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VOICE OF REVOLUTION

Publication of the U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization

August-October, 2019

USMLO 3942 N. Central Ave, Chicago, IL 60634



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Democracy of Our Own Making : 1-5



For an Anti-War Government : 6-12



United Acitons for Rights : 13--16

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT

Organize for a Modern Democracy of Our Own Making

Georgia Representative John Lewis, African American and known for his civil rights activities, in endorsing impeachment of Trump said, "The future of our democracy is at stake." Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of

Representatives, who initiated the impeachment inquiry said, "The actions of the Trump presidency revealed dishonorable facts of the president's betrayal of his oath of office, betrayal of his national
Democracy of Our Own Making • 3

ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT HAS A UNIFYING AIM

Fight for an Anti-War Government

An important part of the Global Climate strike that saw millions of mainly youth fighting for a bright future — in 1,000 demonstrations in the U.S. and thousands more worldwide — was the stand against war. In New York

City not only were anti-war organizers part of the strike September 20 but they also organized a march on Sunday under the banner "Stop the Wars, Save the Planet." Organizers brought out that
Anti-War Government • 6

United Actions Strengthen Work to Defend Rights of Immigrants and Refugees

September saw an important demonstration in El Paso, Texas and dozens of sister demonstrations across the country, defending the rights of immigrants and refugees and denouncing the on-going state-organized attacks and racism of the government. In El Paso, the actions brought

together people both sides of the border, including various organizations and renowned artists in a day of cultural celebration and resistance. The united action followed more than 50 local #ElPasoFirme vigils.

"We are calling on our sis-
United Actions for Immigrant Rights • 13

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I • Democracy of Our Own Making

security and betrayal of the integrity of our elections.” She said, “The president must be held accountable, and no one is above the law.” Trump now is saying he considers the inquiry an attempted coup that he will not permit.

What is absent in all the coverage however is the fact that working people across the country are dissatisfied with the whole electoral setup and the direction of the country. They increasingly express their opposition to a Congress that is dysfunctional, unable to pass significant legislation, prone to government shutdowns and unwilling to address the people’s most pressing concerns, such as those about ending U.S. wars, inequality, poverty and environmental destruction. While the media promotes every tit for tat tweet

among the rulers, voices heard among the people, especially the youth, have raised: Why are they ignoring Trump’s war crimes? Those at the southern border? Why so much concern now about use of blackmail and government funds for self-serving purposes, a common occurrence in the existing setup?

The people are saying this is not our democracy, it does not serve us. This is seen in many demonstrations, such as at the recent Climate Strike actions of millions standing up for a bright future for the youth, at the united actions both sides of the southern border defending rights, in anti-war actions, in forums, speak outs, petitions and more. In the eyes of the



people the elections have long-since lost their integrity and are known for their corruption, manipulation and completely unequal conditions to elect and be elected, including widespread voter suppression. There is a clash between the conditions, which say it is time for the people to be empowered to govern and decide, and the existing authority, represented by the president on down.

A battle of two Americas is intensifying, that of the rich and that of the people proclaiming, *No Crimes Against Humanity* at home or abroad. It is not our democracy at stake. It is not our future the rulers are striving to protect, as their war government and war economy make clear. It is their undemocratic, anti-people rule — their

old democracy that keeps the rich in power and the people out — that is at stake. Every effort is being made to line people up behind the vying factions to defend their old democracy. The people however are more and more saying: We are organizing for a modern democracy of our own making that serves our interests, the interests of the people here and abroad — and we will not be diverted from this direction. It is stepping up work to speak in our own name on issues of concern, organizing house meetings, speak outs at our schools and in our communities, public forums to have our say, that contributes to building our democracy of people’s empowerment.

Can Impeachment Restore Confidence in a Dysfunctional System?

Hillary Clinton, in supporting impeachment of President Trump, said, “This occupant of the Oval Office poses a clear and present danger to our future, to our democracy.” Use of the phrasing “clear and present danger,” is commonly associated with justification for aggression abroad against an enemy that has not attacked but poses a “clear and present danger,” and for restricting freedom of speech in the name of war and countering espionage. It would appear Clinton and those she represents, including the intelligence agencies, favor both at this time. These agencies, like the military, are supposed to remain neutral, so as not to compromise their loyalty to the Office of the President. They both instead have been openly interfering, as the norms of the existing arrangements break down.

What we are witnessing in the impeachment battle is the failure of these old arrangements both to resolve conflicts among the rulers and to restore the confidence of the people in the current setup. The last election did not serve to restore confidence and

indeed, anger with the whole setup has grown. The struggles of the people defending rights is threatening to break the bounds of the existing arrangements and take the path of building new arrangements of people’s empowerment. This is a problem for the rich and at least some among them hope an impeachment inquiry will at least divert those fighting for a new direction and embroil them instead in “protecting” the dysfunctional democracy of the rich.

Impeachment efforts also reflects that the fight among the rulers as to which factions will control the presidency is intensifying. In the past, presidential elections and a functioning Congress that divided up the budget among the factions, served to resolve conflicts among the rulers so that violent civil war did not break out, at least not since the Civil War. But the Trump election resolved nothing, as seen in the unending fighting since. This vying for power by the factions is also evident in the fights within the Office of the President, such as the hiring and firing

of generals; between the executive and the military, with generals, such as former Defense Secretary Mattis openly criticizing the president; and between the federal and state governments, with states refusing to recognize the authority of federal police agencies like Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), for example. When the military publicly challenges the president, the Commander-in-Chief, it raises doubt as to whether they will follow his orders. When states, with their own armed policing agencies and National Guard troops, challenge federal authority, it too calls into question: Who will prevail among the contending authorities?

The rulers are concerned that the upcoming 2020 election will further intensify these conflicts as the competing factions may not accept the outcome. Such a situation could trigger open civil war, with potential for dividing the country, something the rulers are trying desperately to avoid. To do so they may turn to

more imperialist war, including potential invasion of Mexico, or Venezuela, or Iran. And some evidently think impeachment proceedings may unite the contending forces, including within the military.

One thing is clear. The Constitution has not stopped the many crimes of Trump and of government more broadly, such as the genocide of mass incarceration and police killings, environmental destruction, refusal to provide safe drinking water, brutal attacks on the rights to education, housing, healthcare. It provides no means for the people to hold government accountable.

Impeachment does not change this reality of a government that keeps the rich in power and the people out and of a president, whoever he may be, that can act with impunity and broad police powers. It is the peoples and their struggles for rights and empowerment that are changing the situation as work goes forward to strengthen the organized character and aim of building the new.

Proposals for a Direct Vote for President and a Michelle Obama Candidacy

Various proposals are currently being made for reforms to the existing electoral set up, such as different ways of counting the vote, caps on campaign spending, elimination of the Electoral College and its replacement with a direct vote for president.

It is important to examine these proposals from a vantage point that is to the advantage of the people. That is, the existing relations of power keep the people out of power and preserve and protect the power of the rulers. Will proposals change these relations in favor of the people, or take steps in that direction? Or do they preserve the status quo?

One current example is a proposal by film maker Michael Moore. Moore has faith in, or fidelity to the U.S. Constitution. He says the current debates by the Democratic candidates running for president are not what democracy looks like. He says all of them should be rejected and that the only person who can beat Trump is Michelle Obama. Though the debates have already started, the primaries themselves do not begin until next year. Extending this focus on candidates in part reflects the concern among the rulers that the people are rejecting the whole set up and demanding that their voice be heard. Moore, recognizing this but stuck with his fidelity to the Constitution, offers a direction that remains within the confines of the old.

A radio station commenting on Moore's proposal reported getting "tons of letters" saying there will not be an election in 2020 because Trump is a fascist and there is a conspiracy involving Russia's Putin. Many asked, given the conspiracy, with the outcome already determined, then why vote? The radio person complained that refusing to vote is just like voting for Trump. He said that because there is a crisis of democracy and foreign interference, he agrees with Moore in supporting Michelle Obama. (She has so far not agreed to run). Others when talking of conspiracy claim they do not think the U.S. military will go for fascism and it will save the day.



Just taking the comments at face value, what is being said is that there is a flaw in representative democracy that allows conspiracy to take hold, destroying people's faith in the constitutional arrangements and that you end up with a government that is unrepresentative. The Electoral College gets thrown in as a tool of the slave masters and part of the flaw.

The Electoral College is part of the Constitution and provided a means at that time for controlling what was often referred to as the mob, or the propertyless. Each state gets a number of Electoral College votes, based on their population. With state-based elections and the winner take all system in the U.S., whoever gains a plurality — not a majority but a plurality — gets all the Electoral College votes for that state (with the exception of Maine and Nebraska, who divide the votes using a combination of the state vote and that of congressional districts). It is a mechanism that permits the outcome that occurred in the last election, where Clinton got more votes but Trump won the election because he got more Electoral College votes.

Moore is promoting having direct support for someone outside of the primary system, in this case Michelle Obama. Consider that use of the primary system was first introduced around the time of WWI but it does not have widespread use until the 1970's, when many states take it up. This was in part a means to contend with the broad movements of the 1960's for rights and equality. This included standing against the many Democrats known as Dixiecrats who favored segregation and had ties to the Confederacy and former slave owners.

The primaries were supposed to give people more of a say and help maintain the illusion of democracy. Now they are being given as part of the conspiracy, as giving more possibilities for foreign interference. And since the vote remains tied to the Electoral College, it is seen as a means to block democracy. Michelle Obama is encouraged to run outside the primaries as the only person who can beat Trump. This is then connected with demands for a direct vote

for president, without the Electoral College.

The direct vote for president is equated with direct democracy and a means of solving the current flaws. Instead it re-enforces fidelity to the Constitution. The argument being given opposes the Electoral College but not the Constitution. Those calling for direct democracy are taking the existing form of democracy and saying it has different content, either for the slave masters or for the people. But with or without the Electoral College, with or without a direct vote for president, the content remains disempowerment of the people. And given current conditions of civil war, it is actually an argument for constitutional dictatorship by the president who will be given the mandate of the direct vote, or for military dictatorship, as the comments about the military saving the day indicate. It is a proposal that does not change the relations of power and cannot open a path in that direction. There needs to be a break with the old by continually establishing our own vantage points.,

Koch Brothers and Soros Join to Form Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft

A main problem the ruling circles are trying to solve is preserving the U.S. and their rule in the face of intensifying conflicts among the factions vying for power, particularly control of the presidency. There is concern that Trump has been unable to unite the vying factions, especially the huge military bureaucracy, while also keeping the people dispersed and disempowered. In attempting to contend with these problems and unite the factions, some of the most powerful forces have joined together to establish the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. It is openly a means to bring together what are often called anti-war conservatives and liberal democrats. It is funded by billionaires George Soros, a big Clinton backer, and the Koch Brothers, Trump supporters and notorious for their anti-union and anti-people actions.

