howie Hawkins of the Green Party and Jo Jorgensen of the Libertarians. Hawkins qualified in 47 states, 17 of them write-in which means that his name is not on the ballot but voters can write it in, with full name and correct spelling required. Jorgensen is on the ballot in 37 states. Both secured ballot access in states with larger numbers of electoral votes, such as California, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Massachusetts, New York, Florida and Texas. Hawkins' name was removed from the ballot in Pennsylvania, by the Democrats challenging his signatures, while Jorgensen remains on the ballot there.

In addition, seven more candidates have qualified to appear on the ballot in five or more states: Don Blankenship, Constitution Party, 22 states, four of them write-in; Brian T. Carroll, American Solidarity Party, 23 states, 15 write-in; Roque De La Fuente, Alliance Party, 18 states, three write-in; Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party, six states; Gloria La Riva, Party for Socialism and Liberation, 22 states, seven write-in; Brock Pierce, Independent, 20 states, four write-in; Kanye West, Independent, 16 states, four write-in.

## **House and Senate**

For the House of Representatives, currently, those called Democrats are in the majority, 232, with 218 constituting a majority in the 435-member House. Those called Republicans have 197. It is expected that Democrats will keep their majority and perhaps increase it. Though House members serve only two-year terms, the large majority are routinely re-elected. The 2018 House elections, for example, saw only 89 new members, more than usual. As a result of the efforts of women to play a greater role in the political life of the country, there are 101 women, more than at any other time.

In the Senate, there are currently 53 Republicans and 47 Democrats (Bernie Sanders and one other are listed as independent but vote Democrat). There are nine new Senators and 26 women Senators, also the most ever, with some up for re-election. Of the seats being contested 12 are currently held by Democrats, 23 by Republicans. No other parties are represented in Congress.

Another aspect of the unequal nature of the elections is the micro-targeting that now takes place. Some people see almost no campaigning or ads as their states, for example New York and California, are seen as "safely" for one candidate or the other. In other states, hundreds of billions of dollars are pumped into TV, Facebook and other advertising. The main states considered "swing" states for the presidential contest are Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Arizona. For the Senate races, a handful of states are targeted. The Democrats are hoping to unseat Republicans in Iowa, Montana, Idaho, Arizona, North and South Carolina and Maine. Republicans are targeting Democratic Senate seats in Minnesota, Michigan and New Hampshire. Thus it can be seen that it is not a national election that takes place, with all voters on an equal footing, but rather a divisive exercise with targeting of particular states and even districts.

Among the more significant of the Senate races for seats held by Republican Senators, where "unprecedented" funds are being pumped into the races by both candidates are:

- Iowa: Joni Ernst, elected in 2014 and considered a key Trump ally who spoke on Trump's behalf at their convention, is facing Theresa Greenfield who has never held office. Prior to Ernst's election both Iowa Senators had held office for more than 30 years.

- North Carolina: Thom Tillis, who like Ernst is a first-term Senator, is facing Cal Cunningham, an Army reserve officer who has not held office. The campaign could be the most expensive Senate race in history. Vice-President Pence is campaigning for Tillis and both are regularly at Trump events.

- South Carolina: Lindsey Graham, a Senator since 2003, is facing African American Jaime Harrison. Harrison has not held office but was chair of the South Carolina Democratic Party from 2013 to 2017. Graham has significant power within the Senate as chair of the Judiciary Committee and member of the Budget, Appropriations and Foreign Relations Committees.

- Maine: Susan Collins, elected to office in 1997, is facing Sara Gideon, currently Maine Speaker of the House. This is also considered one of the most expensive races, with more than \$150 million spent. Gideon is far outspending Collins.

