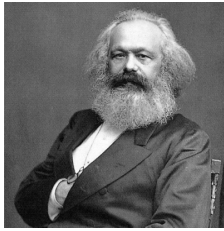


Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity



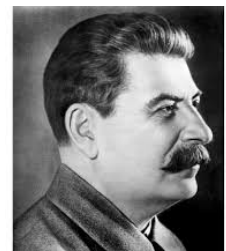
A Journal of Discussion and Debate



Vol. 5, No. 2

June, 2023

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To see the reasoning behind publication of TMLU, please see the article “Why ‘Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity’” in the first issue on the website below. Though we believe that a Party must have ideological unity, we include progressive articles from groups with varying views. Also, note that unsigned articles, as well as comments before articles, are mine (George Gruenthal).

Note that we reprint many articles without asking for permission. Clearly the authors are in no way responsible for other views in this publication.

Comments, criticisms and articles are welcome. The next issue of TMLU should appear in August 2023. Material should be sent in by the end of July.

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**Amendment to the editorial from the previous issue:
“The need for a broad journal of discussion and debate”**

After some brief discussions with a few leading Marxist-Leninists involved in some of the mass groups mentioned in the previous issue, I would like to suggest an amendment.

Basically, there is no reason that the format for the discussion has to be a journal, which would focus it on a more intellectual readership. The discussion could just as well be included in the pages of a newspaper. Such a paper, besides ideological discussion, should also contain articles on what Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?** called “burning questions” of interest to all workers, particularly advanced workers. This would be a good way of drawing workers into a scientific socialist understanding of the issues. It would also be an important way of combining theory and practice.

Currently, most of the mass groups either have no newspaper, or one that only appears irregularly, or is mainly confined to local news. They barely have any ideological content, and no debates.

The question of ideological debate is in no way to undermine democratic centralism. The Bolshevik party always allowed ideological discussion, until an issue was decided and concrete actions were needed to carry it out. (See the article by Lenin, “Freedom to Criticise and Unity of Action,” reprinted in *Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity*, Vol. 3, No. 5.) Take, for example, the question of socialism in one country. This was certainly an issue of theoretical importance, but it only became a practical question with the defeat of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919 and the crushing of the German soviets in the same year. At that point Soviet Russia had to decide whether to build up socialism in Russia while giving what aid they could to the international revolutionary movement, as Stalin proposed, or risk working-class state power in Soviet Russia through adventurous actions, as Trotsky proposed. It was only then that Trotsky was isolated and finally expelled from the Bolshevik party. (One should also note that *Iskra* under Lenin also published a letter from an economist (see Chapter I, Section C of *What Is To Be Done?*)).

Finally, I said that my proposed seven points of unity should be taken as a basis, not a free-for-all, so that if some person or group sent in an article, say, defending China as a socialist country, there should be an editorial reply.

Even within my proposed points of unity, there are plenty of questions that need discussion, for example “identity politics” and what it means. Each small group should not act as if it is fully grounded in Marxism-Leninism and that it alone has all the answers.

Once again, I request all readers to send in their comments and criticisms. I recognize the limited usefulness of a one-person journal and certainly do not see myself as the center of discussion; I am only trying to do what I can to push the Marxist-Leninist movement forward.

* This is not meant to revive the rather sterile debate of the 1970s about the “Iskra plan” or “Iskra principle” in what was then called the “party building” movement.

The Red Phoenix

The debt ceiling debate: An open attack on the working class

BY IAN OCX ON JUNE 3, 2023



Senate

Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., speaks to reporters after a hectic series of amendment votes and final passage on the big debt ceiling and budget cuts package, at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, June 1, 2023. (AP Photo / J. Scott Applewhite)

By Ian Ocax and Hari Kumar, Red Phoenix correspondents.

Late in the night June 1, 2023, Congress voted to pass an agreement on the debt ceiling to prevent the US government from defaulting on its national debt. This debate recurs frequently as the representatives of differing factions of the ruling class fight to preserve their advantages. As they do so it is the workers that end up being squeezed further. However, they reflect the factional struggles within the ruling class.

What is the “debt ceiling”? Like any organization, the government operates within a budget. If its previous outgoing payments exceed that, it risks “default” — being unable to pay its bill. These past bills were already previously approved by Congress. In recent years there have been an increasing number of such debates as priorities are set for future spending by the Senate and House. The national debt began to mount seriously with the First World War. According to Department of the Treasury data it escalated rapidly starting with the Reagan administration, that is, with the onset of the neoliberal era and the increasing domination of the financial wings of global capitalism. We have discussed this in detail elsewhere.

It is worth making two points. First the equation of a state with an individual household is ridiculously naive, as the more insightful bourgeois commentators, for example Paul Krugman, make clear. Individuals have an earning curve that declines after they hit a peak as they age. The same is far from true of governments who “normally see their revenues rise, generation after generation, as the economies they regulate and tax grow.” Governments do have to “service” the debt — pay off bits at a time. But the state does not have to pay it all off and can defer it to the future far more easily than an individual household. Krugman drives this point home with the example of the

debt incurred by England during the Napoleonic wars, which were deferred for decades and decades and to this day have not been totally repaid.

Secondly none of this is new. It is fundamental to capitalism. Marx wrote in Capital Volume III that:

“The only part of the so-called national wealth that actually enters into the collective possessions of modern peoples is their national debt. Hence, as a necessary consequence, the modern doctrine that a nation becomes the richer the more deeply it is in debt. Public credit becomes the credo of capital. And with the rise of national debt-making ... The public debt becomes one of the most powerful levers of primitive accumulation.”

That is why the debt ceiling is a matter of politics and not simple accounting. Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer even went so far as to say that with the reaching of this agreement, “America can breathe a sigh of relief.” The immediate next question is: who in American society can breathe a sigh of relief? Perhaps the bourgeoisie and their representatives in the government, but it will not be the American working class, who, without any proper national representation, lost the most in this debt ceiling agreement.

The agreement that was reached allocates a total of around \$1.5 trillion dollars that will be used to fund the government for the next year. The budget is broken down to show an \$886 billion military defense budget, but only allocates \$704 billion for non-defense spending. This in turn means that while the US military-industrial complex will encompass 60% of the budget once again, the American working class faces austerity measures in order to satisfy the needs of US imperialism. The current debt ceiling agreement also entails several expanded work requirements making it more difficult to receive and keep food stamps. This will also cut funding and limit the amount of credit families in the Needy Families program may receive, and student loan repayments will restart. This attack on working class families comes at a time when 34 million people in the US face hunger and food insecurity with 9 million children living in food insecure conditions, and while student loan forgiveness plans are being struggled for on a national level.

