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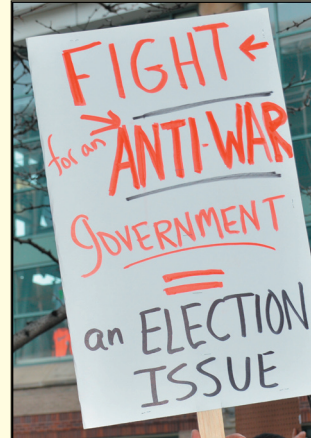
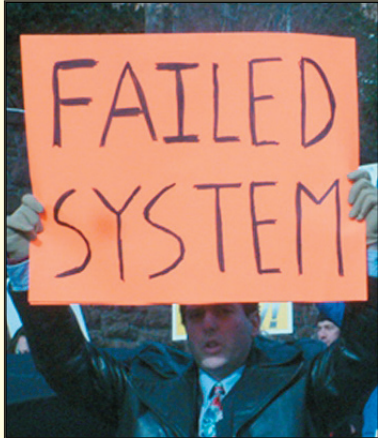
November 4, 2016

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Presidential Elections 2016



POLICE STATE DIRECTION OF THE RICH IS NO SOLUTION

Dysfunctional Political Process Requires Alternative of Politics of Empowerment

As the 2016 elections come to a close, the utter dysfunction of the existing political process has shown itself. It produced Trump and Clinton, candidates disliked and unwanted by the large majority. Major concerns of the people, like imperialist war, destruction of the environment, inequality and poverty have not been addressed, let alone having solutions proposed. The entire process, including the primaries, vast sums spent

on negative advertising, the unending scandals and mudslinging, cannot even be called political. On the contrary, political discourse to inform the public and assist in sorting out the various conflicts and finding solutions to problems is exactly what is absent.

Indeed, the process is serving to depoliticize people, to
Politics of Empowerment • 3

Discrediting Presidential Elections Deepens Possibilities for Federal Intervention and Civil War

Both presidential candidates Trump and Clinton are discrediting the elections. Trump repeatedly claims election fraud is afoot. He focuses on voter fraud by individuals, targeting immigrants in particular. He has called for his

supporters to go to the polls to challenge voters, which they are free to do. He has also called into question the results themselves, indicating Clinton and her allies could rig the election and he

Discrediting Elections • 6

Campaign Serves to Eliminate Political Parties and Undermine Fight for People's Empowerment

As the elections enter their final week, many in the polity more angry now than they were at the beginning of the campaign. The people have endured a string of scandals engulfing both Trump and Clinton and their ensuing

threats. The two candidates are now more broadly disliked than at the start.

The campaigns have confirmed both Trump and Clinton as members of self-serving criminal syndicates vying to
Elimination of Political Parties • 4

November edition of ***Voice of Revolution***

Editorials & Statements

- *Dysfunctional Political Process Requires Alternative of Politics of Empowerment* 1
- *Salute Courageous Struggle of Standing Rock Sioux and All Joining to Resist Government Violence*..... 10

Elections 2016: Fight for Politics of Empowerment

- *Campaign Serves to Eliminate Political Parties and Undermine Fight for People’s Empowerment*..... 1
- *Discrediting Presidential Elections Deepens Possibilities for Federal Intervention and Civil War* 1
- *New York Militarizes Election Day*..... 7
- *Polling Places Shuttered on “Massive Scale”* 7
- *North Carolina NAACP Sues State Over Voter Suppression* 8
- *More Young People Registering as Independents* 8
- *Cultural Expressions of Civil War Scenarios* 9

Salute Resistance at Standing Rock

- *November 15 Day of Action to Defend Standing Rock* 11
- *Actions Across the Globe Mobilize to Support #NoDAPL* 11
- *The Standing Rock Victory You Did Not Hear About*..... 13
- *Terrorizing Charges Dropped Against #NoDAPL Water Protectors* 14
- *Army Corps Calls Dakota Access Pipeline Resisters “Trespassers”*..... 14
- *State and Federal Officials Advance their Corporate Platform at the Expense of Human Health, Safety and Tribal Sovereignty* 15
- *Resistance at Standing Rock Remains Firm* 16
- *The Human Right to Water at Standing Rock*..... 18

U.S. Workers Stand with Canadian Workers

- *This Coup Against Canadian Rights Will Not Pass!* 21
- *Rights and Exceptional Circumstances*..... 22
- *Missing Factor in the Working Class Movement for Emancipation* 22

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I • Politics of Empowerment

impose the notion that politics have no place. It is serving to further divide the people and divert them and their various fighting organizations from the struggle against U.S. war and aggression and for the rights of all. We are to debate which candidate is worse, rather than discussing and taking up steps needed now to advance the alternative of politics of empowerment. Unlike the existing set-up of the rich, this is an alternative that is in our hands to create and develop, an alternative that takes us in the direction of empowering the people themselves to govern and decide.

The rich are doing everything to block such a direction. In a situation where Congress is already dysfunctional, the political parties of the rich are also not just dysfunctional but virtually being eliminated with this election. The elections themselves are being discredited, with claims of fraud (see p.1, Discrediting Presidential Elections). The possibility of civil war is coming to the fore, as seen by various high-level military forces lining up behind each candidate and the FBI contending alongside other policing agencies. Federal intervention in the elections or after is possible, in the name of ending fraud or voter suppression. This too could contribute to a civil war scenario, as states refuse such federal actions.

The answer of the rulers is not to modernize the democracy and put decision-making in the hands of the people. Instead it is new arrangements that impose a government of police power, and with it a president who is Commander-in-Chief, not only of the military but of the people as well (see p.1, Campaign Serves to Eliminate Political Parties). It is an arrangement that has no need of political parties and relies instead on a public life where individual leaders, with their individual machinery, are selected. Then each person is to have a direct relationship with the leader. Obama has already done much to engage people in this "direct" relationship, using the White House webpage and other social media. There is no need for political discourse, no collective or social concerns. What is indispensable is the Commander-in-Chief with power to use force



with impunity, at home and abroad. Presenting herself as such a Commander, Clinton emphasizes she is supposedly what stands between us and the apocalypse.

The democratic and backward direction of the imperialist rich is to eliminate a government of laws and put in its place government of police power. This is further evidenced in the repeated military-like response to protest. There is no upholding of law, no political solutions offered, but rather increasing violence and impunity. The situation at Standing Rock with the Sioux nation courageously standing to defend their sovereignty and water for millions of people is but the latest example. Federal actions against various laws and treaty rights, police armed and acting like soldiers facing enemies, mass arrests, use of tanks, helicopters, pepper-spray, torture and more has occurred. The situation abroad is no different, with use of drones and Special Forces to kill and destroy, putting whole nations

at risk. It is not government of laws. It is government of police power that requires not a civilian president concerned with the needs of society, but a Commander-in-Chief imposing U.S. dictate through use of force.

Clinton is expected to become this Commander-in-Chief and is doing what she can to convince all concerned to follow her in this dangerous direction. But she is not what is indispensable. It is we, the people, who are indispensable, in finding a way forward and blocking the disastrous direction the rulers are striving to impose. It is by advancing our own politics of empowerment, politics that are anti-war and pro-social, that defend the rights of all at home and abroad, that a path forward can be forged. This battle is in our hands to decide!



I • Elimination of Political Parties

serve themselves and others of the imperialist rich. Perhaps of greatest concern to many is that despite the long campaign, no issue facing the polity is dealt with — from how to guarantee equality among human beings to how to ensure that the polity is the source of political power. Importantly, this includes questions of war and peace and the people's opposition to U.S. warmongering. Clinton's call for a no-fly zone in Syria directly threatens war with Russia, potentially unleashing a catastrophic world war. Trump also threatens a broader war boasting he will send the U.S. military directly to engage and eliminate ISIS wherever it exists, which according to the U.S. authorities is dozens of countries. Great concern continues about militarized police, racist government attacks and responding to concerns of the people with such force.

The courageous resistance of the people such as at Standing Rock — where Native Americans and many others are protesting the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline in order to protect water for millions and defend the sovereignty of the Sioux nation — is met with attacks including tanks, automatic weapons, sonic-sound canons, pepper spray and the arrest of 140 unarmed protesters in one day. Killer drones and killer cops are connected and part of militarization of life with broad impunity by the government for its terrorism at home and abroad but these crucial matters are given no space in the campaign.

The campaign is deepening the people's grave concerns about preventing a broader war and ending the existing ones. Posturing as warmongers, the candidates are using the election to discredit whatever remains of governance through laws and promote instead the election of a leader who is both Commander-in-Chief of the military and the people. A Commander-in-Chief is not someone who governs based on law, but rather on police power — the power to criminalize, to punish, to imprison, to kill and destroy with impunity.

Efforts are being made to convince the people that rather than having a dysfunctional government, with dysfunctional parties, what is needed is the selection of a Commander-in-Chief to lead the country. These efforts include the repeated focus on being fit to be Commander-in-Chief, an entire debate, held on an aircraft carrier, devoted to the topic and openly involving military leaders in the campaign.

The campaign's focus on choosing a Commander-in-Chief and broadening the use of police powers at home and abroad undermines the struggle for people's empowerment, the right of the people to decide those issues that affect their work and lives. The elimination of political parties and promotion of individual leaders depoliticizes the people. In the U.S. today the only way to solve the country's



problems and open a path forward is through politicizing the people and finding ways to involve them in politics, especially the youth, and giving them the power to decide and control political, economic and social affairs.

Elimination of Democratic and Republican Parties

To convince the people to accept the direction of a Commander-in-Chief as ruler, both campaigns have focused on discrediting and destroying the Democratic and Republican parties from inside and outside those organizations. Trump and Clinton have contributed essentially to eliminating their respective parties as viable political parties with organized connections with the people.

In this election, Trump from the beginning openly attacked the Republican Party, threatening to run as an independent if he was not treated fairly. Since securing the nomination literally hundreds of Republicans and their top national security and foreign policy experts have openly denounced Trump and refused to back him, including top party leaders. Trump further escalated the attack by blocking funds to Republicans running for other positions.