According to the Institute's statement, the think tank "promotes ideas that move U.S. foreign policy away from endless war and toward vigorous diplomacy in the pursuit of international peace." It is named after John Quincy Adams, the second U.S. president, who said the U.S. "goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy."

The statement speaks to problems the rulers are facing in deciding how to maintain the U.S. role as "indispensable leader": "The foreign policy of the United States has become detached from any defensible conception of U.S. interests and from a decent respect for the rights and dignity of humankind. Political leaders have increasingly deployed the military in a costly, counterproductive, and indiscriminate manner, normalizing war and treating armed dominance as an end in itself.

"Moreover, much of the foreign policy community in Washington has succumbed to intellectual lethargy and dysfunction... It has forfeited the confidence of the American public."

There is recognition and concern here of the broad anti-war stand of the people and an effort to respond to it. Their

"principles," for example, include that responsible statecraft: serves the public interest; engages the world using "peaceful cooperation"; builds a peaceful world by coexisting with competitors and respecting international law; abhors war, with the U.S. military existing "to defend the people and territory of the United States, not to act as a global police force"; is democratic, meaning Congress must neither tolerate "the usurpation of its Constitutional role by the executive nor abdicate its authority to declare war." This last is stated even though Congress has not declared a single one of the many wars since WWII. It is a power long-since usurped by the president. The language is designed to disinform and disorient the anti-war movement, while striving to unite the ruling factions.

There is a fight intensifying within the ruling class not over eliminating the war government and war economy and all this means at home and abroad, but rather over how best to regain the confidence of the people in their rule while also ensuring the dominance of the U.S. The forces coming together are among those that now think the people can be diverted with high ideals and U.S. leadership imposed through what they term responsible statecraft. It is not an end to aggression and interference, rather a different form for it. They are also concerned that the current path of open destruction, use of force and elimination of rule of law, is not succeeding in uniting the vying factions, including the military.

The fact that the Institute is being formed now is also an indication that these forces will intervene in the elections, as both Soros and the Koch Brothers have long been doing. As well, the usual branding of "left" and "right" no longer holds and does not assist in analyzing the various factions and what they are up to. The factions themselves are fluid, not fixed, and as the Institute indicates, various forces can come together for specific purposes.

I • Anti-War Government

“The role of the U.S. military in climate change is massive as oil is essential for the war machine. There is no such thing as a Green War. We cannot confront climate change without confronting U.S. militarism.

“Even though the U.S. military produces more climate pollution than 140 countries combined, the U.S.-made sure the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change from 1997, the first international accord to limit global warming emissions, excluded fossil fuel emissions by the military. Even the Paris Agreement, which Trump withdrew from, still enabled the U.S. to avoid reporting Pentagon emissions.

“As a result, the greatest fossil fuel polluter on the planet is excluded despite the fact that the U.S. military accounts for 25% of the total U.S. consumption of oil, which is itself 25% of the total world consumption...The U.S. Air Force is the single largest consumer of jet fuel and creator of greenhouse gases on the planet.”

Stands were also taken against the use of the chemical weapon depleted uranium (DU), which has been used extensively against the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan. The use of DU violates international law, including the Biological Weapons Convention. The U.S. uses these outlawed weapons, like its killer drones, with impunity. Its illegal aggressive wars and war machine have served to eliminate rule of law.

Demonstrate October 11

Efforts to continue strengthening the antiwar movement are also taking place October 11-12, with a demonstration at the White House and an Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Summit October 12 (see below). Organizers bring out: “The War Machine and U.S. imperialism are the umbrella over virtually every other issue plaguing the world today including climate change, underfunded education, increasingly militarized police, a lack of adequate healthcare, refugee crises across the globe, and much much more. We have had more than enough and will not stand for these atrocities being done in our name and with our tax dollars while the pockets of the elite are lined and average people

suffer the world over.”

Voice of Revolution salutes all these efforts and urges all to join in! As activists gather for the Summit and continue numerous local efforts, we call on all to con-

sider a unifying aim for the anti-war movement: Organize for an Anti-War Government. Many are rightly angry with the crimes and brutality of the U.S. government and stand against them. A movement meeting the interests of the people however is to go beyond being against the rulers — it needs its own pro-active independent program and organizing centered on it. It needs a unifying aim based on the conditions of today, which are crying out for a new form of governance, an anti-war governance where the people are empowered to govern and decide. The existing Constitution with its form of government is outdated and its institutions are in crisis and no longer functioning. The U.S. rulers refuse to go forward and thus are taking the world backward to lawlessness and might makes right. It is the peoples and their struggles against war and for rights that are decisive and a crucial right to affirm at this time is the right to govern and decide.

Let us use the Summit and similar events in the coming year to collectively discuss the aim of an antiwar government. Let us not be limited to describing and denouncing the crimes of the U.S., whether it be sanctions, aggressive war or imperialism as a system. Let us be pro-active in debating and working together to build our own independent collectives and institutions of people’s empowerment as steps on the path to achieving our unifying aim of an anti-war government.



Join March on the Pentagon to Rage Against the War Machine This October

March on the Pentagon

March on the Pentagon invites all those outraged by the War Machine, U.S. imperialism, and endless wars to join us in Washington D.C. on October 11 and 12. From the mind boggling cost which strips money from basic human needs like healthcare, education, clean water and more, the stomach churning death toll, the irreversible environmental impact, the fueling of militarized police, the uptick in right-wing domestic terrorism, the too often ignored contribution to climate change as well as the resulting and potentially deadly PTSD,

substance abuse, domestic abuse and rape suffered by those who have served in the armed forces to the toll war takes on women across the globe — from rape and loss of children to raising one’s family as a refugee in a foreign land — there is something for everyone to be outraged about. If you are not outraged, you are not paying attention.

The War Machine and U.S. imperialism are the umbrella over virtually every other issue plaguing the world today including climate change, underfunded education, increasingly militarized

FIGHT FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT

police, a lack of adequate healthcare, refugee crises across the globe, and much much more.

We have had more than enough and will not stand for these atrocities being done in our name and with our tax dollars while the pockets of the elite are lined and average people suffer the world over. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed thanks to the war on terror, innocent children are born with life threatening abnormalities (if they even survive that long), toxic “forever chemicals” in our water are poisoning military families and refugees alike, the U.S. military is the world’s biggest polluter, the radioactive residue of abandoned uranium mines are wreaking havoc on the lives of the Navajo people, suicides among active-duty soldiers are up 20%, the Pentagon has emitted over a billion metric tons of greenhouse gases, U.S. sanctions killed over 40,000 people in Venezuela since 2017, 14 million people are at risk of starvation and death due to disease in Yemen while the death toll could reach over 230,000 by 2020, all the while Julian Assange sits in solitary confinement in Belmarsh prison for simply revealing the War Machine’s crimes — you get the idea. [...]

War is one of few things that Democrats and Republicans unite over —year after year. Whether it is to approve massive military budgets and involvement in the murder of innocent lives abroad or to cover up incomprehensible war crimes, the two halves of the War Party are determined to keep our War Economy growing.

In addition to the human cost of what was mentioned above, the War Machine and the War Economy siphon money from every aspect of life in the United States. A quick glance at our 2019 discretionary budget says it all: \$727 billion for the military, 61% of the budget; 5% each for education, healthcare, housing.

Taking on the War Machine is no easy task. The military is massive. A whopping 3.5 million people are directly employed by the Department of Defense (DoD) and this does not include the many military contractors — upwards of 560,000 — working for the DoD. And the majority of the world’s largest weapons manufacturers are based in the United States — including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics, United Technologies, and L-3 Technologies — employing who knows how many Americans while raking in profits that most Americans cannot even begin to comprehend. We have a war based economy.

The approach to taking on the War Machine must be multipronged. Annually, March on the Pentagon plans and hosts an anti-war and anti-imperialism march, rally, and educational gathering. Last October around 2,000 people marched on the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. This year, we invite you to join us in Washington DC on Friday, October 11 at 11 am to visibly

express your outrage at the War Machine, but this is only a piece of the puzzle. The following day we will host an Anti-Imperialism Revolutionary Summit to learn more about what we can take home to our own cities and towns and how we can be anti-imperialist every day. This is one piece of the puzzle.

This year, we will meet at the White House on Friday, October 11 at 11 am where we will rage against President Donald Trump and his administration. From there we will visit the headquarters of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a war profiteer, Farragut Square where we will rage against the Democrats, the Atlantic Council, and we will end at the Washington Post where we will rage against mainstream media, Jeff Bezos, and Amazon where we will hold a brief rally and engage in an act of civil disobedience. While holding this event on a Friday may make it more challenging for some to travel to Washington DC to join us in our efforts, it will ensure that war profiteers, government employees, and tourists will see and hear us. Visibility and disruption are pieces of the puzzle of dismantling the war machine.

The following day we will gather from 11:30 am to around 9 pm at St. Stephen Church in Washington DC for the Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Summit. The goal of the summit to bring activists and interested people together to learn why we should be anti-imperialist and what can we do to continue the struggle against militarism and US wars of aggression after we return to our homes across the country. The summit will consist of several panels of experts talking about various aspects of US imperialism and militarism, live music, organizational tabling and information, networking, and childcare in our Peace Place for Children.

Cindy Sheehan is slated to be our keynote speaker. Panels include:

- Local Organizing with Women Against Military Madness
- Struggles Against Imperialism in North America
- Killer Sanctions
- Enough is Enough: End the Endless Wars

Panelists include women on the Women Against Military Madness board of directors, Eugene Puryear, Lisa Davis, Dakotah Lilly, Lee Camp, Medea Benjamin, Don DeBar, Janice Kortcamp, and more.

Summit tickets are \$10 each. Scholarships are available for those who need them—we will not turn away anyone who cannot pay. We are also accepting pay it forward donations to cover ticket and travel costs for those in need of assistance.

The time to act is now... It is time to take risks and force real, actual change. The health of our planet, the lives of our neighbors, and the futures of our children depend on it.

Visit our website: usmlo.org

Activists Confront 2020 Candidates About Drones and War

Nick Mottern, *Knowdrones.com*

In late July, the MQ-9 Reaper drone, the U.S.'s foremost killer drone, entered the Iowa presidential primary contest in a cable TV ad that challenges 2020 Democratic presidential candidates to pledge to end all U.S. drone attacks, close U.S. drone bases and work for a global ban on weaponized drones.

The ad, appearing on MSNBC, CNN and Fox News, urged support for the *End Drone War Pledge* campaign for candidates' forums by members of the Des Moines Catholic Worker House and the Des Moines Veterans For Peace chapter, a cadre that has protested drone killings for two years, with some being arrested at the gate of the Des Moines Air National Guard drone control center after engaging in civil disobedience.