Discussions concerning the national debt ceiling are nothing new to the American worker and they reappear in bourgeois political circles and bourgeois media outlets regularly. Each time these debates and such agreements in Congress are reached, it is the American working class that is told to pay the price and “tighten their belts” so that the US does not default on its national debt. Each time the limit is raised to “keep the country functioning,” the bourgeois politicians decide that it is the workers whose social benefits are cut to make up for the past ventures and policies of the American bourgeoisie.

Debt ceiling debates turn into economic murder for the working class. While there is a new labor movement on the rise it lacks national leadership and representation. The bourgeoisie take advantage of the lack of organized power that the American working class is struggling to build, especially in order to cut the already limited working and social benefits that workers receive. Since the voices of the workers are silent in these debates it is all too easy for bourgeois politicians to simply cut the funds allocated to social benefits won by working class struggles in the US over the years. The results are then justified as necessary in order to keep the government functioning.

In essence, the debt ceiling debate and agreements reached act as a weapon of the ruling bourgeois class to strip workers of the already limited benefits that they are allowed, and as a defense mechanism for the bourgeoisie who see these debates as a time to secure their place, role, and status in American society by diminishing and attacking the lives of the working class.

The way forward for the American workers lies in the continued struggle to build an organized labor movement with a national leadership that forces the bourgeoisie to moderate its strategy of sucking dry what little benefits the workers have to pay for their system of oppression. The American working class is not represented by the reactionary bourgeois government. It has no stake in this government’s existence as a class. Simply put, the US government does not represent the interests of US workers; it represents the American bourgeois and its class interests. As such, it is not the American workers who should have to sacrifice to maintain the functionality of a government that does not represent them.

Below is a generally good article on the war in Sudan, exposing principally the US role in the country. But it glosses over Russia's role (though it does point out that it is aimed at keeping out the U.S.'s chief rivals, Russia and China). Even the website Russia Today points out that "Over the years, Wagner fighters have reportedly been involved in operations in Libya, Mali, Congo, Sudan and the Central African Republic, among others." The Wagner group is a private mercenary force supporting Russia's interest, similar to Academi, formerly known as Blackwater, which supports U.S. interests.*

The article also does not mention the noteworthy fact that the Sudanese Communist Party, which is playing a leading role in the popular movement opposing both generals, is a signatory to the "Urgent! Joint Statement of Communist and Workers' Parties, No to the imperialist war in Ukraine!"†, which condemned both the U.S./NATO and Russia for the war in Ukraine.

<https://unac.notowar.net/2023/05/03/sudan-popular-movement-responds-to-generals-war/>

Sudan/Popular Movement Responds to Generals' War

by **John Catalinotto**, published on *Workers World*, May 2, 2023

April 30 – Reports from Sudan's largest seaport, Port Sudan, located on the Red Sea, describe a chaotic scene of thousands of migrant workers and their families attempting to leave the country in order to escape a conflict between two military factions fighting for control of the government.

The corporate media in Europe and the United States confine their coverage to describing the suffering of civilians and the numbers killed. Their analysis is limited to dissecting the personalities of the two generals commanding the two opposing military forces: Gen. Abdelfattah al-Burhan, who commands the army, and his one-time ally and deputy, Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), who commands the Rapid Forces Militia.

These analyses omit the role of the major imperialist powers in the region and their local client states. Involved up to their necks are U.S. imperialism and its junior partner Britain, which was once the colonial power in Sudan, plus Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. While these states, known as "the quad," claim to be promoting negotiations to end the fighting, they all have economic and geopolitical interests in who runs Sudan.

The capitalist media also make sure to omit the very active role played in the last five years by popular civilian organizations, which represent the majority of the people of Sudan. It was this popular movement, in which Sudan's Communist Party played a leading role, that in 2018 deposed the military government which had run Sudan for decades. At the time, Washington maneuvered to keep the civilians out of power.

Economic and strategic interests

Even after its 2011 split into two countries – Sudan and South Sudan – Sudan alone is still the third-largest country in Africa by area and has a population of 48 million. Washington promoted the split, which left South Sudan occupying most of what had been Sudan's oil reserves. The U.S. aimed to control the south, especially to keep its oil from being traded with China.

Sudan has ample arable land and access to water and is the world's third-greatest producer of gold. Sudan borders on seven other African countries and its long coast on the Red Sea faces Saudi Arabia.

Washington, along with others in the quad, has staked out a position of promoting negotiations, taking advantage of the chaos and misery caused by the fighting. This position hides U.S. imperialism's interest in controlling the resources of Sudan and keeping any potential rivals out – especially Russia and China.



* <https://www.rt.com/russia/563519-prigozhin-credit-wagner-group/>

† <http://www.solidnet.org/article/Urgent-Joint-Statement-of-Communist-and-Workers-Parties-No-to-the-imperialist-war-in-Ukraine/>

Washington has been extending its intervention, first using its military to extract its diplomatic personnel from the embassy in Khartoum, Sudan's capital, and then arranging bus transport for some of the 18,000 U.S. citizens who were in Sudan on April 15 when the fighting broke out. While this has the appearance of rescuing civilians from a nasty war, it allows Washington to put its most powerful face forward: the military might of the Pentagon.