Clinton has been courting the anti-Trump Republicans with many from the Bush administrations joining her campaign. Using her slogan "stronger together," Clinton curries favor among neo-conservatives with suggestions she will likely include them in her cabinet. These include Paul Wolfowitz, considered the architect of the Iraq war for Bush; John Negroponte, Director of National Intelligence and Deputy Secretary of State under George W. Bush; Richard Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State under George W. Bush and advisor to Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush; and Brent Scowcroft, advisor to three previous Republican presidents. All are warmongers. The actions by FBI director Comey saying Clinton is again under investigation, right before the elections and doing so against the advice of the Justice Department and norms of not interfering in elections, further indicates that practices and

norms of the past are finished and conflicts are intensifying. The FBI is contending alongside the CIA, military and other policing agencies and Comey's actions indicate the norms for mitigating these conflicts no longer function.

The combination of splitting and merging indicates that the two parties no longer exist or function as parties with distinct political platforms and discipline. The various factors indicate that, for the rich, political parties are no longer needed. They are being replaced with political life characterized by individual leaders, with their own machinery and constituencies vying for the presidency. Obama and Sanders have such machinery for their individual use, replacing and wrecking party machinery. Trump brought his machinery assembled from personal wealth and outside the Republican Party. So too, Clinton relies not on the Democratic Party apparatus but her own personal apparatus, well-illustrated by leaks from the e-mail account of her campaign chairman John Podesta. This is comprised of a whole retinue of loyal advisors and agents inside and outside the campaign and various levels of government, the Clinton Foundation and the \$80 million net worth and vast connections of a former President. The power and success of this apparatus is taken as further evidence that Clinton "has what it takes."

For the imperialist rich, the U.S. state exists to preserve their class privilege and control of social property, and to keep the working people out of power. The U.S. state has two main forms: a government of laws and a government of police.

The government of laws requires a functioning Congress to legislate such laws and elections for those said to represent the people. The elections are a means for the people to authorize the government to legislate and govern. Both contribute to giving the government legitimacy, and thus the ability to use force. A government of laws is also expected to meet the needs of the people or at least provide the appearance of doing so.

The government of police, with police defined as encompassing the military and all the many policing and spy agencies, does not and cannot legitimate the rule of the imperialist rich and their state. Police power is the use of force, the power to punish, criminalize, jail, and kill with increasing impunity. Police power is not concerned with accountability to the people, as evidenced abroad with the exercise of this power to kill with impunity through drone warfare and Special Forces in Yemen, Pakistan, Syria and elsewhere. At home, the increasingly militarized police forces engage in police killings and attacks on demonstrators, such as those occurring at Standing Rock, and witnessed in Baton Rouge, Baltimore, Ferguson and elsewhere. Accountability and rule of law are absent.

The presidency itself is no longer presented primarily as a civilian in charge of a government of laws, but rather a Commander-in-Chief holding broad police powers to utilize at home and abroad. This reflects the more general direction away from a government of laws and to a government of police power. This, in part, is the reason that both Trump and Clinton are openly bringing the military into play with high level military leaders picking sides, when the military traditionally remains neutral. This tradition exists as a means to ensure the military backs and supports whoever is elected, regardless of party. Now, with the denigration of the Democratic and Republican political parties if not their complete destruction,

the military is being brought into the fray as a crucial factor. This is a dangerous development, as it remains unclear where the loyalties of the military leaders will lie after the election and could indicate open splits in the future.

The process of eliminating a government of laws and political parties has been taking place for some time. This is evident in the dysfunction of Congress, in part because the parties no longer function as political parties. Party leaders are not followed, legislation cannot be passed even with a majority, which the Republicans currently have. The various means for sorting out conflicts among the ruling circles, such as positions on committees and dividing up the budget no longer function. The present presidential campaign is serving to mark the elimination of the parties and a government of laws and the rise of police power as omnipotent. The Commander-in-Chief as ruler is to be followed or else the police power will come down on your neck.

Development of political parties was a positive thing for the people, as they are necessary to give expression to the collective will. Politics are necessary for people to defend their individual and collective interests, and those of society as a whole. Politics are for people to participate in deciding and controlling those affairs that concern and affect them. The undemocratic direction of the imperialist rich to depoliticize the people, including the elimination of politics and political parties, serves to divide and divert the people from defending their individual and collective interests, to block the people from occupying the space for change. Advancing the cause of democracy today requires politics of empowerment, politically mobilizing the people themselves to govern and decide.

Specifically with this election, the imperialist rich are engaged in an effort to force the people to submit to endless U.S. predatory wars and a broader inter-imperialist war among the big powers. Presenting the President as Commander-in-Chief of the police power yet still a leader representing the will of the people is a means to force the people to accept war as necessary and inevitable and their empowerment and pro-social change as impossible. It is also for this reason that Clinton, posing as such a leader, has said, speaking to the people in general, "I'm the last thing standing between you and the apocalypse." This is the posturing of a Commander-in-Chief "of the people, by the people, for the people." It is at once threatening and demanding support, as the only one capable of averting an apocalypse. This is said even as Clinton threatens war with Russia which is what many see as a pending apocalypse. It is a dangerous, destructive direction which must be vigorously opposed.

Imposing this anti-social direction presents problems for the imperialist rich, as the people are not so ready to submit to the dictates of police power. This is evident in the continuing and widespread protests and the broad anger with the campaign itself. A growing sense is developing, particularly among the youth, that a different direction is needed, a pro-social, anti-war direction of empowerment of the people. While the imperialist rich try to present their dangerous and backward direction as a path to change, the people are charged by history to occupy the space for change and step up organizing for a new pro-social direction towards an anti-war government and their political empowerment.

I • Discrediting Elections

may not accept the outcome if he does not win. One of the super political action committees (super PAC) carrying out fundraising for Trump is even called “Stop the Steal.” He persists in claiming fraud by voters is an important issue, even though prosecutions for voter fraud are rare. Only 31 cases of voter impersonation out of a billion votes cast have been exposed. The Trump aim is to sow doubt, not guarantee the right to vote.

Hillary Clinton has filed lawsuits concerning voter intimidation in four “battleground states” — Ohio, Arizona, Nevada and Pennsylvania. The lawsuits contend Trump and his supporters are “conspiring to threaten, intimidate, and thereby prevent minority voters in urban neighborhoods from voting.” The lawsuits cite the 1965 *Voting Rights Act* and the 1871 *Ku Klux Klan Act*. The effort here is to make Clinton appear concerned about voter suppression, especially the voting rights of African Americans. The limiting of the suits to only four states, leaving out states like North Carolina, Texas and Florida where government officials are acting to disenfranchise voters, indicates Clinton’s actions, like Trump’s, are self-serving, to sow doubt about the outcome rather than extend and guarantee the right to vote.

Actions by both candidates have as a main impact the discrediting of elections more generally, increasing the possibility of federal intervention in contradiction with various state authorities. Both candidates ignore the main ways voters are disenfranchised. This includes voter registration laws aimed at blocking African Americans especially and working people more generally from voting. A large portion of eligible voters are not allowed to vote because they are not registered.

From its beginning, the U.S. set-up has served to block people from voting — not ensure the right to vote. Today, one way this occurs is through strict voter ID laws, which have been imposed in fourteen, mainly southern states. The North Carolina NAACP, for example, filed a federal lawsuit on October 31, seeking an immediate injunction to stop the state and various county boards of elections from illegally canceling the registrations of thousands of voters, disproportionately impacting African Americans.

According to a 2010 study, voter suppression includes blocking more than 5.8 million prisoners and ex-prisoners from voting countrywide with almost 600,000 disenfranchised in Florida alone. This suppression disproportionately impacts African Americans who contend with racist mass incarceration nationwide. Removing voters from the rolls, limiting the number of polling places and moving them on Election Day, which causes longer lines and frustration, are other means to disenfranchise voters. These are all far more serious problems voters face in the struggle to affirm their right to vote than the few cases of individual fraud. But the two candidates are not addressing these systemic problems arising from government actions not individuals.

Why then the focus on voter fraud and voter intimidation? It serves to discredit the elections even further in conditions where

people are already angry about the situation. Targeting particular states, as both Trump and Clinton are doing, opens the possibility of calling for more federal intervention to ensure the elections are “fair,” when such intervention could make them more undemocratic. This possibility is underlined by the actions of the Department of Justice (DoJ). The DoJ commonly sends hundreds of observers and poll watchers to various polling stations across the country, as a means to prevent voter intimidation. In 2012, the DoJ sent 780 specially trained observers to polling places in 51 jurisdictions

in 23 states. This year a much smaller number will go to less than five states. For the 14 states with strict new laws, mostly requiring special ID to present at the polls as well as additional registration requirements, the DoJ will not send any observers.

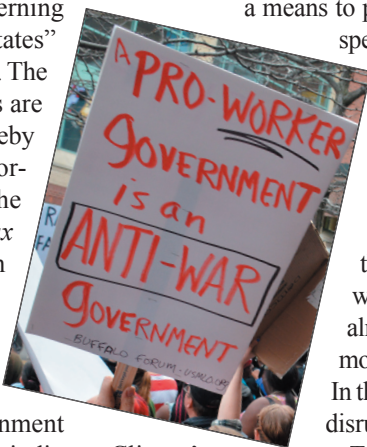
With the likelihood of untrained forces from both the Clinton and Trump campaigns being at the polls, with a number of new laws being implemented, and the already long history of serious attacks on the right to vote mostly by state officials, the DoJ has decided to be absent. In this way, the DoJ can blame the states for any confusion, disruptions and claims of fraud at the polls.

Together with the widespread discrediting of the election by both candidates, this provides a means to justify a federal takeover of elections, or at least more federal intervention in them. It opens a space for the federal government to occupy — presenting changes to the electoral set-up as being more democratic while in fact blocking the people from themselves changing the set-up to favor their empowerment. Further usurping power from the states is also consistent with the direction of a Commander-in-Chief as leader and holder of police powers for the country. It also creates a civil war scenario, if and when states refuse to accept federal control.

In the U.S., for the presidency to be able to control the many policing agencies is no small matter, especially those currently controlled by the cities, counties and states, including the state National Guard. Within the military itself, splits have appeared as seen by the various Generals and Admirals backing either Clinton or Trump. A traditional job of the president is to unite the divisions within the military forces to preserve the union and present a united front of the imperialist rich capable of blocking the working people from coming to power.