The ad makes the point that, at this moment, while presidential candidates campaign in Iowa but speak very little about war and nothing about drone killing, Iowa's Air National Guard members are doing the grisly work, every day, of remotely piloting Reaper killer drones, armed with 500-pound bombs and Hellfire missiles, over undisclosed locations overseas, stalking and killing.

"The Reaper aircraft lives up to its grim name," proudly proclaims the Air National Guard website. "This remotely piloted aircraft provides a unique capability to find and eliminate high value, time-sensitive targets." That is: people.

At a recent Des Moines drone protest, where five demonstrators were arrested, Frank Cordaro, a Des Moines Catholic Worker, read a list of killer drone bases inside the U.S., saying, "We are going to try to make sure we get to every Democratic candidate to see where they stand on this."

A coalition of humanitarian groups is challenging the Democratic field to pledge to cut Pentagon spending by \$200 billion annually and to agree that the U.S. should not go to war without congressional authorization and identification of revenue sources to support such wars. The pledge calls only for a reduction in nuclear weapons, not elimination.

Abolition of U.S. nuclear weapons is, however, the goal of the

presidential candidate pledge campaign of NuclearBan.US, which challenges the Democrats to "sign, ratify and implement the 2017 International Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons."

But why, given the enormous negative impact of Pentagon spending and the existential threat of nuclear weapons, are presidential candidates being challenged about killer drones in particular — machines that have miniscule death-dealing power compared to the entire U.S. arsenal and nuclear weapons?

Killer Drones vs. Nuclear Weapons

Day in and day out, the U.S. fleet of at least 300 Reaper drones is dispersed over at least eight nations, bringing a combined population of 375.3 million under threat of killer drone surveillance and attack. Any of these people are subject to drone stalking and assassination at the whim of U.S. politicians and military commanders, all in violation of international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which calls for protection of privacy, due process and life itself, and these attacks are conducted routinely.

While nuclear weapons threaten apocalypse, the bombs and Hellfire missiles of the Reaper drones are right now delivering terror and very personal apocalypses to some of the poorest people in the world, notably, people of color. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism reports that U.S. drones have killed up to 12,100 people in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia alone since the Bureau began collecting data in 2002.

This is a gross underestimate of total U.S. drone killing, however. U.S. drones have been, or are, also conducting uncounted attacks in Libya, Syria, Iraq and Niger.

Moreover, many drone attacks generally occur in remote areas where there is no reporting. The U.S. government provides no useful information about the extent of its drone war campaign, the numbers of people who have been killed or where killer drones are flying. The U.S. drone war is a secret war, conducted with no public accountability and no effective oversight by Congress. Meanwhile, President Trump has reportedly eased rules controlling drone attacks, undoubtedly leading to a dramatic surge in killing and wounding. [...]

Consider the current war in Yemen, the world's foremost humanitarian crisis according to the United Nations. This war was preceded by, and certainly stimulated by, U.S. drone attacks, starting in 2002. A 2015 report describes the devastating societal impact of U.S. drone attacks in Yemen:

"The sky in the Yemeni countryside, or, the U.S. drones' playground, regularly inflicts violence without any warning or reason on people that are already vulnerable to both poverty and conflict. An entire generation is increasingly succumbing to a way of life that is marked by unpredictability, uncertainty and brutal violence that may suddenly manifest in the form of drone attack at anytime and anywhere."



Normalizing Government Vigilantism

The first U.S. drone attack, in 2001, on the first day of the Afghanistan War, was a failed attempt to assassinate Taliban leader Mullah Omar. The U.S. drone war continues to be a war based on assassination.

Assassination is a form of what is sometimes called preemptive killing; that is, illegal killing based on suspicion, fear, prejudice, hatred or all the above. In the case of killer drones, it is a form of governmental vigilantism. This is politically acceptable in the U.S. because the use of killer drones means that U.S. pilots and soldiers do not have to penetrate dangerous territory in person.

As pointed out by DroneWars.net, drone killing makes it “much easier — perhaps too easy — for politicians to opt for a quick, short-term ‘fix’ of ‘taking out the bad guys’ rather than engaging in the often difficult and long-term work of solving the root causes of conflicts.”

The allure of “easy,” preemptive killing, and the threat to other nations presented by U.S. killer drones, have led to a surge in international adoption of killer drone technology.

The U.S. government has also put forward the argument that drone killing is “precise,” a clinical, clean way of killing, and, somehow, this is supposed to negate or trivialize concerns over the fundamental issues of legality and morality.

This is an extremely dangerous development for humanity.

“There is a danger at the moment that we are conditioning ourselves to think a certain way, that wars are bloodless and that we can carry out war in a nice way,” Air Marshall Greg Bagwell, a commander of British drone operations, pointed out in an interview. “Thinking war is bloodless is a mistake because we need to be aware that war is nasty and opting for it, must be the last resort. Thinking it can be done cleanly, etc. is a mistake.”

Former President Obama — who dramatically increased drone killing during his presidency and oversaw the creation of a global infrastructure to support drone attacks — stunningly chose to trivialize drone slaughter, terror and illegality with a “joke” in which he said he’d use a Predator drone against the Jonas Brothers if they showed any romantic interest in his daughters.

The implicit message for the U.S. public (coming from the president no less) was that killer drones offer a quick, efficient way to deal with annoying people. Here was a presidential seal of approval for drone vigilantism — indeed, a message consistent with the vigilantism of the U.S.’s killer police.

The allure of “easy,” preemptive killing, and the threat to other nations presented by U.S. killer drones, have led to a surge in international adoption of killer drone technology, with more than a dozen countries possessing killer drones. [...]

An international ban on drones is essential not only to prevent killing such as that being conducted by the U.S... but also in preventing larger wars, including nuclear war.

This danger is evident in the recent incident in which Iran shot down a U.S. Global Hawk surveillance drone off its coast. The Global Hawk is widely known to be used for targeting as well as information gathering, and its introduction near or into Iranian airspace was itself a hostile act by the U.S. that nearly precipitated a war.

Would the U.S. have made that decision if the aircraft had a pilot on board? Would U.S. commanders have taken the risk of having a pilot killed or captured, as in the case of the 1960 Russian capture of U-2 spy plane pilot Francis Gary Powers?

Killer Drones as “Corporate Cavalry”

The U.S. confrontation with Iran raises another question with respect to the use of drones, and the U.S. military in general: Will the U.S. military continue to be used around the world on behalf of extraction corporations to ensure favorable access to precious resources, particularly oil?

Reporting for CNN, Antonia Juhasz makes it very clear that the intended beneficiaries of U.S. military action in the on-going tragedy of Iraq are oil extraction corporations: “Before the 2003 invasion, Iraq’s domestic oil industry was fully nationalized and closed to Western oil companies. A decade of war later, it is largely privatized and utterly dominated by foreign firms.”

Killer drones are the “cavalry” flying in to an increasing number of zones targeted for corporate fossil fuel extraction and other exploitation.

Presidential hopefuls Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren are building their campaigns on their avowal to break up corporate power and to liberate politics from control by the super-rich. But so far, theirs and other candidates’ analyses have not examined the dependency of extremely wealthy corporation heads and large stockholders, and the economy they have collectively and deliberately created, on extracting resources from around the world at gunpoint, especially oil.

Given U.S. economic dependency on fossil fuels, the “control” over access to oil supplies through military force and death-dealing sanctions have been fundamental to the extraordinary profitability of a wide range of corporations, including the largest banks, which are at the center of corporate power in the U.S. and globally.

The significance of oil to major banks is illustrated in a recent Rainforest Action Network report which finds that 33 global banks invested \$1.9 trillion in fossil fuels since the 2016 Paris Climate Accords were signed. The four largest such investors were the four largest U.S. banks: JPMorgan Chase at \$195 billion, Wells Fargo at \$151.4 billion, Citigroup at \$129.5 billion, and Bank of America at \$106.7 billion.

In 1967, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of the U.S. military’s role as corporate enforcer: “This need to maintain social stability for our investments accounts for the counter-revolutionary action of American forces in Guatemala. It tells why American helicopters are being used against guerrillas in Cambodia and why American napalm and Green Beret forces have already been active against rebels in Peru.”

Viewed from this perspective, it seems that killer drones are the “cavalry” flying in to relieve U.S. ground forces beleaguered by corporate demands to put boots on the ground in an increasing number of zones targeted for corporate fossil fuel extraction and other exploitation.

All U.S. killer drone operations are in zones where there are contests for control of precious resources. All these areas

are home to poor people of color who are without adequate technological defenses against air attack.

These are the zones of the “small wars” in which the U.S. is involved — wars that get no press attention in the U.S. However, the heads of banks and other major corporations understand very, very well that these wars of repression and conquest are not a sideshow but are, rather, absolutely at the center of sus-

taining concentration of corporate power and increasing their own personal wealth. [...]

There can be no meaningful progress toward diminishing corporate power and stopping climate catastrophe without pulling the U.S. military rug out from under corporate power, starting with drone warfare and targeted killings. Where a candidate stands on killer drones will, indeed, tell us a lot.

Candidates Must Commit to Immediate US Withdrawal From Afghanistan

Marjorie Cohn, Truthout

On July 30, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan reported that the Afghan government and international military forces, primarily the United States, caused most of the civilian deaths in Afghanistan during the first six months of 2019. That’s more killings than those perpetrated in the same time period by the Taliban and ISIS combined.

Aerial operations were responsible for 519 civilian casualties (356 deaths and 156 injuries), including 150 children (89 deaths and 61 injuries). That constitutes a 39 percent increase in overall civilian casualties from aerial attacks. Eighty-three percent of civilian casualties from aerial operations were carried out by the international forces.

U.S. War Crimes

The targeting of civilians amounts to war crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

These war crimes promise to continue unless the U.S. military completely withdraws from Afghanistan. While the United States and the Taliban have had discussions aimed at ending the 18-year war, the eighth round of those talks concluded on August 12 without reaching a peace deal. The two threshold issues are the schedule for the withdrawal of the remaining 14,000 U.S. troops and how to prevent “terrorist attacks” against the U.S. and allies in Afghanistan. The Taliban want the U.S. forces to withdraw before a ceasefire. But U.S. officials seek to maintain 7,000 troops, including Special Operations forces, in Kabul for several years.

Team Trump’s deadly actions are a continuation of the Bush and Obama administrations’ commission of the most heinous crimes in Afghanistan. On April 12, the ICC’s Pre-Trial Chamber found a “reasonable basis” to believe that the parties to the Afghan conflict, including the U.S. military and the CIA, committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, most of them occurring between 2005 and 2015. They include “the war crimes of torture and cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, and rape and other forms of sexual violence pursuant to a policy approved by the U.S. authorities.”