It should be noted that both the Senate and House have largely been reduced to consultative bodies, where major legislation stalls and where the budget no longer serves as a means to sort out differences but rather intensifies splits, leading to government shut downs. It is also no longer useful to consider Democrats and Republicans as political parties, with coherence and concern for the public and its interests, but rather as part of a cartel serving narrow private interests. This was amply evident in the first presidential debate and the massive negative campaigning, with billions being spent to discredit the opposition rather than speak politically to the problems society faces. It is a set-up much hated by the public.

Power, including the massive police powers and control over issues of war and peace are greatly concentrated in the Office of the President. It remains the prize for the vying factions of the oligarchs.

*(Voice of Revolution)*

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## Discussion

# Discourse on Equality and Developing a Constitution Suitable to the People

The following *Discourse on Equality and Developing a Constitution Suitable to the People* is provided to shed light on the developments in the United States at this time. What we see taking place in that country is a great moment of reckoning as a result of the striving of the people for arrangements which put an end to racism and police brutality once and for all and provide equality of all before the law and in the experience of life itself.

Anxiety over the outcome of the November 3 U.S. presidential election is at an all-time high. Most people are wishing for a peaceful democratic transfer of power, no matter who wins. What constitutes power, who wields it and how and what constitutes democracy are less well understood.

When looking into democracy, it is important to look at how power is acquired, including the

human relations underlying that power and the machinery in place to keep and expand it. The machinery of force, including military and policing agencies, is well known. What is often ignored is that part of how power is acquired and maintained is by depriving the people of a way of looking at existing problems and the need to cognize the existing ensemble of human relations. Given the burden of the past, its experience and imprint, there is difficulty trying to explain the New. Not only does the historical trap of the Old hamper our inquiry but so too do the images and vocabulary pushed on us from the past. This means that in making arguments for the New there is a marked tendency to miss the relevant points and react to the Old.

Finding the arguments for a modern definition of democracy, why it is needed, is important. We are not talking about having two sides, pro and con. Argument means giving the proofs, the reasons, for the stand being taken. Argument is what a discussion is about. Specifically in terms of the democracy in the U.S., talks now are being given about whether the Constitution is a viable instrument to deal with the present or it is out of date. For example, New York University Law School held a symposium reported on in *Harper's Magazine*[1] at which Constitutional scholars debated whether the Constitution is out of date and needs to be updated; or there should be no constitutions at all as they trap people into undemocratic practices; or the Constitution is fine, there have just been bad personalities running the ship of state. Some call for a Constitutional Convention and a public debate. Those called the most eminent scholars in the U.S. are debating the fundamental values on which the U.S. Constitution is based, especially its conception of inalienable rights and equality.[2]

As a rule, no one discusses the actual historical experience which led to the adoption of the U.S. Constitution or life-itself under this Constitution. Instead, all sorts of things get mixed up. This includes the debate about whether what we have today is creeping fascism, authoritarianism, and so on, or an aberration of an otherwise sound democracy. What is not raised are the problems concerning the Constitution in the context of solving the problem of equality. Instead, proposals are raised to expand social equality and tackle issues of injustice in the context of liberal and social democracy. For instance, it is said the Constitution needs to be more inclusive rather than exclusive; it needs to provide more rights within the existing civil society.

Such battles are needed, but they are not the ones we are addressing in this *Discourse on Equality and Developing a Constitution Suitable to the People*.

When we address the issue of equality we are saying that equality is the same as membership. We are talking about being an equal member of the polity -- or any other collective -- belonging to something, having membership in something and being an equal member with equal rights and duties within it. Instead of focusing on equality as membership in something, the relation of that equality to identity leads to a big mix-up and confusion. Of course, how one talks about these things depends on outlook and the issue of one's stand toward politics and membership in a political body and the identity of that political body.

The 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution, known as the Civil War/Reconstruction Amendments, are said to deal with equality and the fight against slavery, including due process, equality before the law, citizenship and voting rights.[3] Even though the 13th amendment was supposed to end slavery for African Americans, it has a clause that allows for unpaid chain gangs and slavery by due process of law -- imprisonment for crimes and forced work for little or no payment. This is a problem prisoners across the United States are organizing against by going on hunger strikes, etc.