In today’s circumstances, it appears the hope of the ruling imperialists is to impose a Commander-in-Chief of the police power that is recognized as a necessary, even indispensable commander of the working people. In this way they would succeed in preserving the union while demobilizing the people from opposing the destruction of a government of laws and accepting a government of police power, a militarized police state.

A direction for the state that relies on police power outside a government of laws is unstable, destructive and dangerous. A new direction for political affairs is urgently needed. The people organized to defend their individual and collective interests and the rights of all can mobilize their peers to take up practical politics and wage a conscious battle for a pro-social direction that empowers the people and brings into being an anti-war government.



New York Militarizes Election Day

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced November 4 the police and military response that will be taken on Election Day. The Governor would not confirm reports that “there is a possibility” of a terrorist attack, but did give that as the basis for the increased police presence planned. He said, “We’re in total coordination and consultation with the federal authorities, and we are already on a state of high alert for Election Day, so we have more state police, more national guard, more soldiers on duty than ever before. We’re coordinating with the NYPD... We’ve been living with this now for a decade, and we got prepared for it, and drilled for it, we take every threat seriously, so we’ll be prepared and we’ll be ready.”

Responding to a reporter’s question about “the idea of terrorists seeking to influence the American election” Cuomo said, “What they really want to do is disrupt the democracy in this country... Election Day – the exercise of that democracy, the high holiday of that democracy – of course is going to present a target for them, and of course, we’re going to be ready.” All this while also stating that there are no confirmed threats. The FBI has not confirmed any either.

Cuomo’s office reports: “New York State has taken the following actions to keep New Yorkers safe leading up to Election Day:

- New York National Guard remains at high alert... with more than 700 troops on duty in the New York City Metro region.

- The New York State Police have five regional Special Operations Response Teams, as well as Bomb Disposal Units and 90 canine units prepared to respond to any incident that may occur throughout the state. All Troopers, including intelligence assets, have been placed on high alert and have been instructed to remain vigilant.

- The New York State Intelligence Center’s Cyber Analysis Unit is coordinating with the State Board of Elections, federal Department of Homeland Security and FBI to monitor threats until November 9. Additionally, the Intelligence Center’s hotline has been made available on a 24/7 basis to the county Boards of Election in case of a cyber attack.

- New York State Information Technology services is monitoring for all potential cyber threats related to Election Day. The State’s Chief Information Security Officer has assembled a response team made up of experts from across multiple disciplines and will coordinate an all-day conference bridge, which allows for uninterrupted communication between key agency personnel.

- The New York State Emergency Operations Center will be in its Enhanced Monitoring mode from Monday, November 7 through Wednesday, November 9.

This, according to Governor Cuomo, is what democracy looks like.

IN LOUISIANA, NORTH CAROLINA, TEXAS

Polling Places Shuttered on “Massive Scale”

Deirdre Fulton, Common Dreams, November 4, 2016

Voters in U.S. counties previously covered by the *Voting Rights Act* (VRA) will have at least 868 fewer places to cast ballots in the 2016 election than they did previously, according to a new analysis released Friday.

In fact, the report from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights finds that in the wake of the 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision gutting the VRA, “[c]ounties and states with known records of voting discrimination are closing polling places on a massive scale.”

Many closures happened in places that would have had to gain federal approval to change voting laws prior to the high court’s ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*, “which made Section 5 of the VRA inoperable and opened the door to racial discrimination at every juncture of the electoral process,” as the report explains.

In North Carolina, for example:

Since *Shelby*, formerly covered counties in North Carolina have closed polling places even after significant opposition from minority communities and advocates. Pasquotank and Cleveland counties are the leaders for polling place reductions in the state even though both have established records of voting discrimination.

And in Texas: Almost half of all Texas counties in our sample closed polling places since *Shelby*, resulting in 403 fewer voting

locations for the 2016 election than in past years. These closures come as the state’s voter ID law has become a leading example of voting discrimination since *Shelby* and include reductions in counties like Medina, Caldwell, Nueces, and Galveston — each with established records of discrimination and recent violations of the Voting Rights Act.

While the Leadership Conference acknowledges that “[t]here are justifiable reasons to reduce polling places and consolidations can be executed equitably,” it also points out that “the loss of Section 5 means that there is no process to ensure that reductions are disclosed to the public, are conducted with the input of impacted communities, and do not discriminate against voters of color.” The report brings out polling place closures including: Texas 403; Louisiana 103; Mississippi 44; Alabama 66; South Carolina 12; North Carolina 27.

The analysis notes that “[p]olling place closures are a particularly common and pernicious tactic for disenfranchising voters of color. Decisions to shutter or reduce voting locations are often made quietly and at the last minute, making pre-election intervention or litigation virtually impossible. These changes can place an undue burden on minority voters, who may be less likely to have access to public transportation or vehicles, given continuing disparities in socioeconomic resources.” [...]

North Carolina NAACP Sues State Over Voter Suppression

Julia Craven, The Huffington Post

An emergency hearing was scheduled in federal court for November 2 after the North Carolina NAACP filed a lawsuit to stop county election boards in the state from canceling voter registrations. The group argues that the cancellations are an effort by the state Republican Party to suppress the black vote.

Election boards in Beaufort, Moore and Cumberland counties have already removed thousands of voter registrations because a mailing to the voters' addresses was returned as undeliverable. The NAACP is seeking to have the canceled registrations restored.

Many of the voters still live at the addresses listed on their voter registrations or have moved to other residences within the same county, meaning they can still vote in that county, according to the NAACP lawsuit.

Under the *National Voter Registration Act*, states may cancel registrations only if a voter provides written notice of a change in address or if a voter does not respond to a notice for two election cycles and fails to vote for two federal election cycles. The act also bars states from removing voters from the rolls 90 days or less before a federal election.

"Voter fraud is not the issue. But voter suppression is real, it's planned, it's intentional, and it's ongoing against the African-American community," Barber said Monday.

African-Americans have been disproportionately affected by the cancellations. Black voters account for 91 of the 138 canceled registrations (or over 65 percent) in Beaufort County, according to the North Carolina NAACP, even though black people are

only 25.9 percent of that county's population.

At least 3,951 registrations were canceled in Cumberland County, and around 400 were canceled in Moore County.

"The claim of voter fraud and rigging did not just start with Donald Trump," NAACP President Reverend Barber said during an October 27 press call. He accused North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory and other elected officials of using mere claims of fraud to help pass voter ID restrictions.

North Carolina implemented one of the strictest voter ID laws in the country in 2013. A state appeals court struck it down in July. The judge found that lawmakers had chosen to mandate specific ID requirements — as well as to reduce the number of early voting days and to change registration procedures. [...] The changes disproportionately hurt black voters, who tend to vote on Sundays and to make use of the early voting option.

The North Carolina NAACP previously asked the state to increase early voting hours and submitted four requests for officials to increase the number of early voting sites in counties affected by Hurricane Matthew. Many of those areas have just one voting site, roads that are still underwater and no weekend voting options, according to Barber.

The NAACP has also received reports of intimidation at the polls, Barber said. Events organized by the Souls to the Polls campaign have been photographed and participants have been heckled. Ku Klux Klan graffiti was spray-painted outside a church in Chatham County that has been active in early voting efforts.

More Young People Registering as Independents

Many young people are angered by the current election and question the existing set-up. "Why are these the two candidates we have to choose from?" asked one student who said he was not a Democrat or a Republican. "I don't think we should be in a position like we are right now, choosing between the lesser of two evils," added another who is registered as independent. "The two-party system is destroying politics," said another, all part of an investigation of independent voters by McClatchy News.

Voters registering as independent or unaffiliated are rising across the country, while Republican and Democratic numbers remain basically static. This is particularly true for those 35 and under. Forty-one percent of that age group identify as independents, up eight percent from 2008. Thirty-four percent call themselves Democrats, the same as in 2008. And 22 percent call themselves Republicans, down 5 points from eight years ago, according to Pew Research Center data.

Overall, independent registrations have jumped since 2008 by 22.3 percent. Democrats over that same time increased

2.7 percent and Republicans 3.6 percent. If this general trend continues, the country will have more independent voters than Republicans by 2024 in states that register by party (all but 15 do). Independent rolls already have soared by 40 percent since 2008 in Florida, North Carolina and five other states.

The stand of many voters, especially young people, to register as independents reflects in large part their rejection of the parties of the rich and a desire to change the existing set-up. This is taking place at the same time that the rulers themselves are eliminating the Democratic and Republican parties and striving to further depoliticize the people. They are trying to take advantage of these sentiments against the parties and direct them against politics more generally. Youth are not so easily fooled however. Their stand to register and do so as independents shows their readiness to be part of politics and to see things move in a different direction. Youth especially are among those demanding a modern set-up of political empowerment and joining the efforts to bring it into being.

CURRENT TELEVISION SHOWS

Cultural Expressions of Civil War Scenarios

One new television show and the second season of another both start with potential civil war scenarios for the U.S. Both are on ABC, which is owned by Walt Disney. The shows are a reflection of the current reality of contending policing authorities in the U.S., like the military, CIA and FBI, with contention between them and with the presidency. They also reflect the fact that existing governing arrangements are failing to sort out conflicts among the ruling circles and between them and the peoples here and abroad.

The new show, titled *Designated Survivor*, begins with the Capitol building being blown up during the State of the Union address, when the whole government is present. The bombing wipes out the entire government — the President and his Cabinet, Vice-President, Congress, Supreme Court. The only one left is the “designated survivor,” the one cabinet member who does not attend just in case such an event happens. His position is what is considered one of the more lowly, inconsequential posts of Housing and Urban Development. He then becomes president. One member of Congress, a woman senator was also designated and she then becomes the only surviving member of Congress. Then another representative is miraculously found in the rubble. So there is one senator and one representative.

The story line that then ensues includes various challenges to the President. It is quickly claimed that a terrorist group did the bombing. One of the military generals wants immediate and swift action against the terrorists who might be responsible. The President wants to proceed more slowly. The appearance is given that the general is conspiring with others to remove the president and replace him with a military person, perhaps himself. Then there is the Governor of Michigan who starts rounding up and arresting all



Muslims. The President calls for him to stop. The Governor refuses. The President attempts to federalize the state National Guard to stop the Governor and the General heading the Guard refuses to obey and sides with the Governor.