The chamber, however, refused to open a formal investigation into those crimes, as recommended by ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda. In concluding that “an investigation into the situation

in Afghanistan at this stage would not serve the interests of justice,” the chamber questioned the feasibility of such a probe. An investigation would be “very wide in scope and encompasses a high number of alleged incidents having occurred over a long time period,” the chamber wrote. It noted the extreme difficulty in gauging “the prospects of securing meaningful cooperation from relevant authorities for the future” and found “the current circumstances of the situation in Afghanistan are such as to make the prospects for a successful investigation and prosecution extremely limited.”

In her appeal petition, Bensouda noted that the chamber’s decision was unprecedented. “This is the first time that any Pre-Trial Chamber has held that there is a reasonable basis to believe that the ‘most serious crimes’ within the jurisdiction of the Court have been committed, and that potential cases concerning those crimes would be admissible, but not proceeded to authorize the opening of an investigation,” she wrote.

What caused such an unprecedented refusal by the chamber to open an investigation?

Seven days before the chamber declined to initiate an investigation, the Trump administration revoked the visa of ICC prosecutor Bensouda because of her advocacy for an investigation of war crimes in Afghanistan. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, “We are prepared to take additional steps, including economic sanctions if the ICC does not change its course.”

Apparently, the U.S. refusal to cooperate with an investigation and its thinly veiled efforts at blackmail of the ICC are having the desired effect – impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Meanwhile, regional Afghan forces commandeered by the CIA have “operated unconstrained by battlefield rules designed to protect civilians, conducting night raids, torture and killings with near impunity,” according to *The New York Times*.

In a July 23 meeting with the prime minister of Pakistan, Donald Trump in effect threatened to commit genocide in Afghanistan. He said he could cause Afghanistan to be “wiped off the face of the earth” but he didn’t “want to kill 10 million people.”

In the meantime, the violence in Afghanistan is growing deadlier. In July, 1,500 civilians were killed or wounded, in the most lethal month for the past couple of years.

Of the Democratic presidential candidates, only Tulsi Gabbard and Pete Buttigieg have committed to withdrawing all U.S. troops from Afghanistan during their first year in office.

When the candidates were asked if there would be U.S. troops in Afghanistan at the end of their first term, Elizabeth Warren said, “No”; Bernie Sanders replied, “I suspect not”; Beto O’Rourke responded, “We have to begin to bring these wars to a close”; Kirsten Gillibrand said, “I believe that we need to bring our troops home from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria”; Cory Booker noted, “We cannot have forever wars in this nation”; Julian Castro replied, “We need to withdraw in a way that is orderly, that respects our allies”; Amy Klobuchar responded, “We have been there longer than some of our young people have been on this earth”; Andrew Yang opined, “It’s impossible to know that for sure, given that reality on the ground might lead us to have more people there”;



Marianne Williamson said, “I would make no move in Afghanistan until first I spoke to Afghan women”; and Kamala Harris answered, “We need to have a presence there in terms of supporting what the leaders of Afghanistan want to do.”

Sanders tweeted, “The American people do not want endless war. Congress

must reassert its Constitutional authority over the use of force and responsibly end these interventions [in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria].” Joe Biden promised to “end the forever wars in Afghanistan and the Middle East.”

As the carnage continues with no end in sight, all of the Democratic candidates should be making immediate and complete U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, and indeed, all countries in which the United States is fighting, a central pillar of their platforms. They must also renounce impunity and commit to cooperate with any future ICC investigations.

Democrats Must Stop Dismissing Diplomacy With North Korea

Minju Bae & Ju-Hyun Park, Nodutdol for Korean Community Development

On September 11, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez tweeted a screenshot of CNN’s headline ticker and highlighted “Trump Sides with Kim Jong Un,” assessing “That’s it. That’s the headline.” ...And then, two minutes later, Rep. Ilhan Omar retweeted Ocasio-Cortez, “Trump sides with yet another dictator.”

To their credit, both congresswomen voted for House Resolution 152 (introduced by Representative Ro Khanna) earlier this year, which calls for the formal end to the Korean War. However, it was disappointing but unsurprising to watch two of the most progressive members of Congress discuss Korea in this light. After all, the sentiments that Representatives Ocasio-Cortez and Omar expressed are common among Democrats writ large. In the Democratic debate on September 12, presidential candidates

Julian Castro and Senator Kamala Harris made similar points.

The problem with reflexively dismissing U.S. diplomatic engagement with North Korea is that it depends on a narrative that is disconnected from facts. For more than 70 years, Koreans have lived with division and the horrific consequences of war. The last two years of Korean-led intergovernmental cooperation have laid the groundwork toward peace and reunification. U.S. progressives ought to be supportive of that process — it is their obligation to history and morality.

The origins of the Korean War are directly linked to the surrender of Japan in World War II, which ended two generations of violent colonial rule in Korea. The movement for Korean liberation was just as long. Liberation activists quickly organized a unified, democratically established government called the Korean

People's Republic (KPR) under the leadership of lifelong liberation activist Yeo Un-hyeong.

But just weeks after Japan's surrender in 1945, the U.S. military began to occupy southern Korea and outlawed the nascent KPR, establishing a military government staffed by many former Japanese colonial officials. Koreans resisted U.S. occupation in numerous uprisings. U.S. and pro-U.S. forces responded with retaliatory massacres. In 1948, the U.S. military — in collusion with the newly formed United Nations — installed the conservative, pro-U.S. Republic of Korea (ROK) through a sham election. One of the first acts of the U.S.-installed "democracy" was to suppress an uprising on the island of Jeju by slaughtering tens of thousands of people. It was only after the ROK's formation that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), commonly known as North Korea, was founded.

Since then, the U.S. has done everything in its power to destroy the DPRK, from carpet bombing more than 90 percent of the country from 1950-1953, to modern-day bipartisan economic sanctions, which deprive North Koreans of life-saving necessities like fuel, medicine and access to international trade for their livelihoods. As part of its decades-long war against North Korea, the U.S. aided and abetted South Korean dictators Rhee Syngman, Park Chung-hee and Chun Doo-hwan in brutally crushing reunification and democratization movements, like the Gwangju Uprising of 1980.

Five million people died in the Korean War, and it is hard to say how many more have been killed (and are still being killed) by U.S. policies since.

The U.S. and South Korean militaries also collaborated in creating systems of institutionalized sexual assault of Korean and migrant women, including medical torture and forced sterilization of sex workers who serviced U.S. military personnel. Decades of worker, student and rural organizing eventually made South Korea a democracy in the 1990s, but the U.S. military occupation continues.

It is no wonder the dead — our dead — never make it into the U.S. narrative of freedom and democracy. This narrative attempts to justify U.S. militarism in the Pacific as it disciplines an inherently untrustworthy and illegitimate regime. Five million people died in the Korean War, and it is hard to say how many more have been killed (and are still being killed) by U.S. policies since.

Human Rights and Denuclearization

This is the status quo Democrats uphold when they diminish the complexity of contemporary Korean politics to a false binary of siding with or not siding with "a dictator." What about denuclearization? What about human rights? And indeed, what about them?

The U.S. has no moral authority to enforce denuclearization or



human rights on the Korean Peninsula. The U.S. has bombed civilian targets in Korea and installed nuclear missiles in the south. It still has the largest nuclear arsenal of any nation on Earth and has military infrastructure, including missile sites, throughout the Pacific. Americans cannot be moral and political arbiters for places they do not live in and people they do not know. The greatest threat to human rights in Korea isn't reunification; it's the war, which the U.S. must end.

Progressives can do better by pushing to end sanctions and sign a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War.

The Trump administration may entertain direct talks with North Korea. But the same administration also blocked joint economic projects like the inter-Korean railway and refused to end sanctions as a precondition to an eventual peace treaty. Progressives can do better by pushing to end sanctions and sign a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War. That's the choice the U.S. faces: cooperate with the peace process in full, or perpetuate a forever war that exacts a bloody toll on both sides of the Korean Demilitarized Zone.

In spite of everything, Koreans have created resilient communities throughout the peninsula. Whether in North Korea, South Korea, or elsewhere, we have cared for each other, shaped our own destinies amid extraordinary violence and most importantly, survived. And for decades, we've built across borders toward reunification. A just and lasting peace is possible in Korea but only if we build it ourselves, not on the U.S.'s terms.

For Koreans around the globe, Friday's full moon marked the beginning of Chuseok. Some have characterized Chuseok as the "Korean Thanksgiving." This is inaccurate. Unlike Thanksgiving, Chuseok is not a celebration of genocide. Instead, it is a holiday for family reunion, communion with our ancestors, and commemoration of our past, present and future. For Koreans with separated families, it is a time to mourn our separation. May this be the last Chuseok that this is the case.

I • United Actions for Immigrant Rights

ter communities across the country to join us in an exercise of collective compassion and solidarity on September 7,” said a main organizer from the Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR). “El Paso Firme means we are united as we move forward, with firm steps and clear vision. We know that as long as we continue fighting for our rights, we will prevail,” said another.

Additionally, nurses organized to provide care at the government detention centers and to speak out about the horrific conditions faced by the people detained, including young children. The Registered Nurse Response Network (RNRN) organized 20 teams of volunteer registered nurses, more than 50 RNs from 16 states around the country to provide basic medical care at border shelters for asylum seekers from January to July 2019 (see

below). These nurses join those in El Paso who have demanded the detention center for youth be closed and advanced the call *Do Not Do This in Our Name, Do Not Do This in Our Community!*

As all the actions show, people are not waiting on the government to protect them, but rather are taking united action and building up their own independent organizations. They reject government efforts to speak in their name and instead are speaking out, in their own voices, affirming that they are fighting for a very different America — one that guarantees the rights of all and holds government to account for doing so. The organized resistance is being strengthened as workers continuing speaking out in their own name, organizing united actions that serve their interests and standing as one to defend the rights of all.

Nurses Speak Out About Border Conditions

Registered Nurse Response Network (RNRN)

The Registered Nurse Response Network (RNRN) has released “Compassion Without Borders: RNs Report on the Public Health Crisis at the Border,” announced RNRN, National Nurses United (NNU), and California Nurses Foundation (CNF). The report outlines the health crisis at the border, which the government created.

The 20-page report provides nurses’ firsthand accounts and news reports on the conditions at the southwestern U.S. border and makes concrete recommendations calling for humanitarian standards in border detention facilities. The report details the abysmal conditions in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol detention centers where asylum seekers were not given sufficient amounts of food or drinking water during detention or provided basic hygiene. Some conditions were so inhumane, they do not even meet the Geneva Conventions’ standards for treatment of prisoners of war.