Popular movement issues joint statement

A united popular movement, which overthrew the military regime in 2018 and has opposed the new military coup that took over in October 2021, is continuing to mobilize, while faced with the bloodshed caused by the two warring armed forces. Here are excerpts from its April 19 statement, signed by 42 organizations:

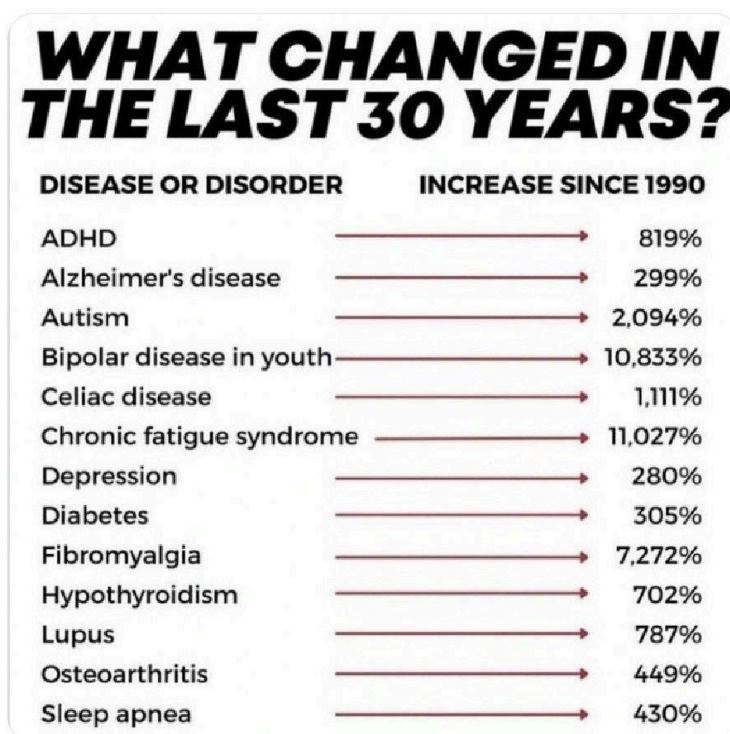
"We, in the resistance committees and democratic political, civil, and professional forces, hereby declare that our country has slid into the abyss of total war, in which generals use their weapons to eliminate everything in their path, and excessive violence has been used by the regime forces as a tool to settle the disputes and conflicts over power. This is contrary to the rules of democratic transition and peaceful power-sharing.

"Despite our differences in political views, we are completely united in our stance against the war and its continuation, and in our opposition to the return of the remnants of the previous regime to the political scene.

"We call for an immediate cessation of the war and the silencing of the clamor of guns, and we reject any results of the war, no matter what they may be. We emphasize the necessity of unity among the forces of the revolution in the face of the schemes of the remnants, those who are striving to regain control of the country, even if it means tearing it apart. We assure them that their efforts will fail, and they will never return to power, as the glorious December revolution is still alive and burning.

"In this regard, we intend to agree on a joint mechanism to monitor developments, coordinate positions, and confront anything that threatens the security and safety of our country and its citizens. We hold the warring parties fully responsible for any violation of human rights.

"We should mobilize to declare a comprehensive political strike and civil disobedience, which is the duty of the moment that we must all rally around, and not allow speeches of sedition, fragmentation, and hateful rhetoric to tear this country apart, and to undermine its unity, sovereignty, safety, and the dignity of its people." (menasolidaritynetwork.com)



Struggle-La Lucha “proves” China is not an imperialist power, by quoting *Foreign Policy* magazine!

<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2023/05/02/biden-nukes-korea-builds-anti-china-alliances/>

...China not an imperialist power

As Foreign Policy magazine noted recently, “China is not a superpower.” The report uses the term superpower to avoid the more direct and accurate phrase imperialist power, which the U.S. tries to deny.

“The United States is undoubtedly a superpower, with a worldwide network of alliance agreements and overseas bases enabling it to deploy and move forces rapidly between various theaters,” FP reports. “China, however, is only a regional power. It wields global economic power and influence, but the geographic reach of its military is largely limited to the Asian and Indo-Pacific theaters.”

The United States has direct and unhindered access to the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic oceans. China has limited access to the Pacific and is mostly hemmed in by major island chains it does not control.

Imperialist “gunboat diplomacy” requires boats, and airplanes need airfields to operate in far-flung regions. China has none of them, either.

China has only one overseas base — its naval facility in Djibouti, staffed with 400 Chinese marines.

While the U.S. Navy plows the world’s oceans daily, the Chinese navy conducts missions only in its own Indo-Pacific area.

A superpower means military and economic dominance over other countries, which China has never had. The U.S., in contrast, has hegemonic dominance over countries in every continent because no other state is in a position to challenge its dominance, FP concludes....

It would be better if Struggle La Lucha would refer to Lenin, who outlined five principal characteristics: “1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; 2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this “finance capital,” of a financial oligarchy; 3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; 4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist combines which share the world among themselves, and 5) territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed.” To see how this applies to China, please see “[Is China an Imperialist Country](#),” and my own article [The Class Nature of China Today](#), which updates the previous book with information on OBOR

UPS Teamsters Start Strike Authorization Vote

June 07, 2023 / Sean Orr and Elliot Lewis



Members of Teamsters Local 804 in New York City rally around their contract demands aimed at UPS. The national contract expires July 31. UPS Teamsters are voting on whether to authorize a strike this week. Photo: Matt Leichenger.

With the largest private sector labor contract in the United States set to expire on July 31 at midnight, the eyes of the American labor movement are on United Parcel Service (UPS) and the nearly 350,000 Teamsters who work there.

The Teamsters announced a UPS strike authorization vote starting this week, with results to be announced June 16. Union leaders are strongly urging a yes vote. "This is how we win," said Teamsters General President Sean O'Brien.

Our contract fight matters for the entire working class. We want workers everywhere—and especially at Amazon and FedEx—to see that organizing a union leads to better pay and working conditions and greater control over their working lives, and opens the door to a better world.

There's no better opportunity to show what we mean than a strike victory against UPS and Wall Street this summer.

SECOND-TIER DRIVERS

The roots of this fight go back decades. UPS jobs were once considered a yardstick of secure union jobs. Now 60 percent of the workforce is part-time, making around the minimum wage in many regions.

Drivers in many locations are forced to work six days a week and up to 14 hours a day with forced overtime. Managers follow drivers in personal vehicles and relentlessly harass workers to scare us into working faster.

In 2018, former Teamsters President James P. Hoffa forced a contract upon members despite a majority no vote. It kept part-time wages low and established a second-tier driver position, named "22.4" for the contract section that created it. Now new drivers make less money and get fewer overtime protections than existing drivers doing the same work.

The rank and file, organizing through the reform caucus Teamsters for a Democratic Union, fought these concessions the whole way. TDU activists organized a “vote no” campaign in 2013 and again in 2018 against concessionary contracts. Then in 2021, TDU led the charge to elect a coalition slate of reformers to the union’s top leadership, on a platform of fighting more aggressively to reverse these concessions.