Then of course the FBI pursues a secret investigation that appears to implicate the surviving representative and the military as being responsible for the bombing. The surviving representative is being positioned to become vice-president.

All of these are very possible scenarios in the present circumstances. And it can hardly be a coincidence that they are being played out on TV now, right during elections.

The president then secures his position by being Commander-in-Chief and raiding the group supposedly responsible using Seal Team Six, capturing the supposed leader of the terrorists. This too is consistent with current conditions, where the president is not so much a civilian responsible to society, but a Commander-in-Chief exercising police power.

A second ABC show, *Quantico*, featuring the FBI, has a story line where the G-20 heads of state are meeting in Manhattan and the building is taken over by “terrorists.” The president agrees to negotiate with the “terrorists,” which he says occurs all the time, to save his wife and other leaders. However, though he does as asked, his wife is beheaded anyway. FBI agents who have infiltrated the CIA are trying to stop the takeover. Then it turns out the takeover is being conducted by a group of rogue CIA agents! Again, a plot of contending armed policing authorities battling each other and contending with the president.

The significance here is that when such storylines are openly presented on regular TV shows, it indicates just how close to becoming real these various civil war scenarios are.

Visit our website: usmlo.org

POLITICAL SOLUTIONS NEEDED

Salute Courageous Struggle of Standing Rock Sioux and All Joining to Resist Government Violence

The U.S. government at all levels continues to sanction violent attacks on the Standing Rock Sioux, in North Dakota, as they courageously struggle to defend their sovereignty, their sacred grounds and safe water for millions. They have been joined by more than 300 tribes from across the country, and many others, including delegations from Canada, Norway and Japan. All are rejecting construction the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), which threatens the water supply for the Sioux and millions of others. The federal government does not have the consent of the Sioux to build on their lands, which is required. Their treaty rights are not being respected. The federal government has not conducted the necessary environmental impact study, also against the law. Construction of the pipeline in the area and police attacks are taking place on unceded Sioux lands, yet their rights to decide are not being respected.

The Sioux exist as a sovereign nation and the relations are nation-to-nation. Resolving the issues at hand is a political matter. Instead, the Sioux and other resisters are being treated like criminals. The world saw as several mine-resistant tanks, dozens of police with automatic weapons, helicopters and other military hardware were used to attack unarmed peaceful protesters. Chemical weapons — tear gas and pepper spray — were used. Mass arrests occurred as did torture, strip searches and other human rights violations of those arrested. All done with impunity and without cause.

Why such violence by the state when political solutions readily exist? It is a reflection of the current direction of the U.S. state, away from a government of laws and to a government of police power. President Obama could readily intervene by stopping construction of the pipeline, which depends on federal permits. He could denounce the violence. Instead he says political solutions that respect the rights of the Sioux are possible, but instead of acting he is going to “let things play out” for a few more weeks!

The Sioux have a long history of resistance to violence by the state. They fought in the Great Sioux Uprising of 1862, when the

government was striving to expand its authority by encouraging settlement on Sioux and other native lands. The Sioux resisted federal and state actions designed to exterminate their culture and steal their land. This included the *Homestead Act* of 1862, which opened millions of acres of land, much of it that of the indigenous peoples.

For the Sioux, the Uprising included clashes with the government and settlers brought to occupy their lands. Hundreds of Sioux were captured, tried for murder, many with trials of only five minutes, and ordered executed. Due process played no part. Lincoln, in December of 1862, while the Civil War was raging, ordered the largest mass execution in U.S. history, hanging 38 of the Sioux. None of the soldiers or settlers involved in attacks and killings of the Sioux were charged. In 1890, there was the government massacre at Wounded Knee, when more than 150 Sioux children, women and men were massacred.

Today, the impunity and violence at Standing Rock are taking place in a situation where the government of laws is not just being violated, but eliminated. This is evident in the fact that numerous laws are being broken, treaties are being broken, human rights, included the right to safe water, being openly violated, and more. At the same time, police forces are free to act with impunity and attack unarmed protesters, standing on unceded Sioux land. The very right to be of the Sioux is being challenged as police powers are exercised against the resisters.

The situation calls for a political solution, as is being demanded by the Sioux and all those protesting. An end to all state violence is required and withdrawal of the National Guard and the many state troopers and police. Obama must stop construction of the pipeline, not reroute it. Every effort to defend the courageous and just stand of the Sioux and all those standing with them is needed. Join the upcoming actions November 15, send funds and supplies, spread the word and join trips to Standing Rock.



November 15 Day of Action to Defend Standing Rock

On November 15, a national Day of Action has been called to Defend Standing Rock, standing united with the struggle there to defend the sovereign rights of Indigenous peoples, the environment and protect the water. One week after the elections, the actions will be demanding that President Obama and his Army Corps of Engineers and the incoming administration stop the Dakota Access Pipeline — and all those after it. People do not want it rerouted, they want it stopped. Actions will be taking place across the country, targeting offices of the Army Corps of Engineers, federal buildings and banks backing the Dakota Access Pipeline. A map of planned actions can be found here: https://actionnetwork.org/event_campaigns/nov-15-nodapl-day-of-action-at-army-corps-of-engineers.

As the call to action brings out: “With coordinated demonstrations across the country, we’ll make it clear that this powerful movement will not allow the Obama administration or the

incoming President to sacrifice Indigenous rights, our water, or our climate — they must reject this pipeline.

“This day of action is one of many calls for solidarity actions targeting not only the Army Corps, but stakeholders at every level — including the banks who are funding Dakota Access and the companies building the project. If there is not any Army Corp office or action near you, join or host an action at a bank that is financing the pipeline, a Federal building, or another location instead.

“Together, our movements stopped the Keystone XL pipeline almost one-year ago today, and an even bigger movement is rising up to stop Dakota Access and all fossil fuel infrastructure.

“We know that elections and individuals alone do not create change — movements do. That is why we will continue to fight until native sovereignty is honored, indigenous rights are protected, and our communities, water, and climate matter more than fossil fuel profits.”

STANDING WITH STANDING ROCK

Actions Across the Globe Mobilize to Support #NoDAPL

Candice Bernd, Truthout

Since the violent clash October 27 in which 141 Indigenous Water Protectors were arrested, marked with numbers and put into dog-kennel-like holding cells after defending land directly in the route of the Dakota Access pipeline, activists from across the U.S. and around the world have responded with a groundswell of actions in solidarity. [...]

A global outcry has followed an attack on Native Water Protectors gathered on 1851 Oceti Sakowin treaty land north of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation on October 27. More than 200 law enforcement officers from seven different states and National Guard personnel used flash grenades, bean bag launchers, pepper spray and long range acoustic devices, and even allegedly fired live ammunition on Indigenous Land Defenders protecting sacred burial grounds. [...]

Native communities and activists around the world are taking bold action in solidarity with those at Standing Rock. Since the October 27 police sweep, activists in the U.S. and abroad have strategically targeted the powerful interests bankrolling the pipeline by locking themselves down inside banks, protesting the pipeline’s billionaire backers, rallying at city halls to protest public resources and police personnel being sent to suppress Native Water Protectors, speaking out online by “checking in” at Standing Rock on Facebook, and donating money to the protesters’ legal fund and to cover other expenses.

Activists have also targeted President Obama and Democratic

presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, with Native youth flooding Clinton’s campaign headquarters in Brooklyn to demand she oppose the pipeline on the day of the mass arrests at Standing Rock. There were also demonstrations to demand the pipeline’s cancellation near a Clinton presidential campaign fundraiser with President Obama in Beverly Hills on October 24.

Investigations by LittleSis and Food and Water Watch reveal that 38 banks have extended more than \$10.25 billion in loans to fund the Energy Transfer group of companies behind the pipeline, which include Energy Transfer Partners, Energy Transfer Equity, Sunoco Logistics and Dakota Access LLC. Additionally, Canada’s largest pipeline company, Enbridge, with the Texas-based Marathon Petroleum Corporation put down \$2.6 billion last month to become joint stakeholders of 49 percent of the Dakota Access pipeline. Phillips 66 also owns a 25 percent stake in the pipeline.

Seventeen major banks are backing Dakota Access LLC directly with a \$2.5 billion credit line to build the pipeline. Major funders include Citibank, Wells Fargo, BNP Paribas, SunTrust, Royal Bank of Scotland, Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, Mizuho Bank, TD Securities, ABN AMRO Capital, DNB First Bank, ICBC London, SMBC Nikko Securities and Société Générale.

After the Red Warrior Camp at Standing Rock (Sacred Stone and Oceti Sakowin are among the other camps), put out a call for solidarity actions last Thursday, protests have unfolded in the U.S.

REJECT STATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WATER PROTECTORS

and abroad. In Canada, Indigenous resisters from the Kahnawake Mohawk nation shut down a highway bridge leading to Montreal. In New Zealand, the Indigenous Māori people have been expressing support by posting videos of a traditional Māori war dance called the “haka” to a Facebook group called “Haka with Standing Rock.”

In the U.S., several protests at banks funding the pipeline have led to arrests of Native activists and their allies. In San Francisco on Monday, 12 activists with Diablo Rising Tide were arrested at the Citigroup bank headquarters after shutting down the elevators that lead to the bank’s corporate offices to protest its role as the lead arranger and lender to the Dakota Access pipeline. More than 50 people protested in front of the bank. [...]

That same day in Salt Lake City, eight people were arrested after chaining themselves together at a downtown Wells Fargo location, demanding the bank cancel its investment in Dakota Access.

“What [those at Standing Rock] are doing for us, putting their bodies on the line and standing there with no weapons, peacefully being Water Protectors, we want them to know that we hear them. We’re here. That’s why we did what we did,” said Carol Surveyor, who was at the Wells Fargo protest Monday and is Navajo/Diné. She cited the 2015 Gold King Mine wastewater spill’s effect on the Navajo Nation’s water as a personal motivation to act in solidarity with Standing Rock. “I know what happens to a town, to these communities, when their water is contaminated,” she said.

Several activists involved with the bank action also staged a sit-in at city hall in Salt Lake City on Tuesday, demanding city officials pass a resolution that would formally express the city’s support for the Standing Rock Sioux and their struggle against the pipeline.