RNRN volunteers spoke out about their deployments to shelters in Tucson, Arizona, El Paso, Texas, and other locations at the Global Nurses Solidarity Assembly in San Francisco on September 14. The nurses cared for asylum seekers who had been in ICE or Border Patrol detention as well as other people in need of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, including victims of Volcan de Fuego in Guatemala and Hurricanes Katrina, Harvey, and Maria.

“It was appalling to hear about the conditions of families kept by ICE and U.S. Border Patrol,” said Cathy Kennedy, an RN from California, during the “Compassion Without Borders” panel. “They were not to be able to brush their teeth, have clean combs, or shower.”

“[In detention, ICE] would take all their clothes except for

one layer,” said Maria Rojas, an RN from Florida. “They also took their shoelaces, belts, and hair ties. They slept on the floor in what they called ‘hieleras,’ ice boxes with only a mylar sheet for a blanket. The little ones had bad colds. One little boy was so congested, he had trouble breathing.”

“During my deployment in Tucson, I had to take a young girl to the emergency room twice,” said Kennedy. “We thought she had Kawasaki disease because she was so sick. Her father was so worried. He had left his wife and another child behind in Guatemala to find a better life.”

“There is a stark contrast between people vilified in the media versus the people I saw at Casa Alitas [shelter in Tucson],” said Terry Tate, an RN from Louisiana. “Nurses met many families who traveled for 15 days, sometimes more, to reach the United States. They took treacherous journeys to escape violence and extreme poverty.”

“We treat everyone regardless of immigration status,” said Kennedy. “We absolutely have to do more. We cannot stand for one more death.”

RNRN — a disaster relief program sponsored by NNU and CNF— deployed 20 teams of volunteer registered nurses, more than 50 RNs from 16 states around the country to provide basic medical care at border shelters to asylum seekers from January to July 2019. RNRN currently has nurses deployed in the Bahamas, assisting victims of Hurricane Dorian.

(The Registered Nurse Response Network, a disaster relief program sponsored by National Nurses United and California Nurses Foundation, has a volunteer base of more than 26,000 RNs representing all U.S. states and territories as well as 21 countries around the world.)

Visit our website: usmlo.org

Thousands of People Open Homes to Refugees

Members of the Asylum Seekers Sponsorship Project, who are spread across the country, have organized to find people willing to open their homes to refugees. When the group was formed in the spring of 2018, shortly after the massive demonstrations opposing separating migrant families at the border, including removing children and infants, they thought a few dozen people would come forward. Instead, 100 volunteers signed up the first two days, and now about 2,000 people have shown interest in hosting someone. The organization has so far placed asylum seekers with about 200 hosts.

The hosts house refugees, sometimes for a few days, sometimes for a year or more. They organize to pick people up from detention centers, serve as a means to reunite families, drive them to bus stations, house and feed their fellow human beings, with assistance from the various organizations involved. Said one host for a family of three, “I don’t know if I gave them more than what they gave me.”

“Every time the Trump administration lashes out at immigrants, at migrants, at asylum seekers, we see more Americans outraged for that, looking for ways to relieve,” said Heather Cronk, a core team member of the group who lives in the Washington area.

In another example, about 800 people quickly signed up to volunteer to host somebody shortly after the nationwide organization Freedom for Immigrants launched its sponsorship program last year, said Christina Fialho, co-founder and executive director of the group. Now nearly 2,000 people have

signed up, she said.

The group, based in California and with offices also in New York, Washington and Texas, says it has also collected \$1.1 million from donors to post bond and get more than 230 immigrants out of custody so that they can stay with hosts, friends or family. Immigrant Families Together is another organization that helps fund the various efforts.

Ken Cuccinelli, the acting head of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, told The Associated Press last week that there is a backlog of about 335,000 asylum cases and more than half of that is over two years old.

The process of becoming a host can be challenging. Not every host can communicate in Spanish, French or other languages, and the vetting process by some groups is rigorous. The international organization World Relief, for example, makes hosts go through a training process, background checks and in-home visits.

Many of the hosts are retirees. Said one, “It is humanity. You do it because it is the right thing to do.” In Los Angeles, Mila Marvizon and her husband responded to a social media request to host a youth who, according to his lawyer, could not get a bond unless he had a sponsor. “We had to prove we were American citizens, prove we were financially able to support someone and that we would make sure he gets to all official appointments, court dates, ICE appointments, everything else.”

Despite the difficulties from the state, and the challenges of learning new languages, hosts and refugees together are taking their stand to affirm their rights as human beings.

STUDENTS REPORT ON EXPERIENCE

Beyond La Frontera: What We Learned About Rural Immigration Raids This Summer

Nourelhoda Eidy, Ronnie Alvarez, and Madeline Simone

As three students who spent our summers learning about the health impacts of immigration work raids, we find it is necessary to reflect on the implications of Trump’s interior enforcement tactics. Our research is enabled by accounts of people either directly affected by raids or those who helped with responding to the crisis. We recognize that immigration raids are largely politicized, which is evidenced by the increased number of large-scale worksite raids since Trump was elected in 2016. As a research group in the public health sector, we aim to draw connections between the human rights violations that are raids to the health and social implications they have on mixed-status communities.

To begin, two types of raids are either worksite or in the comfort of your own home. ICE enforcement can take many forms—as they frequently collaborate with local police, sometimes including SWAT-like units with no-knock warrants. One tactic is that local police will station checkpoints

in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Latinx individuals and pull over cars. This tactic is highly driven by racial motives.

ICE often swarms facilities and/or homes in a hyper militarized fashion (with weaponry, and body armor), blockading all exits. In many cases, ICE has warrants for suspected drug activity or for employer arrests for exploitation of immigrant workers. These warrants serve as decoys because once inside the facility or home, ICE proceeds to racially profile all peoples perceived to be undocumented and arrests them. This is often referred to as “collateral arrests.”

Raids in worksites may result in hundreds of detainees. Once someone is detained, they are taken to a detention facility where they may not know the location. Due to being in an unknown location or location away from a major city, the process of obtaining legal representation takes even longer. Detainees are predominantly men who typically serve as the

main breadwinner for their families. Consequently, families take a financial hit. Not only is the main source of income gone, but now there are increased expenses with legal proceedings.

If the court allows a bond for a detainee, they are difficult to pay due to financial limitations. The legal process involving immigration cases is a lengthy endeavor due to a backed up system and the extensive wait for court dates. Because of this, detainees may opt for voluntary departure, in which they choose to be deported to their country of origin to avoid such an extensive and expensive legal process. In many accounts, voluntary departure of an undocumented parent leads their citizen children to also leave for the purpose of family unification. This moves us into a conversation on how immigration enforcement affects whole families and communities.

As we have seen in our research, the spillover effect of these raids on a community is tremendous. An individual does not have to be directly involved in an immigration raid to suffer the health consequences. Affected communities are not limited to undocumented individuals, but also include those who are citizens in mixed-status families, permanent residents, or DACAmented. Members of mixed-status families, for example, live with pending sense of dread knowing that a loved-one, or many, have been raided, detained, physically abused, or deported as a result of these events.

There is a common theme of people living in a state of constant fear moving forward. It is a constant fear of what will happen to detained loved ones, a fear of anyone else from their family or community being removed, and a fear of ICE coming back.

Individuals respond to immigration enforcement with lack of trust in police and other social institutions. Something as simple as walking a child to school or sitting in a public park is avoided for fear of any encounters with officials. Additionally, fewer students attend schools in the days following a raid, creating an educational disadvantage for these students. Likewise, a combination of individuals not seeking out health services and the stress endured from the aftermath of such an event, leads to poorer health.

This can be evidenced by a study in 2008 after a worksite raid in Postville, Iowa, which concluded that Latina mothers experienced an increase in rates of low birth weight (LBW) in comparison to white women after the raid, regardless of their citizenship status. These health consequences can be condensed, lifelong, and even cross-generational. Whether they're caused by the continuous fear of being detained, having limited access to healthcare, or plunging trust in government authority, these all contribute to an overall health crisis in immigrant communities.

Change is possible, and here is what we can do:

As a country, we need to take steps and create interventions that target various levels. As some politicians and groups continue to advocate for the goal of abolishing ICE, more immediate action is necessary and possible. On a national level,

it is clear there must be stronger accountability procedures and transparency in ICE actions. This includes transparency in the treatment of detainees and the quality of facilities. ICE actions should be explicit in their warrant, and collateral arrests should be forbidden.

On both a structural and social level, we need to move away from reinforcing and attributing terms with negative connotations to this community. When detainees are held by ICE, they receive what serves as a case number but is referred to as an "Alien Registration Number." The supposed leader of our country even refers to the drivers of our agricultural success as "illegal aliens." These terms erase the reality that undocumented immigrants have shaped this country for decades. Further, when we eliminate the usage of these words, we decriminalize immigration, and stop treating undocumented individuals as felons. We need to stop treating undocumented individuals as any different from the people who founded this country, or the waves of Irish and German immigrants who came to the United States to escape economic turmoil.

Our research has focused mainly on community level intervention and response. In the aftermath of the raids, we have studied, community organizations, including Iowa Welcomes Its Immigrant Neighbors (IowaWINS), have played an imperative role in working with different sectors, including legal services, teachers, religious leaders and Latinx/immigrant advocates, to provide a wide range of services. Organizations operate out of churches and create a system to bring families in and offer legal aid, therapists, day care, support for bond payments, etc. Additionally, they host educational workshops to spread knowledge of undocumented individuals' rights, make families aware of how to respond when ICE appears at your door, and create preparation response methods should another raid occur. Therefore, many organizations, such as IowaWINS and O'Neill Cares Coalition, set up food pantries in churches and reached out to neighboring religious institutions to provide monetary or material donations. Most importantly, they bring a community that has been inflicted with so much pain and is living in fear together to foster an environment of social resilience and support.

These are a few of the many ways that the country can work towards reducing health consequences related to unfair and unjust immigration enforcement practices. We need to build better relationships and give gratitude to a community that has contributed so much to this country's progress, rather than continuing to create a mythical enemy out of them. As three future health professionals and scholars, we reject the elitist definition of the American identity, and are ready to recreate a system of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness... FOR ALL.

(Nourelhoda Eidy is a senior studying Community and Global Public Health; Ronnie Alvarez is a junior studying Public Health Sciences with a minor in Chemistry; Madeline Simone is a senior studying Biology, Health, and Society with a minor in Spanish.)

What Trump's Asylum Ban Will Mean for the Thousands Waiting at the U.S.-Mexico Border

Sarah F. Rogerson, Albany Law School

The Trump administration's latest restrictive immigration policy, known as the asylum ban, was recently upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. The ban effectively ends asylum relief for the vast majority of refugees seeking it at the U.S.-Mexico border. It prevents individuals from applying for asylum in the United States if they could have pursued asylum in another country first.