Now UPS Teamsters are demanding a significant pay increase for part-timers to \$25 an hour, the elimination of 22.4’s two-tier wages for package car drivers, an end to forced sixth days of work, increased pension payouts for 60,000 workers so they’re more equal across the country, no driver-facing cameras, more holidays, and an end to subcontracting and the use of gig workers.

In the rank and file, expectations are high. If the two-tier wage structure for drivers is not eliminated on day one of this contract, it is a strike issue. If part-time workers do not get a significant pay increase, it is a strike issue. If all work days beyond the five-day work week are not totally voluntary, it is a strike issue.

Some of these demands are about regaining ground lost by past union administrations. But for many workers, especially those hired since the last contract, this is about fighting for more. UPSers kept the economy running throughout the Covid-19 pandemic without a penny of hazard pay, and we watched UPS make record profits off our backs while working forced overtime. Of course we now want our fair share.

There’s widespread support for these demands, and people are ready to fight for them. The rank and file will not accept a half deal, trade-offs, or “sharing the burden” with UPS.

WALL STREET MARCHING ORDERS

Seventy-two percent of UPS stocks are owned by Wall Street firms; the two largest shareholders are Vanguard Capital and BlackRock. These firms and others own big chunks of our economy, including not just UPS but also its main private competitors, including FedEx and the railroads.

What does Wall Street want out of the UPS contract? Steady and massive profits. From their perspective, UPS is one of the great success stories of the pandemic.

From 2012 to 2019, UPS yearly profits ranged from \$7.1 billion to \$8.2 billion. In 2020, when the rest of the economy was suffering, UPS still made over \$8.7 billion. Then the company reported the largest profits in its history: \$13.1 billion in 2021 and \$13.9 billion in 2022.

UPS will try to further increase these profits in the 2023 contract by asking for “flexibility” to schedule employees to work any of the seven days in a week, the installation of driver-facing cameras to further harass workers, and the continued use of gig workers to deliver packages.

The biggest impediment to Wall Street dictating terms for the entire logistics industry is the Teamsters’ UPS contract. Simply look to the competitors to see what corporations would do without a unionized counter-force: Amazon drivers are paid nearly minimum wage and get their hours cut next week if they do not meet inhumane production standards this week; FedEx is moving to eliminate all direct hires and switching to a 100 percent subcontractor model.

A two-week strike could cost UPS about \$3.2 billion. But more important, a strike at UPS would be the largest demonstration of working-class power seen yet in the post-Covid economy. Every worker could see that they have the power to win better conditions by collectively withholding their labor.

That result is what Wall Street fears the most.

STARTED A YEAR AGO

Our contract fight started nearly a year ago. Last August, we had contract kick-off rallies around the country. In the fall, we filled out contract surveys, affirming the popularity of ambitious demands. Over the winter, thousands of us stood at gates and in break rooms handing out Contract Unity Pledge Cards to build support for the major contract demands we're willing to strike over.

In the spring, we held Contract Action Team trainings around the country to map our workplaces, select picket captains, and develop organizing plans to engage our co-workers. And in the last month, rank-and-file TDU activists began petitioning at dozens of UPS "barns" to demand the company accept a higher national pension plan and raise part-time pay to \$25 an hour.

We're firm in our high expectations. We want to win the best contract in Teamster history—and if we have to, we'll be willing to hit the streets on August 1 to do it.

Sean Orr is a UPS package car driver and elected shop steward in Teamsters Local 705 in Chicago.

Elliot Lewis is a UPS package car driver and alternate shop steward in Teamsters Local 804 in New York City.

79. MATRIX DISASTER PROTOCOL MANUAL, 2021 ed.
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CHOOSING YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW



	Pfizer: \$4.7 billion in fines for false claims, drug and medical equipment safety violations, off-label promotion, corrupt practices, kickbacks, and bribery.
	Moderna: Has never brought a vaccine to market since its founding, despite fielding 9+ vaccine candidates, none of which made it through phase 3 clinical trials.
 Johnson & Johnson	Johnson & Johnson: Named in hundreds of thousands of lawsuits for toxic and/or dangerous products, including drugs, shampoos, medical equipment, and asbestos-contaminated baby powder.
	AstraZeneca: Suspended by two dozen European countries due to severe, lethal adverse reactions, like blood clots.



DON'T WORRY, YOU'RE IN SAFE HANDS!

If you're vaccinated, remember to wear a mask and socially distance because you can still spread COVID-19. Trust the Science™



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Coordinated with the
COVID-5G
MAP For more information

San Francisco/Protests demand justice for trans organizer Banko Brown

By **Judy Greenspan** posted on May 25, 2023

San Francisco

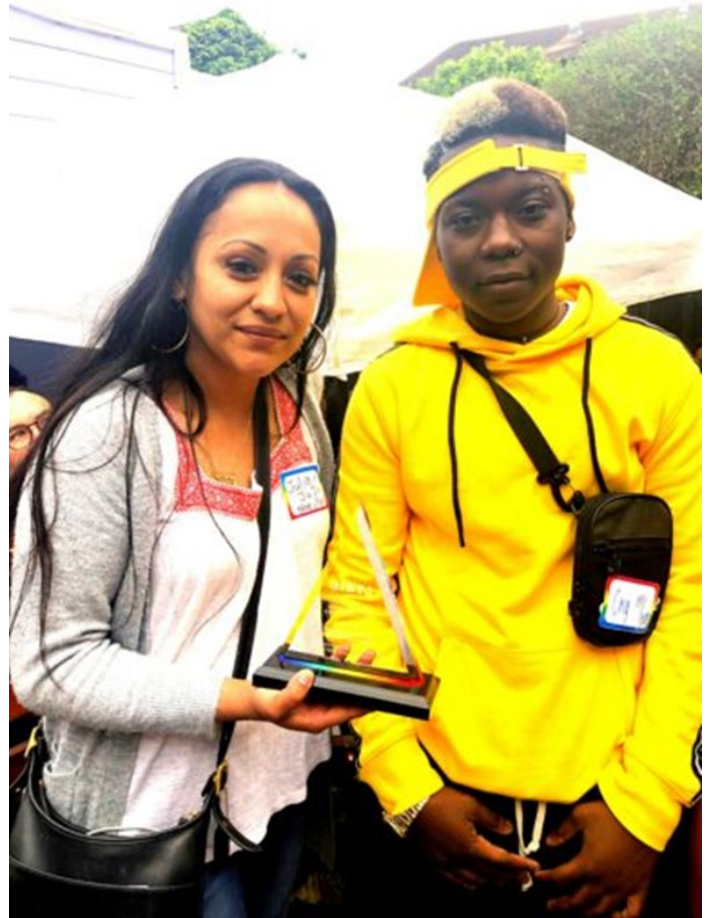
Despite the fact that recently released video footage clearly shows a Walgreens security guard tackling, beating up and then killing unarmed Black trans activist Banko Brown April 27, on busy Market Street in San Francisco, no charges will be filed. In fact, the San Francisco District Attorney's office released a statement after viewing the video calling the shooting "reasonable." (Guardian, May 15)

Since Brown's murder by the security guard, demonstrations have been organized in San Francisco and around California. Brown, 24 years old, was well-known in the local trans movement as an organizer who worked hard to support Black trans youth, despite his own recent struggles with homelessness.