In other cities, activists protested their local police departments’ complicity in the violence being enacted against resisters at Standing Rock. More than 1,000 people demonstrated at the Minneapolis city hall on October 28, to protest the deployment of Hennepin County police to brutalize Native Water Protectors. The rally led to a sit-in at the office of Sheriff Rich Stanek, who has sent county deputies to Standing Rock.

Protesters in Austin, Texas, gathered outside the Texas Parks and Wildlife Headquarters to demand that Energy Transfer Partners CEO Kelcy Warren step down or be removed from the state’s Parks and Wildlife Commission. They cited Warren’s appointment by Governor Greg Abbot as a conflict of interest. Warren gave more than \$500,000 to Abbott during his gubernatorial campaign, and a combined \$30,000 to Abbot’s 2006 and 2010 campaigns for state attorney general, according to the Texas Ethics Commission.

“I wonder if the Texas Parks and Wildlife scientists would be as amenable [to oil and gas development] if they weren’t pressured by the [industry reps on the] commission,” said Lori Glover, an organizer and cofounder of Defend Big Bend, which is fighting another Energy Transfer Partners pipeline, the Trans-Pecos, through the state’s Big Bend region. “There have been so many pipeline explosions over the past few years, yet [the commission] continues to say that there’s no problem, and gives out these [oil and gas] permits and allows these things to happen.”

The Austin rally also addressed the Houston-based Apache Corporation’s plans to drill for oil and gas around West Texas’ serene Balmorhea State Park and its well-known spring-fed pools. [...]



Demonstration in San Francisco unites with Standing Rock

Other recent actions included lockdowns in Providence, Rhode Island, where two people blocked the entrance to a TD Bank branch and corporate office; Mount Laurel, New Jersey, where four people were arrested after sitting-in at TD Bank’s corporate headquarters there; and Philadelphia, where 25 people sat-in at a TD Bank ATM lobby.

Protests at banks funding the pipeline and at corporate headquarters of companies directly behind the pipeline have jumped off in cities across the country in recent months, including large demonstrations in New York City, where on November 1, dozens of activists disrupted morning commutes by blockading the Grand Central Terminal before marching to the offices of JP Morgan and Bank of America. Other large demonstrations have erupted in Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, Houston, New Haven and elsewhere.

Last weekend, more than a million people “checked in” to Standing Rock on Facebook, in an overwhelming display of online solidarity and an attempt to confuse police efforts to monitor which individuals are at the resistance camps in Standing Rock. Meanwhile, hundreds of people have showed their support online by contributing to the camps’ legal funds and donating to pay for expenses at the Standing Rock camps.

In one way or another, these communities are responding directly to the Red Warrior Camp’s call for solidarity actions. The statement asks allies to travel directly to Standing Rock if they can, as advancing police forces and winter weather have made sustaining the encampment increasingly difficult.

The camp asks allies who can’t be present at Standing Rock to take escalated action against strategic targets by going to NoDAPLSolidarity.org and registering within the global solidarity network to target local Army Corps, banks, pipeline companies, corporations and elected officials responsible for the pipeline with nonviolent direct action. Lastly, the statement asks allies to send donations to the official Red Warrior Camp Fund and Official Legal Fund. The Sacred Stone Camp is also accepting donations at the Official Sacred Stone Camp Fund.

Other ways to help include calling elected officials, such as North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple, the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, the Army Corps of Engineers and the White House, and staying vocal on social media.

The Standing Rock Victory You Did Not Hear About

Desiree Kane, November 4, 2016

Last week, the world watched in horror as a massive militarized police force attacked prayerful Indigenous Water Protectors fighting for the water of 18 million people. Over and over, people were brutalized, pulled out of sweat lodges while in ceremony wearing only their underwear. Medics and journalists were arrested alongside Water Protectors. Cars were searched and impounded, personal possessions were taken by police.

Everyone by now has seen the videos of the assault last Thursday. Here at Standing Rock, the age-old story of government forces raising arms against Native people is being repeated in real time through social media.

But lost in that day, in the horrific stories of degradation, is a small story of victory, of how 40 to 50 Native people stood against more than 250 police on a bridge on County Road 134 in rural North Dakota.

Word-of-mouth announcements went out to the Oceti Sakowin camp that there was going to be a police raid of the front-line camp that had been set up in the way of the pipeline. A raid means people are in imminent danger, and that is widely understood here. Over Labor Day, campers were attacked by dogs and pepper sprayed by Dakota Access security. And since then, we've seen increased militarization. It has been apparent that the government, specifically Morton County Sheriff's office, is the security force protecting the pipeline, so no one doubted that this time the police would be the ones to desecrate bodies and lifeways.

My original plan was to take County Road 134 to photograph the pipeline being forced into the earth.

Instead, I found a blockade of wood logs and hay bales set up in an area where water divided the back country road. No one there was armed with anything other than prayer. It was a strategic juncture because police vehicles couldn't cross the narrow embankments on their way to the raid. If they were stopped at this bridge from the east, they could only come from the north.

In the morning, police did come, and from both sides. When I arrived, this blockade had already stopped an LRAD — a sonic weapon often called "sound cannon," which can cause permanent hearing loss — from making it to the camp. Even as police numbers grew, eventually well beyond 200, the Water Protectors held their ground, fearless.

Then the dancing began.

People began dancing to a hand drum, entranced by the power of prayer. A single elder, a veteran, repeatedly walked out and



A Sioux elder stands up to police and calls for negotiations. Police refused but people succeeded in blocking the road

yelled: "Send one unarmed like I am out here to negotiate. Please. We are protecting the water for our children and yours. Send one out here to negotiate. Let's talk! Please!"

He was met with no negotiation.

But the Water Protectors held the bridge. For hours and hours, police advanced and retreated.

This was an unforgettable moment unfolding. With the dancing going on and the veteran trying to negotiate out front, a young woman stepped up and began moving her body to the beat of the drum. She was power incarnate. Her arms were wide open, her pink fingernail polish glistening. She was crying. Just waiting to be pepper sprayed, she wore a painter's mask, one which would have done nothing much for protection.

That standoff's foundation was ceremony and song, the truest essence of religious freedom.

This is what colonial violence looks like: 250 police — some of them snipers, some with guns drawn on the crowd — in a standoff with 40 to 50 unarmed Indigenous people who just want to be allowed to live.

The untold story of this day was that those troops never made it from the east to join the others in raiding the camp, dehumanizing the friends and families of those on that bridge. There were 250 fewer officers able to show up to brutalize people and pervert prayer ceremonies on October 27. History rarely teaches us about when Natives win against the state. And that's how injustice flourishes: in the shadows.

So let me be clear. On October 27, when a colonial force armed with military weapons faced off on a bridge against veterans armed with only prayer, the Natives won.

(Desiree Kane is a Miwok woman and multimedia journalist focused on producing stories with a conscience at the intersection of Indigenous peoples, energy production and the environment.)

Terrorizing Charges Dropped Against #NoDAPL Water Protectors

Sacred Stone Camp, November 3, 2016

Last month, spirit rider Mason Redwing was charged with felony reckless endangerment of law enforcement and a felony count of terrorizing law enforcement after he allegedly rode his horse towards a police line. On Tuesday, Judge Romanick found no probable cause and dismissed all charges against Redwing.

Similarly, Wanikiyewin Loud Hawk, a South Dakota native, was arrested on charges of reckless endangerment, criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, and obstruction of government function. The charges were dropped after Judge Romanick once again found no probable cause.

Water protector Red Fawn Fallis was arrested on the frontline last week for allegedly firing a .38-caliber pistol three times. The gun is claimed to have fired as Fallis was pinned to the ground by an officer, as two additional officers held her left arm. She faces charges for attempted murder, and her bond was set at \$100,000, the highest yet of this campaign.

Sean Turgeon, also known as Prolific the Rapper, faces two charges of reckless endangerment and one misdemeanor obstruction of government function, after Morton County made allegations the he flew a drone near a North Dakota Highway Patrol aircraft. Turgeon gained national recognition through his music videos that criticize Dakota Access and the violent law enforcement response. He was released on bond on October 31, 2016.

These charges and arrests come after weeks of militarized police response and escalation of violence. Just last week, over 300 police officers fired pepper spray, percussion grenades, and shotguns at largely unarmed DAPL protesters, and a prayer

circle of elders was interrupted and all were arrested for their peaceful protest.

Eryn Wise, International Indigenous Youth Council said, “Red Fawn is a valued member of our community and a revered friend of the International Indigenous Youth Council. When we heard of the charges, all of us were in disbelief. Red Fawn has continually supported the youth council since its inception and is responsible for personally rescuing many of our members from the front lines after being brutalized by police. She is an extension of our organization and a selfless caretaker, being responsible for many women and elders within her own encampment. We would like to ask as a council that you stop sharing the mug shot of our sister and instead speak her name. Uplift her in prayer and remember that even our most gentle and devoted warriors are under attack.”

Tara Houska, from Honor the Earth added, “The contrast between the treatment of indigenous people protecting their water and sacred sites vs. the so-called “Bundy Standoff” of armed white folks taking over a federal building is stark. We have seen elders arrested while praying, teenagers maced, unarmed protectors tased, and horses killed by police. Life altering consequences await us, at the hands of a prosecutor eager to comb the books for felony charges. This is not justice. America should be in an uproar over what is happening to indigenous people and their allies within U.S. borders. President Obama’s “let it play out over several weeks” is not an answer. Order a full Environmental Impact Statement and protect the water and sacred sites at issue for the people.”

GIVING GREEN LIGHT TO POLICE ATTACKS

Army Corps Calls Dakota Access Pipeline Resisters “Trespassers”

indianz.com, Friday, November 4, 2016

A #NoDAPL water protection effort in North Dakota was met by another big law enforcement response on November 2, 2016. With a key easement for the Dakota Access Pipeline being delayed by the Obama administration, water protection efforts are shifting to additional sites in North Dakota. But the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is taking a harsh stance against the presence of pipeline resisters on federal property. A letter sent to Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier on November 1 refers to them as “trespassers.”

“The Corps of Engineers has not provided any permits or permissions for anyone to access that area of the federal property that we manage,” Colonel John W. Henderson, the

Commander of the Omaha District, wrote in the November 1 letter. “It is an area that has not been opened for use by the public for recreational or camping purposes.”