Citizenship is also a part of the discussion, as the 14th Amendment includes the following: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States." Today there are proposals, including from Trump, to eliminate birthright citizenship.

The general trend evident in the discourse on the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. democracy, equality, values and so forth, is that there is a line of progress from the past to the future according to which the fight involves constantly expanding the rights of the people and contending with the pressure of counterrevolution.

The argument for a modern definition of democracy is not, however, that it is an improvement on past definitions of democracy, or an improvement on the Constitution.

Since ancient times there have been democratic revolutions and democratic constitutions.

Democracy is how the people are constituted, what they can do by right and duty. Any democracy at any time offers proofs for that form of governance given by a constitution.

Democracy then is the giving of proofs, or arguments, of any constitution, written or not.

We are not arguing for improvements on what has been constituted in the past. We are arguing for a modern definition of democracy, for a democracy suitable to the material conditions in the present.

What rules one follows -- the rule of the people -- are actually the arguments for a democratic constitution. Is it suitable for the people? If yes, then an argument is given as to why. If not, an argument is given as to why. Many are talking about how close or how far democracy is from fascism or totalitarianism but *they are not giving arguments as to whether the U.S. Constitution, the rule it establishes, is suitable to the people.*

### **The Interconnection of International and National**

On writing about the Civil War and Reconstruction, W.E.B. DuBois allows for a distinction between a democratic revolution and a democratic constitution and whether a constitution serves to further democracy or block it. In dealing with democratic revolution, he brings forward that there were two labour systems that came into conflict: the slave labour system and the free labour system. He says the two could no longer coexist. He did not attach this to conceptions of black vs. white, because the whole labour system of the Confederacy broke down; it was not just an issue of those enslaved.

The other reason for recognizing democratic revolution and democratic constitution which is forgotten by everyone is that the Civil War was a rebellion against the people by the slave power, as opposed to being between the Union and the Confederacy, black vs. white, etc. There was an act of aggression by the slave power -- the firing on Fort Sumter.<sup>[4]</sup> And the slave power included New York and Boston merchants who owned shipping lines and transported the cotton produced in the south to the world market.

For DuBois, the Civil War was always an international struggle. It took place on the world stage and was of the significance of the Paris Commune. It was a general strike of all the enslaved. DuBois recognizes the interrelations of national and international -- that one cannot deal with the Civil War simply as a local occurrence. And in pointing to the international connection, DuBois paid particular attention to the fact that what happened in the U.S. was connected with Africa, a reality that remains today.

We can say that whatever happens within local boundaries is related to what is happening globally. Civil war and imperialist war are always connected. The way to look at these issues is that there is an ongoing interconnection of international and national. It is not just a matter of a particular war solving a particular problem. It is broader.

## Equality Is a Structure Involving Membership in a Polity

Looking at what is a modern democracy and a constitution for it, we are arguing that equality is a structure involving membership in a polity or other collective. It is commonly not put forward as a structure, but rather as a social issue, a problem of double standards; more for some and less for others. Terms used include "equality under the law," "respect" and the like. But they are part of how things are constituted, not how democracy works and how it is defined. Saying the constitution, or the state, define democracy is an inversion; the cart gets put before the horse. *It diverts from something more fundamental: are you equal members of that society?*

We are looking at the conception of a constitution. We are interested in what are the proofs. A proof given by democracy is whether the rule established is suitable for the people. What structures are provided for being equal members of society? And, if what is proven are structures of inequality, why not look into writing our own new constitution instead of debating or fixing the old one?