Angered by Brown's murder and by San Francisco DA Brooke Jenkins' early release of the Walgreens security guard from custody (three days after the shooting), along with her announcement that no charges would be filed, community activists attended a San Francisco Board of Supervisors meeting. They spoke out and demanded accountability for Banko's murder.

DA Jenkins, who recently replaced former DA Chesa Boudin, ran on a law-and-order platform promising swift and severe punishment of shoplifters and others engaging in property crimes. Boudin was targeted in a right-wing recall, due to his unprecedented championing of the poor and his refusal to join the gentrifiers in filling the jails with poor people.

The Young Women's Freedom Center has been consistently outspoken in its demand for justice for Brown. On Twitter, in a recorded statement, Co-Executive Director Julia Arroyo said, "You can't take a Black life here. You can't take a Black trans life here. Now you have to answer to



Banko Brown with Young Women's Freedom Center Co-Executive Director Julia Arroyo. Credit: Young Women's Freedom Center

us!” She went on to say, “We won’t stop until we hold Walgreens and the City of San Francisco accountable.”

Brown was unarmed. The recently released video showed him being brutalized by Walgreens security guard Michael Earl-Wayne Anthony, thrown into the air and then, as Brown was backing away, shot by Anthony in the chest.

The fact that an unarmed Black trans person can be killed for an alleged crime of survival like shoplifting, and the guard who murdered him can go free is testimony to the incredible racist gentrification that has swept San Francisco. The city has declared war not on homelessness but on the homeless, the unhoused and the poor.

This ongoing racist war has clearly targeted the trans community, not only with the unprecedented rise of anti-trans legislation across the country, but with the recent brutal attacks and murders of trans people, including at least 11 this year so far.

Here in San Francisco, the home of the 1966 Compton Cafeteria Riots, a rebellion led by Black and Brown transgender youth and drag queens that set the stage for the Stonewall Rebellion in New York City in 1969, the LGBTQIA2S+ community and its allies will continue to expose and fightback against this upsurge of violence against the Black and Brown trans community.

Cartoon from Party of Labor of Iran for Assange



Excerpt from: <https://cindyseehan.substack.com/p/let-we-the-people-hear-the-recordings>



The Biden family's dealings with Burisma Holdings, a Ukrainian energy firm, have dominated headlines in recent years, with allegations of corruption, nepotism, and blackmail. As the scandal unfolds, it has prompted questions and concerns about the role of powerful political figures and their families, as well as the complex web of deceit that can shape global affairs. In this post, I'll try to share the key details of the Biden-Burisma saga, including the involvement of Joe Biden, Hunter Biden, and Brother Jim Biden, the allegations of bribes and extortion, and the impact on US-Ukraine relations and the larger political landscape.

To understand the Biden-Burisma scandal, it's important to start with the basics. Burisma Holdings is a Ukrainian natural gas company that was founded in 2002. It has faced numerous accusations of corruption, and its former owner (and former Ukrainian politician), Mykola Zlochevsky, was investigated for money laundering and other crimes. In 2014, the Ukrainian government launched an anti-corruption probe into Burisma, and this is where the Bidens come in. That same year, Hunter Biden, Joe Biden's son, was appointed to the board of Burisma.



Robert F. Kennedy Jr ✓

@RobertKennedyJr

Yesterday, President Biden announced Dr. Monica Bertagnolli as his intended nominee for Director of the NIH. Guess what? From 2015-2021, Bertagnolli received more than 116 grants from Pfizer, totaling \$290.8 million. This amount made up 89% of all her. research grants. #TheRevolvingDoor #Kennedy24

<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2023/05/06/harry-belafonte-problems-faced-by-people-of-color-are-as-dire-and-entrenched-as-they-were-half-a-century-ago/>

Harry Belafonte: problems faced by people of color are 'as dire and entrenched as they were half a century ago'

May 6, 2023 Gloria Verdieu

Harry Belafonte and Cuban President Fidel Castro.

Harry Belafonte's album "Calypso," which included Day-O (The Banana Boat Song) and Jamaica Farewell, reached the top of the Billboard album chart shortly after its release in 1956 and stayed there for 31 weeks. It was said to be the first album by a single artist to sell more than a million copies.

His voice stirred hearts, many wakened for the first time to the melodies and rhythms of Caribbean music. The charismatic artist soon became the first Black actor to achieve major success in Hollywood as a leading man.

Belafonte starred in the iconic 1954 movie "Carmen Jones" with Dorothy Dandridge.

His 1957 movie, "Island in the Sun," was a romantic drama that dealt with social inequality and racism on a British-ruled Caribbean Island. That movie challenged the racist policies followed by the film industry. A bill was introduced in the South Carolina legislature that would fine any theater showing the movie.

Almost as soon as Belafonte's meteoric career blossomed, it ran into the wall of racism – a barrier designed to stifle the voices and words of Black and Brown people, to erase images that evoke a dream of equality, justice, and love between people.

Belafonte refused to perform in the South from 1954 until 1961.

When he arrived in Atlanta to appear in a benefit concert for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1962, a popular restaurant refused to serve him.

During the 1960s, Belafonte felt that Hollywood was not interested in the socially conscious films he wanted to make, and in turn, he was not interested in the roles that cast racist stereotypes. He turned to television and his 1960 TV special "Tonight With Belafonte."