There are a few exceptions: (1) if you lose your asylum claim in a third country, or (2) if you only passed through the few countries who are not parties to certain United Nations refugee conventions. None of these countries are located in Central America, through which the many refugees travel on their way to the U.S.

As a scholar of immigration law, I can state with authority that — unlike other policies — this particular move will likely result in the death, kidnapping and torture of individuals seeking safety from persecution and torture in their home countries.

Asylum-Seekers' Journeys

Asylum-seekers at the southern border come from all over the world, not only Central America.

Before I became a law professor, I worked as a staff attorney at Human Rights Initiative of North Texas, a legal services nonprofit in Dallas, Texas. The vast majority of our clients entered through the southern border. They were fleeing violence from every corner of the world: Egypt, Chad, Pakistan, Nepal — and yes, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, too.

Last summer, I led an effort to provide legal information regarding credible fear interviews to over 300 asylum-seekers transferred straight from the southern border to a county jail in Albany, New York. They came from 39 different countries and spoke 19 different languages.

To qualify for asylum in the U.S., an individual must show that they have suffered persecution or fear that they will suffer persecution in the future on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

Courts have interpreted membership in a particular social group to include claims involving persecution due to gender, sexual orientation, family affiliation and other types of persecution that the government cannot or will not prevent.

One of my former clients, a human rights worker from a country in Africa, narrowly escaped death after having been imprisoned and tortured by her own government. She swam across the Rio Grande to seek safety in the United States after catching a flight to Central America and making her perilous journey north. She was eight months pregnant. When she arrived in our office with her husband, also a refugee and also a client, she was days away from giving birth and in crippling distress. Months later, after giving birth, she and her husband, were granted asylum.

New Struggles Under the Ban

Under the asylum ban, individuals like my client are less likely to

survive. First, upon arriving at the border, asylees are subjected to another Trump-era policy implemented on January 25: the "remain in Mexico" policy, which requires them to wait in line in Mexico with thousands of other migrants. If they avoid the rape, beatings, kidnappings and ransom that have plagued those waiting in Mexico, a new fate awaits them. They might make it to the front of the line, only to be turned away under the new policies. Immigration judges presiding remotely over closed hearings from the U.S. can decide that an individual is required to seek asylum in one of the countries they passed through before arriving in Mexico.

Let us say that country is Guatemala, one of the countries that asylees traveling by land from anywhere in Central or South America must pass through in order to reach Mexico. The U.S. State Department indicates that Guatemala "remains among the most dangerous countries in the world," due to "endemic poverty, an abundance of weapons, a legacy of societal violence, and the presence of organized criminal gangs."

This small, troubled country now has a long line of asylum applications to process, which it is already ill-equipped to do. Guatemala's asylum system has been characterized by immigration experts as "embryonic." As of August 2, its four asylum officers had not resolved any of the 423 cases awaiting a decision.

Legal Challenges

Many of the over 10,000 migrants waiting at the border — whose numbers are growing daily — face similar dangers.

Earlier this month, the *Washington Post* reported on the kidnapping of a family of four awaiting their chance to seek asylum. That story cited a human rights report cataloging more than 110 cases of violent crimes against asylum-seekers waiting as a result of the "Remain in Mexico" policy, during observations of hearings at the border in June and July.

So far, lawsuits challenging this ban have failed. The most recent legal challenge, filed on September 16, is on behalf of more than 100 migrant mothers and children directly impacted by the asylum ban.

That lawsuit documents and challenges the inconsistent implementation of the policy. For example, the first step in articulating an asylum claim at the border is a process called a "credible fear interview." Under the asylum ban, individuals have not been provided legal orientation regarding the new processes for these interviews. Some have been subjected to multiple interviews over long periods of time. Meanwhile, untrained border patrol officers, rather than trained asylum officers, are now conducting the interviews.

As renewed legal challenges make their way through the courts, I fear that families will continue disappearing, violent attacks on refugees will increase, and the human toll will be irreversible.

ELECTIONS IN CANADA

MLPC Candidates Are Worker Politicians Who Fight for People's Empowerment

Voice of Revolution is reprinting articles from Renewal Update, the bulletin of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada (MLPC). Federal elections are underway in Canada and people there face many of the same problems confronted by all those here fighting for rights and favored by empowerment. The articles also provide an important example of how to conduct election campaigns in a manner that favors the people. For more materials visit cpcml.ca. (The Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada is the name under which the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) is registered with Elections Canada.)

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The Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada (MLPC) is pleased to announce that 50 candidates, 25 women and 25 men, have been officially confirmed by Elections Canada.

A video introducing the candidates and platform captures the striving of the workers, women, youth and students and Indigenous peoples to exercise control over the decisions that affect their lives. Their struggles include crucial questions of the direction of the economy and whom it serves, as well as matters related to all aspects of social and political life and well-being.

The MLPC pays first-rate attention to the work which organizes people to speak in their own name and provide society with a pro-social aim consistent with the needs of the times. It gives priority to the need for political renewal by calling for the abolition of privileges for the few and that the rights of all be provided with a guarantee. By pursuing what belongs to them by right, Canadians bring pertinent information to light and breach the wall of silence enforced by the monopoly-controlled media about the problems they face and how they think these problems can be solved in a manner that favors them and opens a path forward for society.

MLPC leader Anna Di Carlo points out, "The masses of people who participate in the strikes, lockouts, rallies, blockades, demonstrations and protests have mainstream demands which the



parties that form the cartel party system either do not recognize or pay lip service to in a cynical move for votes.

"The MLPC is the only party that calls on Canadians to use their own voice to discuss the world as is and unite people in action to provide the required solutions. The electioneering of the cartel parties will not resolve the crisis in which the liberal democratic institutions are mired. The internecine fighting within the ranks of the elites is sharper than ever. Rule by Decree can be expected from whichever party or coalition comes to power. This is why in this election and beyond, Marxist-Leninist Party candidates call on Canadians to take an active approach to democratic renewal by speaking in their own name. A vote for the Marxist-Leninists is a vote that recognizes the need for people's empowerment. Vote ML and empower yourself now!"

(Renewal Update, (RU) October 3, 2019)

Bringing in the New Against the Old Is a Necessity, Not a Choice

Normand Chouinard, MLPC candidate in La Prairie, Quebec

A lot is said about "choices" in this election: choice of candidates, choice of parties, choice of promises and so on. As workers we are told to make the choice which best accords with our own beliefs. This is said to be what democracy is all about. Economically, we are reduced to a category called consumers who have freedom of choice about what, where, when and how they consume. As citizens, we are said to be free because we are entitled to choose who will represent us. We have no say

over the direction of the economy or what is produced or who is chosen by parties which form a cartel party system and vie to form the next government or what they do and for whom, but we are free to choose.

In fact, the only choice for the workers is to speak about their concerns and reject the nonsense about choices that fills the air waves. Canada's working people do not need a privileged strata to govern over them and deprive them of any control over the

decisions which affect their lives.

The political space reserved for workers by the cartel parties is one of helplessness, hopelessness and humiliation. Workers are supposed to place their hopes and fate in someone who claims she or he will represent them once in power. Once in power, the party that forms the government does whatever the narrow private interests they serve tell them. Workers are then supposed to feel disappointed or even betrayed because “commitments” are broken. They are told that after the election their role will be to hold this or that government’s “feet to the fire.” Agreeing with these “choices” renders the working people passive or bitter or frustrated observers because they exercise no control over any of it.

What conclusion can workers draw from all of this? Are they to believe they have all these choices when in fact the choice imposed on them is a dictate to permit others to speak in their name? How this dictate prevails when nobody agrees with it is a serious issue facing all of us. It bears looking into. How does a privileged minority remain in power when the majority does

not support its rule? What role do elections play in maintaining that rule?

Working people do not agree with the direction of the economy, with the sell-out of our resources, with the way the natural environment is endangered, with how the national interest is defined and betrayed or that we are engaged in killing other peoples through sanctions and wars of aggression and occupation or with how decisions are taken. How then does this carry on and on and on? How can things be done differently so that we break with the past and no longer cohabit with the dictate that our duty is to choose one of the parties which form a cartel party system to keep the people out of power.

We can start changing things in a manner which favors our interests and those of Quebec and Canada itself by discussing things from a perspective which favors us, not the rich. We can intervene in these elections by finding ways and means to speak about our own concerns, in our own name. This will be a democratic thing to do.

(RU, September 16, 2019)

DISCUSSION OF THE MLPC PLATFORM

Education Is a Right!

Education is a right. This is pretty much accepted by everyone in today’s world but what does it mean? How is this right defined and how can it be enforced? One thing is for sure — defining and enforcing this right are a necessity. Without providing the coming generations with an education commensurate with the level required by societies and the world today, how can we possibly bring into being the kind of future we want?

But who decides what is needed by societies today? Who decides the content and funding of education? What forms of social, political and other culture are the youth imbued with through the education system? What about settling scores with the old conscience of society such as the cruel discrimination in the case of Indigenous children and families and the systemic racism they face? Or the discriminatory ways in which children from immigrant families and other backgrounds are treated or how the Canadian economy exploits international students as cash cows — to the tune of \$19 billion in the case of “visa students”? How does the education system assess and deal with the problems of adolescence and growing up and their many related matters?

Do these issues and how they are dealt with by governments at all levels support the educators, schools, communities, and most importantly the youth or are they used to divide us? Do they treat the youth as human beings with rights or just as categories of “things” to be targeted for reward or punishment and the consumption of “things” according to values nobody has

discussed and decided for themselves?

An education system is financed to educate and train youth according to the needs of an economy. When that economy is in the hands of a tiny financial oligarchy, which is self-serving to the extreme, the direction of the economy and the education

system is set according to the very narrow private aims of the oligarchs in control. How do we as educators and others concerned with education and the youth deal with this reality?

In the field of education, what governments see fit to provide is controlled by the narrow private aims of those who own and control the economy, and in particular the companies that produce and sell everything in the education market. This includes the necessary infrastructure, buildings, computers, furnishings,

textbooks and equipment of all kinds. But the tentacles of these private interests reach well beyond this to what kind of workers they want produced for their labor market. The control of these powerful private interests extends to the curriculum, programming, demands for research and importantly the aim of the education system itself.

The aim of those who direct the education system from the top is to serve the private interests of those in control of the economy, the financial oligarchy. The aim coming from the top means that the educators and youth are put under tremendous pressure to obey and fit into this anti-social atmosphere of serving narrow private interests and their market including their labor market.



They are forced to “fend for themselves” and “do whatever it takes” to secure a niche for themselves in the education system and labor market the financial oligarchs control.