Henderson told the sheriff, “As such, the Corps of Engineers would consider these individuals to be trespassers.” He added, “On behalf of the Corps of Engineers, as a property owner, I am requesting law enforcement assistance in this matter, as needed.”

The letter — which was written without prior consultation of either the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe or the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe — was in fact taken as an invitation for action. The next day, November 2, a water protection ceremony along

the Cannon Ball River was met with law enforcement action. Kirchmeier sent forces to the area, where more than 100 people suffered injuries after being shot at close range by less-lethal weapons and sprayed with chemicals.

“Members of our youth council were again among the first to be wounded while in the water today, trying to rescue their relatives from being hurt,” Eryn Wise of the International Indigenous Youth Council said in first-hand account provided by the Sacred Stone Camp, the original #NoDAPL encampment.

“I spent an hour washing pepper spray from their hair and faces,” said Wise, who is from the Jicarilla Apache Nation and Laguna Pueblo. “They asked me, ‘When will this end?’ I had no answer.”

Officially, the Army Corps has said it would not take action to remove #NoDAPL encampments from federal property adjacent to the Cannon Ball River. The additional water

protection sites are located north of that area and some have taken to calling it the North Camp.

The area happens to be the same place where Dakota Access has already built infrastructure in hopes of completing the \$3.8 billion project. Those efforts continue even though the pipeline partnership lacks an easement to drill underneath the Missouri River. [...]

On July 28, Colonel Henderson is the one that signed a finding of no significant environmental impact with respect to work at the Missouri River. He also now says protestors are trespassers. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe does not want him involved in the process any longer based on the government attacks this week.

Henderson is “unfit to handle a sensitive issue of this magnitude and has a proven incapacity to deal respectfully and maturely with Indian people,” Chairman Harold Frazier wrote in a letter to top Army officials on November 2.

STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE CHAIRMAN:

State and Federal Officials Advance their Corporate Platform at the Expense of Human Health, Safety and Tribal Sovereignty

October 30, 2016

On Sunday, October 30, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe released the following statement from Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II:

“Government officials continue to ignore the factual record: Energy Transfer Partners (ETP) and the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) have failed to protect water and people, and repeatedly cut environmental corners with the knowing aid and comfort of state machinery controlled by the governor of North Dakota. The governor and ETP are willfully ignoring a common-sense federal directive to halt construction until the project is reviewed for its true environmental impacts.

“This pipeline was rerouted towards our tribal nations when other citizens of North Dakota rightfully rejected it in the interests of protecting their communities and water. We seek the same consideration as those citizens. It is disappointing to see our state and federal officials advance their corporate, pro-Big Oil energy platform here in North Dakota at the expense of human health, safety and tribal sovereignty. Our tribal nations give this state its name.

“Both the government and private sector enlisted and sanctioned dangerous and dehumanizing tactics through a taxpayer-funded, militarized law enforcement with documented human rights abuses. The aggressive acts of these forces have caused severe injuries and endangered the safety of thousands of peaceful protectors who share our goal of protecting the water.

“We do not have weapons. We have people and prayer. We have civil rights and tribal rights. And for now, we have our



Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II

water. The announcement that Amnesty International wants to observe actions of the United States and the State of North Dakota alone should give us cold comfort, since the civil rights of thousands are ignored.

“We stand with our brothers and sisters of more than 300 tribal nations, the citizens of North Dakota and the hundreds of thousands of American citizens and allied organizations from around America and the world who share our goal of protecting the water. Water is life.”

MORE THEN 140 ARRESTED

Resistance at Standing Rock Remains Firm

Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn, YES! Magazine, November 1, 2016

On October 27, scores of law enforcement officers from seven different states showed up with riot gear, armored vehicles, and military weaponry to clear away Standing Rock's newest camp, the "1851 Treaty Camp." The camp stands directly in the path of the Dakota Access pipeline. Tipis and sweat lodges were destroyed. Vehicles were set ablaze. More than 140 protesters were arrested.

The county sheriff is claiming the water protectors were violent and that police were stopping a riot. But hours of live video feed from people caught in the confrontation showed instead a military-style assault on unarmed people: police beating people with batons, police with assault rifles, chemical mace, guns firing rubber bullets and beanbag rounds, tasers.

Dave Archambault II, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, has maintained that its members and supporters are engaging in peaceful, nonviolent expressions of their opposition to the pipeline.

Tara Houska, national campaigns director for the Native environmental group Honor the Earth, and Thane Maxwell, an organizer with Honor the Earth, have been at the camp for months. They describe what is happening:

Law enforcement from at least six other states have been involved in the assaults in North Dakota. And Morton County's sheriff claims the federal government's refusal to provide manpower and financial assistance factored into the call for help from other states. Tell me about the law that allows this.

The troops from other states (Wisconsin, Indiana, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming, and Nebraska) are sent here through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which was designed for natural disaster situations. In 20 years of operation, EMAC has only been used twice for protest purposes — in the Baltimore rebellion after Freddie Gray's murder and here at Standing Rock. Its use here was made possible by Governor Jack Dalrymple's declaration of a State of Emergency, which was itself a gross misuse of funding and powers intended for natural disaster relief.

If folks in those surrounding states and counties want to complain about their tax dollars going to support this, what should they do?

I (Thane) am from Minneapolis, where Hennepin County Sheriff Richard Stanek has sent 30 Special Operations forces to Standing Rock. We encountered them here on the front lines on October 27 and documented their brutality against us. Tara shot footage of Hennepin County officers violently beating a man with batons, someone they had pulled out of the crowd. Honor the Earth has a substantial constituent base in Hennepin County, so we and our allies have pushed hard to demand the sheriff withdraw the troops. Thousands have signed petitions and attended rallies at government offices this week, and many elected officials, nonprofit leaders, and faith leaders have issued

public statements calling for immediate withdrawal. But so far, we have not won. We encourage people in other jurisdictions sending troops to demand their elected officials put an end to this violence. Do not take no for an answer.

How many water protectors have been arrested so far?

Over 400 people have been arrested. Some are still in jail from the mass arrests on Thursday, as law enforcement makes it extremely difficult to track people, so an exact count is unknown.

The treaty camp was on Energy Transfer property, but the property closer to the river belongs to Army Corps of Engineers, is that right?

Well, the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 clearly affirmed all of this land as sovereign, unceded territory belonging to the Great Sioux Nation. [...]

There have been reports of police violence against elders and children, right?

Yes. Elders and children have been bitten by DAPL private security attack dogs, pepper-sprayed, shot with rubber bullets, and beaten by police. Often elders are in ceremonial dress and actively praying when arrested — drumming, singing, burning sage. One member of the International Indigenous Youth Council suffered a broken wrist from a strike by a police baton, and just a few days later an officer saw the cast and intentionally twisted her wrist to re-injure her.

What are the incidents of torture that have been reported?

Arrestees have reported numerous experiences of abuse and torture while in police custody. Folks have been strip-searched for misdemeanor charges, and there are reports that women have been left naked in their cells and harassed by male guards. Native arrestees have had their braids undone and pawed through for an alleged "weapons search" in what is a clear effort to demean. Others have had hoods placed over their heads, been incarcerated in dog kennels due to lack of cell space, or marked with numbers on their skin. Amnesty International classifies these practices as "cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment (CID)," which is illegal under international and U.S. law. Water protectors who locked themselves to construction equipment have also reported the use of waterboarding and pain compliance techniques such as zip-tying people in contorted positions for hours at a time. These are internationally recognized as methods of torture.

I heard police are targeting medics and journalists. Is this a recognized tactic?

Yes. People know about Amy Goodman's charges, but many other members of the press have suffered physical violence, arrest, detention, and confiscation of equipment. Journalists are often targeted during confrontations because they possess and disseminate evidence of police brutality and human rights violations. Medics are also targeted because they make it possible for protectors to continue fighting the Dakota Access pipeline

SALUTE RESISTANCE AT STANDING ROCK

on the frontlines.

These are recognized combat tactics, and if it were actually a war, clear violations of Geneva Convention humanitarian rules. Clearly identifiable medics have been shot in the back with non-lethal ammunition while attending to patients.

[...]

What exactly happens to people who get arrested? What do they go through and how expensive is it for them? Will nonresidents need to return to North Dakota for trial?

Arrestees have had a huge range of experiences, and it keeps getting worse. Some have been bonded out for a reasonable amount of money in just a few hours. Others have stayed in for days and been tortured and abused. Many have been told their personal property was “lost.” Many have faced trumped-up charges and inflated bonds. This is partly an intimidation tactic by Morton County and partly an attempt to seize as many of our financial resources as possible.

Almost all of the estimated 142 people arrested on Thursday are facing felony charges.

Currently, a team called the Red Owl Legal Collective consults with people while in custody and prioritizes bond for those with medical conditions, immigration issues, proximity to structural violence. They bond people out as quickly as possible, and sometimes represent arrestees at bond hearings where a judge may or may not reduce the inflated bond. So far, we have spent nearly \$300,000 just to get people out of jail.

Right now, almost all of the estimated 142 people arrested October 27 are facing felony charges and bonds of \$1,500 each. Hopefully none of these charges will stick, but it puts an incredible burden on the movement.

Yes, people are expected to return later for an arraignment hearing where charges are finalized — some have had charges dropped, others have had misdemeanors transformed into felonies. At that point, a plea is entered and the defendant is expected to return again for either a pre-trial conference or a trial. All of this is of course very taxing for people who live far away and, in many cases, in poverty.

Who is providing legal assistance to those arrested?

We are both members of The Freshet Collective, which raises money and manages the Sacred Stone Legal Defense Fund. We work closely with the legal support team on the ground at the encampment, operating with support from the National Lawyers Guild, and we are currently seeking additional attorneys experienced in this line of work. Many other groups on the ground here support this effort, as expressed in this solidarity statement.

What's the best way for people to support legal defense from afar — both for those arrested and for the other legal battles ahead?

The Sacred Stone Legal Defense Fund is online at www.fundrazr.com/sacredstone. Direct contributions can be made via PayPal to freshetcollective@gmail.com to reduce processing



fees. This fund is restricted to the direct support of those arrested — bail, fines, court costs, vehicle impoundment, defendant travel, and attorney fees. Any remaining funds will be used in civil cases against Dakota Access, law enforcement, or other parties responsible for human and civil rights violations.