"The show begins with images of hard labor while Belafonte belts a viscous version of 'Bald Headed Woman.' The whole hour is just this sort of chilling: percussive work songs, big-bottomed gospel, moaning blues, dramatically spare sets that imply segregation and incarceration, the weather system that called herself Odetta. Belafonte never makes a direct speech about injustice. He trusts the songs and stagecraft to speak for themselves. Folks — Black folks, especially — will get it. It's their music," [writes Peter Keepnews](#) in the New York Times obituary.

The show won an Emmy, the first for a Black performer. However, after the first show, the contract was broken. According to Belafonte, the sponsor, Revlon, asked him not to feature Black and white performers together.

The taping of a 1968 special with director Petula Clark was interrupted when Clark touched Belafonte's arm. The sponsor, Chrysler-Plymouth, demanded a retake. Later they apologized. Belafonte reportedly said: "The apology came one hundred years too late."



Harold George Bellanfanti Jr. was born on March 1, 1927, in Harlem, N.Y. His father, a chef on merchant ships, was born in Martinique. He changed the family's name. His mother, Melvine (Love) Bellanfanti, born in Jamaica, took jobs as a housekeeper. She took her son to Jamaica, where he spent some of his childhood living with relatives.

Belafonte dropped out of high school in Manhattan in 1944 to enlist in the Navy. Black shipmates introduced him to the works of W.E.B. Du Bois and other African American authors and urged him to study Black history.

Returning to New York after his discharge, Belafonte became interested in acting and enrolled at the Dramatic Workshop, where his classmates included Marlon Brando and Tony Curtis.

His lifelong friendship with Sidney Poitier began when both worked at the American Negro Theater in Manhattan. His first job was working as a stagehand.

From early in their careers, Belafonte and Poitier witnessed the unrelenting persecution by the U.S. government of Paul Robeson, the legendary Black freedom fighter who sought to use his enormous artistic talent to fight against racism in the U.S. and Western colonialism in Africa.

In "My Song: A Memoir," Belafonte wrote: My whole life was an homage to Robeson. He recalled, "Paul Robeson had been my first great formative influence; you might say he gave me my backbone. Martin King was the second; he nourished my soul."

Like Robeson, Belafonte fought for freedom at home and overseas. Like Robeson, he was blacklisted during the McCarthy era.

Belafonte emerged from the Civil rights movement as a mover and shaker. During the 1963 Birmingham campaign, he bailed King out of the Birmingham, Alabama, jail and raised funds to release other civil rights protesters. He contributed to the 1961 Freedom Rides, supported voter registration drives, and helped to organize the 1963 March on Washington.

His New York City apartment often served as a headquarters for the Civil Rights Movement. Belafonte wrote that Dr. Martin Luther King "wrote the outline to his 1967 antiwar speech denouncing the Vietnam War in my apartment."

Belafonte described a trip with Sidney Poitier in Freedom Summer 1964 to deliver the desperately needed funds he had raised to the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in Greenwood, Mississippi. The Ku Klux Klan threatened them from the moment their small plane touched down.

Belafonte was a longtime critic of U.S. foreign policy. He made statements opposing the U.S. embargo on Cuba; praising Soviet peace initiatives; attacking the U.S. invasion of Grenada; praising the Abraham Lincoln Brigade; honoring Ethel and Julius Rosenberg; and praising Fidel Castro.

Belafonte was active in the anti-apartheid movement. He was a board member of the Trans Africa Forum and the Institute for Policy Studies. He helped organize a cultural boycott to end apartheid in South Africa.

In 2005, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez initiated a program to provide cheaper heating oil for poor people in the United States. Belafonte supported this initiative. He was quoted as saying during a meeting with Chávez, "No matter what the greatest tyrant in the world, the greatest terrorist in the world, George W. Bush says, we're here to tell you: Not hundreds, not thousands, but millions of the American people support your revolution."

The comment ignited a great deal of controversy. Hillary Clinton refused to acknowledge Belafonte's presence at an awards ceremony. AARP (American Association for Retired Persons), after naming him one of its 10 Impact Award honorees in 2006, released the statement: "AARP does not condone the manner and tone which he has chosen and finds his comments completely unacceptable."

Belafonte and Danny Glover met with Chávez in January 2006 when they led a delegation, including activist/professor Cornel West, to meet with the Venezuelan president.

When the people of St. Denis, France, named a street for U.S. political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal in May 2006, Harry Belafonte recorded a video message to be presented at the ceremony.

Speaking about Haiti in 2011 on Democracy Now, he noted that the U.S. has a pattern in looking at the devastation that takes place in regions where they have great interests. And they move in, first and foremost, to look at how to use the moment of distress to further those interests.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-qgfRsEnJY>

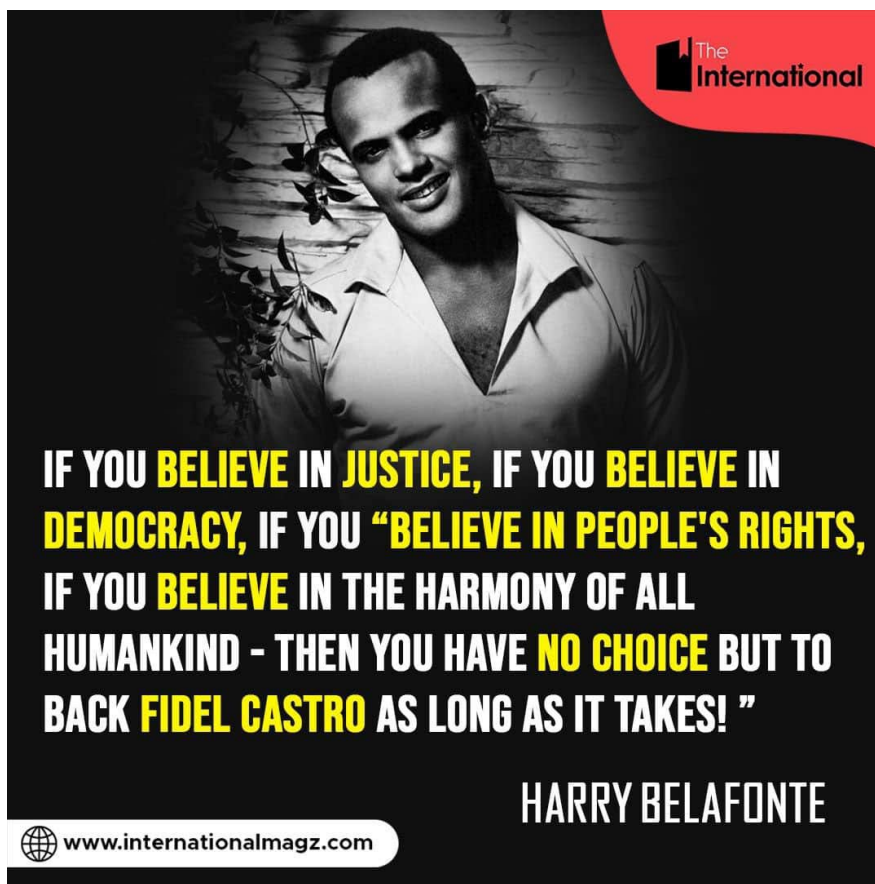
In 2013, Belafonte was named a grand marshal of the New York City Pride Parade alongside Edie Windsor and Earl Fowlkes. Windsor won a legal victory for the same-sex marriage rights. Earl Fowlke is the President/CEO of the Center for Black Equity (formerly the International Federation of Black Pride – IFBP).