However, try as they might, these narrow private interests do not and cannot control the people. Try as they might, they cannot force the educators and support workers, parents and students to agree with them and willingly succumb. This is their problem and society's great asset. While getting an education is a source of constant worry for the younger generations because of the cost and the dog-eat-dog, everyone-fend-for-themselves culture, many youth are defying this dictate in order to build a bright future for themselves. While the degeneration of the system of education is increasingly stressful for teachers, education workers, principals and parents; they are courageously and with tremendous dedication and determination finding ways and means to say No! to the cutbacks, privatization, dictate and imposition of unacceptable aims and conditions. Even administrators, who are hired and pressured by those who have their fingers in the education pie to run schools, colleges and universities like private businesses whose main aim is to make money for all and sundry, are speaking out despite threats of

job loss and other forms of reprisal.

This resistance, this refusal to give in, this spirit of saying No! when necessary, makes the unity in action among educators, support staff, students and parents life-giving and important. It makes the demands and claims of those who work and live in the field of education — educators, students, parents and others — life-giving and important.

The educators are professionals who have taken up a duty to society, to their students and to themselves. When they speak about their conditions of life and work and the problems in the field of education as a result of cutbacks and lack of funding or the self-seeking demands of the powerful private interests, their voices are worth more than gold. We should listen to them and support them when they fight to affirm their rights and speak in their own name.

We need a society that provides rights with a guarantee including the right to education because we need enlightened teachers, education workers, schools, colleges and universities to help raise our children and open a path forward for the progress of society.

(RU, September 20, 2019)

MAKE CANADA A ZONE FOR PEACE!

The Losses We Mourn on 9/11, the Challenges We Accept

The writ for the federal election was dropped on September 11, the 18th anniversary of the day the terrorist attacks took place on the Twin Towers in New York City, the Pentagon and elsewhere. Prime Minister Trudeau in his opening campaign speech mourned the loss of life on that day.

We too mourn the loss of life on that day, including the many Canadians. September 11 always brings to mind as well the lives lost on that horrific day in 1973, the opening shot of a sustained terrorist attack against the people of Chile, as a direct result of the fascist U.S.-inspired coup d'état. This attack was one of many the U.S. imperialists were engaged in during Operation Condor and their dirty wars in South and Central America and the Caribbean. We deeply mourn those who died in those wars defending freedom, democracy and their sovereignty from the military savagery and interference of the United States.

We mourn as well the loss of life since 9/11, 2001 as a result of U.S. revenge-seeking and desperation to extend its global hegemony. We, along with thousands of fellow Canadians, are deeply concerned with the loss of civil liberties, the Special Ops, torture sites and hundreds of thousands, even millions killed as a result of U.S. economic sanctions and wars of aggression and occupation with 9/11 used as a propaganda ploy. The likes of Justin Trudeau and Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland do not mourn or even recognize these losses; for in the name of national security and national interest, their government is

a war government in the service of U.S. crimes.

They also do not mourn the loss of the liberal democratic institutions, which at one time served a public good. On the contrary, in the name of those institutions they justify the use of the police powers that underlie the constitutions of what they call the western democracies. Those constitutions permit the imposition of a rule of law in contempt of a modern understanding of the purpose of law to serve the cause of justice. The rule of law and police powers based on those western constitutions are out of sync with the needs of the times. To use them to suppress the forward march of people and their claims on what belongs to them by right is reactionary and amoral, which makes those who govern today both anti-social and unfit to rule.

On this occasion, *Renewal Update* expresses its solidarity with the peoples of the United States and Chile who are striving to see justice served under today's conditions. We also extend our solidarity to the peoples of all the countries that have been and continue to be subjected to the destruction by U.S. and NATO forces, which include those of Canada.

We also express our full support for the people of Kashmir whose autonomy has been arbitrarily suspended by India with thousands imprisoned through the imposition of “black laws,” with their resources plundered and youth killed in the name of prosperity and security. The same government of India promotes “Brahmin supremacy” and incites hatred on every conceivable basis with impunity, yet nonetheless is called the world's largest

democracy.

None of the losses following 9/11 solicits the least regret on the part of the government of Canada or those seeking to form the next government in the election. Despite what they may say, September 11, 2001 was the beginning of a new round of state terrorism, anarchy and violence, as was September 11, 1973 for the peoples of Chile and elsewhere in South and Central America and the Caribbean. Since 2001, Canada has been fully integrated into the U.S. war machine and Homeland Security and its laws, with Canadians subject to the decision-making of the U.S. warmongers.

In the lead up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, U.S. President George Bush declared Saddam Hussein a Hitler and called anyone who opposed the invasion, an appeaser of Hitler. Life has revealed who are the real appeasers of war, aggression and national betrayal. No amount of campaign rhetoric will change that revealed fact of life.

On this occasion of the anniversary of 9/11, we salute all those who are fighting for peace, democracy and freedom in today's conditions. Let us together unite in defense of the rights of all and take up the challenges we face!

(RU, September 14, 2019)

The Truth of the Matter

An Ipsos poll released on September 5 says that 67 per cent of those surveyed believe that “Canada’s Economy is Rigged to Advantage the Rich and Powerful,” an increase of eight points since Ipsos last posed the question in 2016.

Sixty-one per cent of respondents agreed with the statement “Traditional Parties and Politicians Don’t Care About People Like Me.”

Prior to the release of this survey, on August 26, Simon Fraser University’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue reported on a 61-page study it conducted titled “State of Democracy and Appeal of Populism.” It said that a “solid majority [61 per cent] believe government puts establishment interests ahead of ordinary Canadians.” “Canadians believe that government is insensitive to what citizens think. A solid majority (70 per cent) say elected officials don’t care what ordinary Canadians think, and more than six-in-ten feel government ignores their interests in favor of the establishment,” the Wosk Centre for Dialogue reported.

These two investigations do not deplore the state of Canada’s democratic institutions and the fraud of holding elections between leaders and parties nobody trusts. Their alleged concern is to understand why Canadians are prone to populism! The Wosk

Centre study, funded in part by the Government of Canada, was begun in 2017, as part of a larger project to work “with governments and organizations across Canada to understand how different forms of democratic engagement can better serve residents to increase levels of democratic commitment and participation.” The Wosk Centre for Dialogue described the survey as one of the most comprehensive ever on the topic.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the parties which form the cartel party system are now running around the country each declaring they represent what Canadians stand for. It shows that this election promises to be a disgraceful spectacle which will not resolve any problems facing Canadians, let alone the crisis in which the democratic institutions are mired. It all makes the message the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada is giving on point — which is that Canadians are quite capable of speaking in their own name and are doing so more and more. The role the MLPC has given itself in this election is to encourage Canadians to speak in their own name and close their ears to the nonsense talk of those who call themselves leaders as well as the media and pundits. All of them decide “the issues” and then declare that we have a choice. Enough!

(RU, September 12, 2019)

GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION

Speaking About the Environment — What Is Relevant and What Is Not

To respond to questions received by readers on matters related to the environment, *Renewal Update* spoke to youth leading the climate strike in Quebec, Dr. Dougal MacDonald, MLPC spokesperson on matters related to the environment, TML Weekly journalist K.C. Adams, and Pierre Chénier, Secretary of the Workers’ Centre of the MLPC, on the topic: When Speaking about the Environment — What is Relevant and What is Not?

Renewal Update: We will start with the youth. Tell us about the actions you are organizing in Quebec for September 27.

Answer: We will be many many people, that is for sure. Actions are taking place in cities and towns all over Quebec. The

Montreal organizers are planning for some 350,000 people. In the Outaouais, which is western Quebec, we will cross the river to the Parliament and put the government of Canada on notice.

Renewal Update: What are the central demands?

Answer: Everyone speaks in their own name and puts their demands on their placards. They are there for all to see. Beyond that, we can say that as a collective we are quite clear that when it comes to matters related to the natural environment, the damage that is done every day is mainly the result of the pursuit of greed by the people in business and governments in their service. The science exists to have a sustainable world.



Global Climate Strike, Montreal, September 20, 2019

Many of us as individuals pay attention to being ecologically conscious in the way we live but damage to the environment is not the fault of individual behavior. We have no say when it comes to setting the direction of the economy or power to hold the polluters to account. This raises an important underlying issue – the need for people to sort out how to empower themselves because without that how do we guarantee the future for ourselves? It is a fantasy. The youth in their discussions are addressing who, where and how decisions are taken. The fact is that the huge demonstrations worldwide tell us something about what people power looks like and the youth are spearheading this. What the majority want cannot be denied. They just need to organize to get what they want!

Renewal Update: Indeed! Even as various forces try to lay claim to this movement of the youth, the demonstrations are proof of people power. Keeping the majority in check is a full-time job for those who are determined to perpetuate their stranglehold on the decision-making power. This brings us to the next question: When it comes to matters related to the environment, Canadians are being wooed by what is called a Green New Deal (GND). What does the MLPC think about this?

Dougal MacDonald: When looking at the GND, people must remind themselves that the crucial issue of safeguarding the natural environment must be taken up keeping in mind who controls the economy and the decision-making processes. Certainly, all investments must be made taking into account their impact on the environment and some are definitely more environmentally

friendly than others. However, so long as the discourse on these matters is not in the hands of the people, the outcome is not in their hands either.

In Canada, what protects the environment is the resistance of the people to pay-the-rich schemes and the theft and plunder of the land and resources. The Indigenous peoples' involvement to uphold their hereditary rights as the keepers of the land is fundamental, as are the initiatives of young people to build a bright future for themselves.

Everyone wants a healthy natural environment and the MLPC opposes all attempts to divide the ranks of the people on how it can be safeguarded.

K.C. Adams: I concur which is why I would like to begin with some observations about the Green New Deal (GND).

The GND is aspirational in overall tone. It seeks to carve a niche in climate change and Indigenous rights. It contains a broad basket of policy objectives and calls on the cartel parties and official politicians to implement the GND. The language is highly dramatic to the point of being melodramatic.

Renewal Update: Please elaborate what you mean by an aspirational document.

K.C. Adams: As an aspirational document it calls on the people to join together to pressure governments and the cartel parties and their political activists to combat climate change and bring Indigenous peoples into the mainstream of economic and political life. Most importantly, it signals a broader movement to bring the people into line behind the movement of the financial

oligarchs for green investment to gain acceptance within all the cartel parties. All indications lead to the conclusion that it is part of a public relations campaign of the financial oligarchy to open up new areas of investment opportunities for those who own and control social wealth. The public relations campaign is to create public acceptance of pay-the-rich schemes for private investment in alternate energy sources and affiliated sectors such as electric vehicles and green construction. This would also include public/private/partnerships in all the various sectors of what is broadly known as green investment. Who benefits from these public/private partnerships is an issue Canadians are tackling at this time because so far, in the name of high ideals, they have been massive pay-the-rich schemes which also serve to distract the attention of the workers from the fight for the respect of what belongs to them by right.