The tribes' legal interventions in the regulatory process are entirely separate, as are the supplementary legal interventions we are working on at Honor the Earth.

Is there still time for Obama and Justice, Interior, and Army Corps to step in?

The Obama administration could intervene any time. So far, they have taken measured steps of delay, such as the suspension and review of Army Corps permits related to this project. But no firm answers have been given and construction of the Dakota Access pipeline has sped up.

The U.S. Army Corps (USACE) has still not sent the final easement to Congress that is required for DAPL to drill under the Missouri River. At a bare minimum, the USACE should deny this permit until a stringent level of environmental review — an Environmental Impact Statement — is conducted for the project, which will require a full survey of sacred sites and other cultural resources, and cumulative impacts to the public health and the environment, all in formal nation-to-nation consultation with the impacted tribal governments. We at Honor the Earth recently teamed up with the Sierra Club and the Indigenous Environmental Network to submit a letter to the Army Corps spelling out the requirements of the *National Environmental Policy Act* and the *National Historical Preservation Act* in this situation. Since DAPL intentionally destroyed sacred sites to circumvent their protection, the Army Corps cannot legally issue any more permits. And as the brutal, militarized response by [the government] continues to escalate, the Obama administration's lack of intervention is indefensible.

Anything else you can tell us about the treaty camp's plans now?

All we can tell you is that we will be here until the end, and we will do everything in our power to protect this land, this water, and all the beings who depend on it. We cannot express to you the courage, dedication, and passion in the hearts of the people. You are seeing the videos and images and hearing the stories, but you really have to be here to feel it. People are willing to die for this. Five hundred years of oppression is enough.

The Human Right to Water at Standing Rock

Marjorie Cohn, *Truthout*, November 3, 2016

As thousands of Indigenous peoples from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, other Native American tribes, and their allies continue their protest against the Dakota Access pipeline (DAPL), corporate media have continued to focus almost exclusively on the presidential election. Most media ignored last week's vicious attack on the Water Protectors, as they call themselves.

The construction of the pipeline would violate the human right to peace, the right of Indigenous peoples to practice their cultural traditions, and several federal statutes.

On October 27, more than 100 police from seven different states and the North Dakota National Guard, clad in riot gear and carrying automatic rifles, arrived in MRAPs [Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected military vehicles], Humvees and an armored police truck. They defended Energy Transfer Partners (ETP), the company behind the pipeline, and arrested 142 Water Protectors. That brings the total arrested since August to over 400. More than 40 people have been injured, and some have broken bones and welts from rubber bullets fired by officers.

To read more stories like this, visit [Human Rights and Global Wrongs](#).

Ret. Army Col. Ann Wright, who spent four days at Standing Rock, reported: "Police used mace, pepper spray, tear gas and flash-bang grenades and bean-bag rounds against Native Americans who lined up on the highway."

The 1,170-mile, \$3.7 billion oil pipeline is scheduled to traverse North Dakota, South Dakota, Illinois and Iowa. Slated to transport over 570,000 barrels of fracked oil daily, the pipeline would pass under the Missouri River at Lake Oahe, just a half-mile upstream from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's drinking water source. It could affect 28 tribes and millions of people.

An inevitable oil spill from the pipeline, releasing diesel fuel and toxic levels of contaminants into the river, would be culturally and economically catastrophic to the tribe, polluting its source of water and critical farmlands.

Oil spills are all too common. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration documented over 2,000 significant accidents from oil pipelines since 1995. An average of 121 accidents has taken place annually from 2013 to 2015.

People who drink water with oil in it or eat meat from live-stock exposed to oil have a higher rate of cancer and digestive problems, according to a 2010 report by Worcester Polytechnic Institute, which studied three major oil spills. And people who use oil-contaminated water for bathing or laundry have a higher incidence of skin problems, including rashes, eczema and skin cancer.

North Dakota and six other states deployed their police officers to attack and arrest the Water Protectors in order to facilitate the construction of this pipeline, which would seriously threaten the tribe's water supply, in violation of the human right to water.

Torture and Degrading Treatment of Water Protectors

Those arrested were held at the Morton County Correctional Center in 10-by-14 foot cages, some in dog kennels. They reported being forced to wait for access to food,

water, bathrooms and medical attention. Some charged with misdemeanors were strip-searched. Women were left naked in their cells and male guards harassed them. Some people were zip-tied in stress positions for hours.

Water Protectors who had locked themselves to some construction equipment reported being waterboarded. Waterboarding has long been considered torture, which violates the UN's Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by the United States.

Amnesty International, which has sent a team to Standing Rock to investigate the human rights abuses, stated that some of this treatment violates the prohibition on cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. (In addition to ratifying the Convention against Torture, the United States has also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which outlaws cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.)

Violation of the Human Right to Water

The mantra of the Water Protectors at Standing Rock is "Water Is Life." The World Health Organization (WHO) stated in its 2010 Fact Sheet on The Right To Water, "Water is the essence of life. Safe drinking water and sanitation are indispensable to sustain life and health, and fundamental to the dignity of all."

The WHO also determined, "Access to safe drinking water by indigenous peoples is closely linked to their control over their ancestral lands, territories and resources. Lack of legal recognition or protection of these ancestral lands, territories or resources can, therefore, have far-reaching implications for their enjoyment of the right to water."

Indeed, the international community has recognized that access to safe drinking water must be analyzed within a human rights framework.

States have a duty to ensure access to the means of survival, the United Nations Human Rights Committee wrote in its 1982 general comment No. 6. The Committee was interpreting the



SALUTE RESISTANCE AT STANDING ROCK

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its 2002 general comment No. 15, stated, “The human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.” The Committee defined the right to water as the right of all people “to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses.” Water must be free from chemical substances that constitute a threat to health, according to the WHO’s analysis of general comment No. 15.

Construing the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted that the right to water is part of the right to an adequate standard of living.

Although the United States has not ratified the covenant, we have signed it, thereby incurring a legal obligation to refrain from taking actions inconsistent with the object and purpose of the covenant, under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. The United States has not ratified the Vienna Convention but considers it to be binding customary international law.

The WHO also observed that a violation of the right to water violates the well-established international principle of non-discrimination enshrined in all major human rights treaties. Discrimination means any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of specific characteristics of an individual such as race, religion, age or sex, which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Dakota Access pipeline was originally set to go through Bismarck and Mandan, North Dakota, which would have adversely affected white people. (Both Bismarck and Mandan are around 90 percent white.) When people in those communities opposed the projected route, it was altered to travel through areas close to Native American communities. This is a violation of the non-discrimination principle.

In 2010, the UN General Assembly specifically recognized the human right to water and sanitation, and stated that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights.

Violation of Indigenous Peoples’ Right to Practice Cultural Traditions

The pipeline would pass through areas of great cultural significance, including sacred sites and burial grounds protected by federal law. Construction would destroy these burial grounds, sacred sites and historically significant areas in its path.

Cultural resource surveys were conducted by out-of-state, non-tribal consultants of the company seeking to build the pipeline. But only tribally trained and approved consultants are actually able to assess such sites. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe



has never had the opportunity to discuss protocols for cultural surveys, or participate in surveys that were conducted. It was only provided partial surveys after they were completed.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites.”

This declaration, a moral document but not a treaty, passed with 144 states voting in favor, four voting against, and 11 abstentions. The United States voted in opposition.

Violation of Federal Statutes

On July 27, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe sued the US Army Corps of Engineers, the primary federal agency that granted permits needed for the construction of the pipeline. The lawsuit alleged violations of multiple federal statutes, including *the Clean Water Act*, *National Historic Preservation Act* and *National Environmental Policy Act*, when the permits were issued.

Moreover, the Corps did not do a full Environmental Impact Statement as required by the *National Environmental Policy Act*.

“Construction and operation of the pipeline, as authorized by the Corps, threatens the Tribe’s environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe,” the complaint reads.

The Standing Rock Sioux were not properly consulted on the cultural and environmental impacts of the pipelines, as required by law. The tribe requested a preliminary injunction to halt construction until it could survey the pipeline route for cultural and heritage resources.

“Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful

REJECT STATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WATER PROTECTORS

consultation,” Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II wrote in an op-ed in *The New York Times*.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights.” The declaration further says, “Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including ... sanitation, health” and “to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence.” That includes the right to clean water.

On September 9, US District Judge James Boasberg denied the tribe’s request for injunctive relief and the tribe appealed.

Immediately following the court’s denial of the injunction, responding to pressure from the Water Protectors, three federal agencies -- the Department of Justice, Department of the Army, and Department of the Interior -- issued a joint statement announcing they will halt any additional permitting and reconsider their past permits for the project.

There is still one remaining permit that has not been issued. Since the Corps owns land on either side of Lake Oahe, Dakota Access must obtain an easement from the Corps to dig the tunnel for the pipeline underneath the lake on federally owned lands.

The three federal agencies asked that the pipeline company voluntarily pause all construction activity within 20 miles east or west of Lake Oahe. The company refused.

If Dakota Access is found to have knowingly damaged a historic



or cultural resource with the intent of sidestepping the National Historic Preservation Act, the Corps cannot issue the easement.

Meanwhile, Chairman Archambault has called on the Department of Justice to conduct an investigation into heavy-handed police tactics and possible civil rights violations.

UN Special Rapporteurs and Observers Concerned About Abuses

The UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, called on the United States to halt the construction of the DAPL because it poses a significant risk to the drinking water of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and threatens to destroy their sacred sites and burial grounds.

Tauli-Corpuz’s call was endorsed by eight other UN mandate holders, including the special rapporteurs on the situation of human rights defenders, the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, human rights and the environment, the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, cultural rights, human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, as well as the chairperson of the working group on business and human rights.

They also expressed concern at reports of intimidation, harassment and prosecution of Indigenous peoples exercising their right to peaceful assembly at Standing Rock.

A delegation from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues sent observers to Standing Rock to investigate the Water Protectors’ claims of human rights abuses, including the right to water, protection of sacred sites, the right to free prior and informed consent before development affecting their territories, the protection of Indigenous human and environmental rights defenders, unlawful arrests, excessive force and mistreatment in custody. [...]

The National Lawyers Guild formed the Red Owl Legal Collective on site to provide legal representation for those arrested — including protesters, members of the press, legal observers and lawyers — and to work on civil litigation.