Harry Belafonte wrote a New York Times opinion article in 2016 urging people not to vote for Donald J. Trump, whom he called feckless and immature, a film flam man. “What Langston Hughes so yearned for when he asked that America be America again was the realization of an age-old people’s struggle, not the vaporous fantasies of a petty tyrant. Mr. Trump asks us what we have to lose, and we must answer, only the dream, only everything.”

Harry Belafonte, born Harold George Bellanfanti Jr., joined the ancestors on April 25, 2023. He was 96 years old.

Lallan Schoenstein contributed to this article.



Two statements from the European meeting of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations. Translated from *Scintilla* num. 135, June 2023, at http://piattaformacomunista.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/scintilla_135_giugno_23_web.pdf

Let us fight for peace – Stop the War!

Below is the statement adopted by the European meeting of the ICMLPO, released on the eve of the summit of NATO foreign ministers that took place in Oslo on June 1. The summit focused on increasing military spending and the process of further extending this warmongering alliance to Sweden and Ukraine, with consequent risks of widening and escalating the war with Russia. It also gave the green light to the Ukrainian counteroffensive.

The demand for the withdrawal of our country from NATO, as well as from the "European Defense", is increasingly a fundamental issue for the development of a broad movement of struggle for peace, bread and work, against the current policy of war, misery and exploitation followed by the Italian bourgeoisie and its reactionary government.



Ukraine is the tragic victim of a brutal and reactionary war in which imperialist Russia and its Western imperialist rivals wish to subjugate the country and exploit its vast resources. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian and Russian soldiers and civilians have already lost their lives on battlefields and in cities.

The NATO foreign ministers will meet in Oslo on May 31 to discuss how to further prolong this war, massacre and devastation.

This is the primary objective of the United States and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. Otherwise, they could accept offers from different countries to facilitate peace negotiations. The US and NATO, on the other hand, openly reject this on behalf of Ukraine. They also insist that Russia must be defeated and that they will intervene in the war with more armaments and logistics "for as long as necessary."

It is a prolonged war waged in the interests of the ruling classes and their monopolies, which can intensify with the threat of tactical nuclear bombs, which expands its fronts from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The enormous economic and human costs are thrown onto the shoulders of the working class and the peoples.

The imperialists' claim to defend Ukraine is just as false as their proclamations about defending freedom, sovereignty and "liberal values." The peoples of the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya are well acquainted with these "values".

NATO is the problem, not the solution. It has never been an alliance for the defense of European countries. It is a war-mongering alliance established to safeguard US hegemony in Europe and to suppress any workers' movement that might threaten the ruling class.

The war propaganda on both sides is deafening. Although NATO's conventional military strength far exceeds Russia's, the war is used as a pretext for extreme militarization and rearmament of Europe. Defense budgets are being doubled and even tripled. Pretending that their military resources are scarce, the NATO countries themselves are sending tanks, missiles and finally fighter jets to Ukraine with their own "limited resources".

While police control and authoritarian politics are on the rise in all European countries, there is continuous propaganda to prepare the younger generation to become cannon fodder.

The European bourgeoisie allows the United States to use its territories for military activities and even for nuclear bases.

Ahead of the North Atlantic Council summit, the Norwegian government allowed the world's largest aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford to anchor outside the city of Oslo.

Similarly, Belarus is allowing Russia to deploy nuclear missiles on its territory.

Moreover, the European Union is redefining its imperialist ambitions and strategy. The military union is established to protect the interests of the imperialist European states and monopolies, to participate in the struggle for the re-division of the world.

In a mix of cooperation and rivalry, the German and French imperialists want to take advantage of this situation and dominate the EU and the smaller capitalist states. Above all, German imperialism is active in realizing its old plans to be the leading power in Europe.

It doesn't take imagination to figure out who is paying the price for war and the escalation of militarization. Ukrainian and Russian soldiers are paying with their lives at the front, while workers elsewhere in Europe are experiencing skyrocketing inflation, high interest rates, reduced real wages, limitations on democratic rights. Austerity policies are being imposed across Europe to support the massive spending on defense budgets.

The workers of our continent have nothing to gain and everything to lose from the anti-people and dangerous policy of war. Our main enemy is the bourgeoisie in our countries. The struggle for peace, against the shipment of arms and the growing involvement of our countries in this unjust war, against all warmongers is a central task in the current situation.

This struggle must be linked to the struggle for the increase in our wages, for the defense and improvement of working conditions, for public and decent pensions, health systems, education, as well as the fight against reaction and fascism in every country.

An immediate ceasefire and negotiations are the short-term solution in Ukraine. But only international class solidarity and the pressure of the peoples and workers of Europe can guarantee a just peace in the long run. The question of peace can never be left in the hands of imperialist governments!

Stop the war now!

We salute the rise of the workers' movement in Europe

In 2020, the crisis of capitalism with the Covid 19 pandemic shook the world economy. Millions of workers lost their jobs, all workers suffered heavy wage cuts and important sectors of the workers were forced to work in very bad and dangerous conditions. "Frontline" workers, especially women, were "celebrated," but had to struggle for some recognition through modest wage increases. The bosses used this period to increase exploitation, impose social setbacks, in the name of "bailing out" the economy, and received billions in public money.



Once the pandemic was over, the bosses and governments called for a general mobilization to boost the economy. This has meant increased profits and super-exploitation. Inflation began to rise, lowering real wages.