Green investment exists within a climate of disinvestment in the carbon fuel energy and use sectors or at least its downturn. Many big banks and other financial and insurance cartels and pension and investment funds now have selective and even restrictive policies regarding carbon investment. It is part of an internecine dogfight within the ranks of the ruling class.

Renewal Update: The main party pushing for investments in alternate energy and forms of transportation and other aspects of the green economy has been the Green Party while the Liberals and NDP vie to show that they too have green credentials. Can you comment.

Pierre Chénier: The perception of where the Liberals and NDP stand on matters related to the environment is tainted by deeds seen to be opportunist while the perception of what the Conservative Party stands for is also skewed by public relations campaigns which present it as a defender of jobs and the economy at the expense of the environment. The fact is that the workers have reason not to trust any of them because they all pander to special interests one way or another. Attempts to “balance the economy and the environment” or which pit one against the other are irrational. An economy and the environment in which it exists are parts of a whole. The relationship of parts to whole can be cognized and acted upon but the aim has to be pure.

The deeds of governments at different levels betray their hypocrisy as in the case of Trudeau’s purchase of the Trans Mountain Pipeline for \$4.5 billion to bail out Kinder Morgan and the Trudeau government’s betrayal of the aim of environmental assessment requirements and promises to restore nation-to-nation relations with the Indigenous peoples who are the keepers of the land, and so on. Not so long ago, after the Vancouver Island

federal by-election win for the Green Party, in response and seemingly in a panic to stop the rise of the Green Party, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh immediately withdrew his erstwhile support of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) \$40 billion globally controlled project in northern BC that relies on fracking for its natural gas. Many labor unions and the provincial NDP expressed anger with this sudden change of position. Yes, people are angry, unions were angry, but all of it hides that it is not the workers who control the stands which are taken by these parties, or by most of the unions for that matter. It

underscores that the main issue when it comes to the environment is who decides what is done and to be done? It reveals the need for people’s empowerment.

As for the Green Party, the BC Green Party forms part of the provincial minority government that supports the foreign LNG investment and is providing millions of dollars in pay-the-rich schemes to it.

K.C. Adams: The GND can be used to safeguard actual and potential carbon fuel investment by promoting what are called less carbon intense extractive measures in existing projects such as in the oil sands, and investments in carbon capture and “less carbon intense” carbon fuels such as natural gas. This has been a feature of the NDP/Green BC government promoting its involvement and pay-the-rich schemes for the \$40 billion LNG foreign investment in northern BC and the fracking for natural gas in the northeast as well as the building of the Site C dam and hydroelectric project. It may also signal renewed investments in nuclear power as a green source to power electric vehicles or driverless trucks which will become common soon on the transportation corridors which are being built. While we deliberate on investments in hydro power versus fossil fuels we cannot forget who sets the direction of the economy and who it serves. Workers in Quebec are fighting against Quebec hydro-power being given



away to international interests practically for free.

Renewal Update: What about the involvement of private deals said to be Indigenous?

Dougal MacDonald: The way ruling elites are pandering to the Indigenous peoples and Canadians by claiming they respect Indigenous rights is sickening. It has become fashionable to apologize for crimes of expropriation and genocide and then carry on business as usual. The Lubicon in Alberta experienced what it means for the federal government to have the power to create bands and dissolve bands according to who it can get to agree with it. This is how the band council system was established from the beginning when the Mohawk were expropriated. The demands of the First Nations for consultations are treated in the most perfunctory manner, with utter disrespect. A company can call itself Indigenous, be private or public – which means it trades on the stock market for private gain not that it serves what Canadians generally understand to be “the public” — it can be for profit or non profit, the issue still is who controls decision-making and who the decisions serve and how social responsibility is defined and enforced. This is the problem posed for solution in the 21st century.

K.C. Adams: The GND emphasis on Indigenous involvement appears to be an initiative to bring Indigenous leaders into the campaign for green and other investments, open up territories where they have a legal existence, blunt the resistance of the people and their demand for nation-to-nation arrangements, and bring them into the mainstream of joint investment possibilities under the control of the financial oligarchy. Three of the largest current real estate development projects in Vancouver are investments of the financial oligarchs on Indigenous First Nations urban territory they control outside the authority and bylaws of Vancouver City Council restricting height, density and other issues. Certain oligarchs are also keen to bring in Indigenous investors or partners to participate in the Trans Mountain Pipeline and other pipelines and projects.

As Dougal said, the GND shows that the crucial issue of safeguarding the natural environment must be taken up keeping in mind who controls the economy and the decision-making processes. When Canadians consider what investments are made, the MLPC calls on them to take into account their impact on both the social and natural environment. Some investments are definitely more environmentally friendly than others. However, attempts to establish what's what basically puts us into an irrational pursuit because even the information about the investments and who owns what is not public information. The definition of what it means to qualify as pro-social is not in the hands of Canadians. So long as the pertinent information on the matters in question is not in the hands of the people, the discourse and the outcome are not in their hands either.

In Canada, as is also the case in the United States, the role played by the resistance of the Indigenous peoples to their expropriation and attempts to extinguish their rights on their territories is what protects the environment. Their principled opposition to pay-the-rich schemes and the theft and plunder



of the land and resources and their fight for justice and for their hereditary rights to be given a guarantee with consequences are heroic and deserve everyone's support.

Pierre Chénier: The voice of the Indigenous peoples as the keepers of the land is fundamental, as are the initiatives of young people to build a bright future for themselves and so too the concrete support industrial workers provide when Indigenous peoples and young people are fighting. Workers of Indigenous nationalities make up the vanguard of the Canadian working class. In the construction sector, the iron workers are models in every respect. We are one class, one people and we need to establish one nation-building project which upholds the rights of all.

Recently, when the new Champlain Bridge was inaugurated in Montreal, construction workers took the lead and said, because of us a virtual plan was turned into reality. We worked twenty-four hours a day seven days a week for four and a half years, in forty below and forty above, they said. A Mohawk elder gave the bridge the Mohawk Guarantee and, within this, the crane operators and all others are upholding their safety concerns, showing how socially responsible they are. It was a matter of great pride for all of us.

Nobody is confused about the interests we hold in common but those who control the political power do everything to stereotype people — whether Indigenous peoples or Quebeckers or workers or everyone else. By creating this stereotype we are targeted in one way or another, criminalized if we do not go along with what is said to be good for us. We need to speak out against such things. Those who attempt to split the working class between this or that panacea, or get workers to attack the Indigenous peoples who are resisting should be opposed. Workers need to speak out against such things.

Renewal Update: What then are the politics of the GND?

K.C. Adams: To better grasp the politics of the GND and where it stands in relation to the important issues of the day, it is necessary to examine what is missing from its statements and website. The GND says nothing on the need for democratic renewal and for political empowerment of the people so that they can speak and act politically in their own name, resolve problems in ways that favor the people and open a path forward. The GND accepts the established political arrangement and electoral process designed to enforce the claim that elections provide the cartel parties with a mandate. It seeks to mobilize the people to put pressure on the cartel parties and hand over their authorship, their name, to others who claim to represent them. Under the current system, the vote means that others over whom we exercise no control are empowered to speak in our name. Many politicians speak in favor of the GND to give themselves credentials but the people do not control what they will or will not do.

For instance, GND also says nothing of the battle in defense of the rights of the people. In fact, it does not speak of rights at all. It has no comment on the anti-social offensive and how the financial oligarchy is using the period of the retreat of revolution to strengthen its overall control of the social wealth the working people produce and to attack the rights of the people in Canada and around the world and establish the global hegemony of U.S. imperialism. How does one defend the environment at a time nation-wrecking is the order of the day and people no longer exercise jurisdiction over their own land? The fight to protect the environment is really a nation-building endeavor on a new historical basis where the people are the decision-makers.

The GND says nothing on war, war preparations and the military-industrial complex of Canada and the U.S. within the U.S. imperialist system of states, not even with regard to their stupendous use of carbon fuels and effect on climate change. This is considered taboo, a divisive issue.

The GND says nothing of the constant U.S.-led attacks for regime change including the boycotts, blockades, threats of war and invasion, Special Forces operations and mercenaries active throughout the world to overthrow governments or destroy those states that U.S. imperialism cannot control. With the invasion of Libya the desert aquifers were destroyed. The military bases of the U.S. and other big powers create havoc on the lands and marine environments everywhere. Getting free rein to access the resources of the Amazon or Kashmir, Columbia, Venezuela, Cuba and other countries involves the commission of heinous crimes, including of clear-cutting which causes massive damage as do aggression and war. It does not bode well when these facts are MIA when speaking about what it takes today to defend the natural environment.

It is also relevant that the GND does not identify any social or political force that is blocking the change it says it wants to achieve. It does not identify any social class forces in Canada and what their positions are with regard to the economy and politics of the country and specifically the policy objectives of the GND.



A deliberation on the advisability of promoting the GND should keep all of this in mind. What is missing is very relevant to the deliberation.

Renewal Update: Not a few might respond to the observation of what the GND is missing by saying that to raise such issues is to be divisive. The aim, they say, is to unite everyone on what they hold in common, not what divides them. What do you say to that?

Dougal MacDonald: It is disingenuous. In fact, even the discussion on what the people hold in common is missing! This kind of argument merely seeks to cover up that the people have no role in discussing how issues pose themselves or in setting agenda. It is a feature of cartels and coalitions to be exclusionary. Those who see the need to discuss how things pose themselves tend to be called extremist and calls are made and actions taken to defame them and on this basis justify their exclusion. It is the new feature of the refusal of the ruling class to be political and instead get away with nation-wrecking.

Nobody wants to be exclusionary in this day and age so to accuse those who are raising the need to discuss of extremism and throw them into the same pot as ideological fanatics is as desperate as one can get.

K.C. Adams: By not identifying what social class force owns and controls the socialized economy and its direction, and effectively controls the politics of the country or lack hereof, what is hidden is who a program serves. Canadians need to identify the constant fights for control among members of the financial oligarchy and the authorities at different levels which vie to serve one side or the other or both at the same time. It is important for those who come under the influence of the GND to not permit themselves to become embroiled in the internecine battles of the competing private interests of the financial oligarchy, siding with one against another.

Pierre Chénier: The MLPC is a strong advocate for Canadians to speak their minds. The fight of those who call themselves environmentalists against being defamed as foreign agitators or terrorists is also important. They have the right to speak their minds, express their desires and agitate for what they think will provide solutions to the problems we face without being criminalized. By participating in organizing their peers and providing problems with solutions, people empower themselves. Headway can be made and is being made.

(Reference: <https://greennewdealcanada.ca/>)
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