U.S. STEEL ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT WITH BEDROCK

This Coup Against Canadian Rights Will Not Pass!

Workers' Forum, Canada

A U.S. Steel press release November 1 reads, "United States Steel Corporation announced today that it has agreed to proposed terms with Bedrock Industries Group LLC regarding the sale and transition of ownership of U.S. Steel Canada, Inc. ('USSC') to Bedrock...."

"U.S. Steel will receive approximately \$126 million in satisfaction of its secured claims, including interest, and unsecured claims. The proposed terms also include an agreement to provide mutual releases among key stakeholders, including a release of all claims against U.S. Steel regarding environmental, pension and other liabilities.

"As part of the proposed transition in ownership, U.S. Steel will continue to provide certain shared services to USSC and will enter into an agreement to supply USSC with all of its requirements for iron ore pellets through 2021."

The press release speaks of an agreement between two arms of U.S. finance capital to reorganize ownership and control of the century-old Stelco Steelworks situated in Hamilton and Nanticoke, Ontario. The reorganization will shift \$126 million from one arm of the U.S. oligarchy to another arm. In doing so the key feature as the press release states is to release the U.S. imperialist rich from all claims against them regarding environmental remediation, pensions, other post-employment benefits, a provincial loan worth \$150 million that they refuse to pay back, municipal taxes etc, which they contemptuously label "liabilities."

This agreement could be characterized as similar to one thief selling stolen goods to another criminal at a discount and in so doing the buyer of the stolen goods at a marked-down price assures the thief that all charges and problems related to the original robbery will be wiped clean as he has good connections and influence with the state authorities.

The U.S. imperialist rich are treating Canada as a colony without rights. They have decided amongst themselves in collusion with Canadian state collaborators in the judiciary and governments as well as civil society to hatch a scheme involving Canadian social property that Canadian workers have built over



the past century and more. The agreement violates the rights of Canadians to the employment their social property can provide, their claim on the social wealth they can produce, and the pensions and other post-employment benefits they were promised upon retirement in exchange for their capacity to work. The agreement also violates the rights of Canadians to environmental remediation and payment for work done at USSC by local companies that should come from the continuing value workers at the social property can produce or from the global assets of U.S. Steel.

Upon U.S. Steel's 2007 purchase of Stelco, which was in itself a scam that saw another arm of the imperialist beast run off with \$1.1 billion, USS made all sorts of promises regarding levels of employment and production and to make the pension plans whole by 2015. USS broke every promise and must be held to account. It does not have a legitimate claim to one penny let alone \$126 million and to abscond without meeting its commitments, especially to the pension plans.

The rights of Canadians are sacred. The Canadian working class will not allow its rights or the rights of its fellow Canadians and nation to be trampled in the mud. This coup against Canadian rights will not pass! Canadian workers stand as one against this theft of what belongs to them by right!

Rights and Exceptional Circumstances

In a recent discussion, Gary Howe, President of USW Local 1005 at Stelco Hamilton Works remarked that while Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau goes around the world demanding other countries respect human rights, here at home, workers under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) have no rights. Workers under CCAA cannot pursue human rights claims; they can only file grievances in the case of dismissal. Gary said Stelco steelworkers are under CCAA for the second time, which will soon total over five years without even their basic rights recognized let alone guaranteed. Essar Steel Algoma steelworkers in Sault Ste. Marie have been under CCAA three times in recent years.

The lack of rights extends to the absence of a guarantee of pensions and post-employment benefits not only under CCAA but generally. Under CCAA, these rights are considered expendable to save a company from liquidation or major creditors from losses. Under the hoax of exceptional circumstances, rights are extinguished for the greater good of saving a corporation or facility, or to ensure that certain creditors of the financial oligarchy receive their money. This means that workers' rights are not rights at all but policy objectives that must succumb to the property rights of the financial oligarchs who view their rights as owners of equity and debt as sacrosanct and dominating all other aspects of life. They use the state authorities to enforce their domination over the working class and to deny workers their rights.

The oligarchs seeking to control U.S. Steel Canada, the former Stelco, and Essar Steel Algoma, and bring them out of CCAA, all use the line of exceptional circumstances to negate the rights of workers to their jobs, wages, pensions and benefits. They say rights must be denied if the steel sector is to regain its footing and for the investors to be rewarded.

Workers cannot and will not accept this line of the ruling



oligarchs of exceptional circumstances that demand the negation of rights. The recognition and guarantee of rights have become fundamental in modern life. People have rights by virtue of being human. If the present system and those in control cannot guarantee rights then either they must relinquish control or replace the system. If these big companies, which exist as oligopolies with interlocking ownership and global control across entire sectors, cannot guarantee rights then they have no reason to exist. They must step aside and allow a new direction to be found where rights are recognized and guaranteed.

We live in the twenty-first century within a socialized economy of industrial mass production that can meet the needs and well-being of all and guarantee their rights. No excuses are acceptable and no excuses will be accepted by the modern working class for denial of rights. Rights are inviolable! Accountability for rights begins at home!

Missing Factor in the Working Class Movement for Emancipation

K.C. Adams, TML Weekly, Canada

Workers are their own saviors!

The working class movement for emancipation should discard a bad habit that is holding it back. It denies its own capacity to organize and bring about change independently of the imperialist ruling elite and their state. Political culture has engrained in the minds of workers that only through influencing the ruling elite and using their state-organized institutions can they stop the imperialist rich and their monopolies and oligopolies from attacking the working class and convince them to uphold rights and solve problems for the greater good and not their narrow private interests.

With this mindset, the working class movement for emancipation has been left with almost no institutions it can truly call its own. When workers want to make their own views known to their peers and other workers and the general public, they generally turn to the mass media of the ruling elite. When workers want their political opinions expressed in practice, they turn to one of the cartel political parties of the ruling elite. When workers are distressed, their rights denied and in need of help, they are left to the tender mercies of the state institutions and charities of the imperialist rich.

In all this, the excuse is generally given or silently understood

U.S. WORKERS STAND WITH CANDIAN WORKERS

and accepted as normal that no working class media or political and welfare institutions are strong enough to make a difference so workers must turn for help to the institutions of the imperialist ruling elite. In this way no action is taken to strengthen media which is partisan to their independent views and positions or the political and welfare institutions of the working class.

How often is it heard that if only the Toronto Star, Hamilton Spectator, La Presse or other media outlet of the monopolies would stop their anti-worker bias and present working class interests and views objectively and consistently then things would change for the better. This disabling emotion of hope stops workers from taking decisive action to build their own media and institutions independently of the ruling elite.

Workers are seduced by the false promises of those who hold economic and political power. This is so because workers do not grasp that they are the producers of social wealth in the country; they are the majority class by far and the only social force capable of challenging and depriving the ruling elite of their power to deprive the people of the rights they have by virtue of being human.

The imperialist rich constantly drum nonsense into workers' heads that they are a cost of production, not only their wages but their social programs such as pensions, unemployment insurance, injured workers' compensation etc. Workers are told constantly and are meant to believe they are and to see themselves as a burden on the economy and society and that the real heroes are the imperialist rich. The lie is propagated that somehow the actual producers who do the work and produce all the social wealth the people and society need for their existence are not capable of solving problems for the good of themselves, their economy and society.

The objective truth for all to see is denied that the imperialist rich and their narrow competing private interests are really the drag and block to solving the problems of the economy and society and are holding back the working class from taking its rightful place as the leader and foundation of modern life.

Removing the block to progress posed by the power of the ruling elite is the answer for the working class to defend its

rights, solve the problems of the economy, move it in a new pro-social direction, and open a positive path for society. The working class cannot remove this block if it constantly seeks help from the very force that is blocking solutions from happening and depriving workers of their rightful leading role.

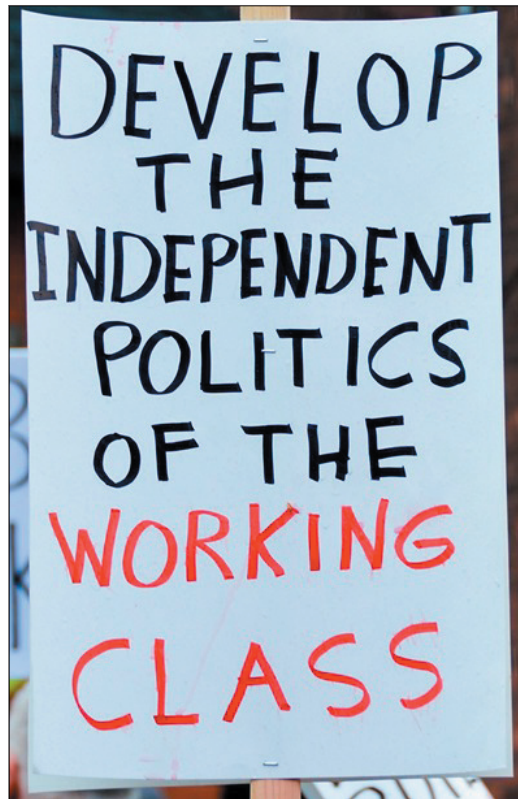
The working class has to confront the ruling monopoly elite and their state with the power of its own independent voice, actions and institutions. This is not so farfetched in today's world where technology offers workers great tools to reach their peers and others.

What is stopping workers from expressing their views in writing and voice and sending them in an organized way to all their peers and others at their workplace and beyond? What is stopping them from setting up welfare institutions that investigate the conditions of their fellow workers, retirees and others and develop methods to help all those who need assistance in defending their rights? What is stopping workers from having regular and sustained actions with analysis that bring their and the economy's problems into the open in active confrontation with the ruling elite and challenge their power to block solutions?

The imperialist rich have to be made to feel uncomfortable and forced to think that they should come to some arrangement with the working class and that equilibrium in social relations is better than constantly serving the narrow interests of the oligopolies and attacking the rights of the people and letting the economy flounder in recurring crises.

In all cases the working class has to have the initiative in its own hands to defend its rights and exercise its power and desire to solve problems in a broad pro-social manner for the greater good. The days of begging the ruling monopoly elite for what belongs to the working class by right are finished. To turn the situation around in favor of the working class, the initiative has to come from workers themselves to build their own voice and institutions in their workplaces and communities. Workers have to look to themselves as their own leaders of their movement, their economy and country.

Workers Are Their Own Saviors!



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