## Harmonizing Interests

For us, at the heart of the matter, are relates, relations, a motion going towards something with a purpose. That is our relates. "I" is a relate. We want to transcend all limits. If you are told the constitution, written or not, defines democracy, you come up with justifications such as the ones which talk about balancing security and liberty -- how much of each? This is especially common now with the broad resistance taking place and the police violence against it. There is a big effort to divert people from advancing the struggle for the rights of all, including for their own empowerment and looking into a constitution suitable for that.

A people, minimally, has to be made up of all individuals and all collectives. And minimally, they are bearing the relations that exist in society and the relations with other relations. If I am looking at one lateral of a triangle, there are two other sides that are different; there are multiples of relates left out. The name given to those relations among all beings, is "interests." Interests and harmonizing them is what you are not allowed to talk about when looking into democracy and constitutions.

Individuals are perceived as abstract persons, not as *individual and collective*. Each person carries individual and collective and general interest. Interest is *inter esse* (among beings). Put another way, it is "social beings." The ensemble of human relations is the basis of interest -- social beings. Individual interest is defined by the ensemble of relations, as are collective interests. It is a higher order than the way we are often looking at persons -- that you add them up and get collectives.

In arguing for a modern definition we are arguing for the proofs of how a constitution sorts out these interests of individual, collective, general and all humanity. It is not a matter of collecting people all together and adding them up or carving them into identity-based groups. We are arguing that interests come from society, the ensemble of human relations, and should define constitutions.

These inversions about the state determining society and the constitution determining democracy are promoted to hide the relations between humans and humans and humans and nature. They promote that things start from the state, which is used to define the society -- is it fascist, democratic, capitalist, socialist -- as opposed to saying society is the basis for the state. The inversion takes place mentally and is a block to cognition of the relations. The state appears as something independent of, external to, superior to, the people and exists as an independent entity unto itself. It has its own intelligence, ethics, way of thinking, what you can and cannot do, as Trump's speeches and actions often indicate. But this way of looking at democracy hides that the state is a relation based on the human relations of society.



There is an actual inversion that takes place objectively, which is the direct relations people have to producing their way of life, their relations with nature, with all humans. That is where the inversion takes place. Dealing with changing those relations is how problems of democracy can be sorted out.

An argument for a modern definition of democracy is to recognize *the people*, which is a historical category, not something out of time and space like a constitution which is super-imposed on us. We are saying, the reality is that the productive powers already created the inversion and divisions in society and our actions are based on what the human relations reveal.

## Notes

1. "Constitution in Crisis: Has America's founding document become the nation's undoing?" by Donna Edwards, Mary Anne Franks, David Law, Lawrence Lessig, Louis Michael Seidman, *Harpers*, October 2019.

2. See Commission on Unalienable Rights, National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, July 16, 2020.

3. Text for 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to U.S. Constitution:

**AMENDMENT 13** -- Passed by Congress January 31, 1865. Ratified December 6, 1865.

Note: A portion of Article IV, section 2, of the Constitution was superseded by the 13th amendment.

### Section 1

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

### Section 2

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

**AMENDMENT 14** -- Passed by Congress June 13, 1866. Ratified July 9, 1868.

Note: Article I, section 2, of the Constitution was modified by section 2 of the 14th amendment.

### Section 1

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

### Section 2

Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice-President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age,\* and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

### Section 3

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil

or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

#### **Section 4**

The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

#### **Section 5**

The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

\*Changed by section 1 of the 26th amendment.

**AMENDMENT 15** -- Passed by Congress February 26, 1869. Ratified February 3, 1870.

#### **Section 1**

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

#### **Section 2**

The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

4. The Battle of Fort Sumter (April 12-13, 1861) was the bombardment of Fort Sumter near Charleston, South Carolina by the South Carolina militia (the Confederate Army did not yet exist), and the return gunfire and subsequent surrender by the United States Army. This battle is given as the start of the American Civil War.

*(Article based on a lecture delivered by the Ideological Studies Centre to a Seminar on the State and its Role)*

## **SUPPLEMENT**

# **No Let-Up to Protest Movement in the U.S.**

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