The workers' resistance began to organize, at different levels, step by step; The need for higher wages was widespread. The invasion of Ukraine greatly aggravated the conflicts and rivalries between Russian and Western imperialism. Oil, gas and food prices have skyrocketed, making the workers and the masses pay the consequences of this reactionary war. Sanctions and militarization have brought inflation to high levels, causing a brutal impoverishment of the workers and peoples.

"Our time is now!"

In all countries, demands for higher wages and better working conditions have begun to grow: mobilizations, strikes, demonstrations, have increasingly become the way to impose them on the bosses. It is a trend, with different levels and rhythms, that can be seen in all countries; The class struggle, the strength of the workers when they struggle together, the importance of the working class, have imposed themselves more and more.

Let us give some examples

In **Germany**, a wave of powerful mobilizations, strikes unseen for decades, has developed in many sectors, with concrete demands that have gone higher than before. There was a "new spirit" among the workers, more determination to win and a general feeling of support for those engaged in the struggle: the workers of health care, education, public transport experienced this, as the government and the bosses could not mobilize other sectors against the strikers. The reformist trade union leaders had to take this situation into account, they were forced into more radical demagoguery and even prolonged strikes. The bosses, trade union leaders and the coalition government have reached a compromise in order to stop the wave of strikes, with an increase in wages, well below official inflation. A new generation of worker activists has been formed in this struggle, gaining more confidence in themselves and in the strength of the workers. It is obvious that other struggles will follow.

In **Italy**, the far-right government at the service of big capital has launched a brutal attack against the working class, the poor, migrants. The labor market has been more liberalized and more precarious, social assistance has been blocked, the minimum wage has been removed from the agenda, special protection of migrants has been abolished. Under these conditions, the struggle for better working conditions, to increase wages and stop layoffs is developing: for example, in the Stellantis and Arcelor Mittal plants, in the logistics, transport, health care and social sectors, while the exemplary struggle led by the GKN workers' collective continues.

In **Norway**, the bourgeoisie and the big monopolies are the "profiteers of the war", mainly because of the high gas prices. Thus, the real income of the workers has fallen over the last three years. After four days of trade union action in the private sector, involving 25,000 workers, in April the reformist leadership of the trade union confederation negotiated a wage compromise that compensates for inflation for only a minority. However, the workers have experienced their strength and ability to repel attacks on their living and working conditions.

In **Spain**, inflation is 7.5%, unemployment is 13.1% (among young people it is 29.26%) and 28% of the population lives below the poverty line. Two large demonstrations with hundreds of thousands of participants were held in support of the public health system, organized by local initiatives. Sectors of workers (cleaning, hostels, etc.) who had little contact with the unions, entered the struggle, trying to coordinate their battle. On the agenda is the need to organize opposition to the project of privatization of the public sector. With the recent local elections and the anticipation of the general elections, the political landscape is unstable and right-wing parties are threatening to come to power.

In **Denmark**, where the profits of the big monopolies are high, the workers' expectations for real wage increases in national negotiations were high. Instead, the bosses and trade union leaders entered into an agreement with little real increase and left it to local negotiations to achieve something more, hindering the strength of the collective struggle of the class. Some workers are beginning to take charge of the struggle for higher wages, while the bosses reject this. The issue of "social dumping" and super-exploitation, especially of migrant workers, is an important issue for the workers who are fighting and strengthening their solidarity. The government also decided to turn a public holiday into a working day, in order to finance the increase in military spending, which provoked a large demonstration and protest.

In **Turkey**, presidential and parliamentary elections dominated the political scene. They have concealed the dramatic 100% inflation in the first four months of 2023, and all the big problems that the workers and peoples are facing, such as the earthquake. In Turkey, where 60.4% of the population lives below the hunger line and 87% below the poverty line, where the Central Bank's assets have gone negative, where it is inevitable that the restrictive monetary policy that will be followed by the government will cause an explosion in unemployment, it is inevitable that all these problems will be on the agenda again after the elections while the country will no longer have the same conditions of yesterday's policies.

France: "No to 64 years"

The powerful movement of demonstrations (so far 13 of them, including May Day) and strikes that began in January 2023, against the reform of the pension system, has mobilized millions of workers, young people, women, etc. The

movement rallied around the concrete demand: "No to 64 years", which was supported by a broad coalition of the main trade unions, youth organizations, with the support of a wide range of associations, left-wing political parties, etc. This movement is also a continuation of previous movements against anti-worker and anti-people reforms and is taking place in the context of a wave of strikes for higher wages, which began in 2019. The pension counter-reform has led to the common sentiment: "Enough is enough, this time it is no", "No to exploitation, no to working to the grave".

This movement has many aspects that, taken together, have constituted its strength, its determination, expressed by the slogan "We are not giving up". At the forefront of this struggle is the working class that has participated in all the cities, in the production centers of the whole country, etc. It has attracted large sectors of the workers and the masses, and even today 90% of the workers are against that reform, even though the government imposed it. The way in which it imposed the reform, using all the tricks of the Constitution – many of them completely unknown to the masses – using provocations and police repression, increased the determination of the workers and the youth.

The movement failed to block the economy, even though important sectors were engaged in continuous strikes. But the blockade of the economy is an important factor in the necessary balance of power to make the government retreat. This is a lesson that many workers have in mind today.

The general feeling is the satisfaction of having demonstrated the strength of the workers' movement, its ability to unite around concrete demands. There are many lessons to share and discuss; There is a growing awareness that it is the whole system, the imperialist capitalist system, that is the main obstacle to be overcome. That movement was followed with great sympathy internationally. It stimulated the workers, the militants and animated them in the idea "yes, it is possible for the workers to fight, unite, take the initiative" against capital and its system.

Some conclusions

The serious consequences of the policy adopted in the pandemic to impoverish the workers and peoples, inflation and the enormous costs of the war in Ukraine, have led to an awakening of the workers' movement in Europe at different levels, going in the same direction with similar demands.

The workers and peoples are at a turning point, as they can no longer bear the constant attacks of the capitalists and their states. In this struggle, the consciousness of the workers has grown and their self-confidence has increased.

Forced by the growing attacks of capital and the growing inability of the system to meet the needs and expectations of the workers and popular masses, the struggle will develop and intensify in the coming period.

It is our duty to develop class consciousness, to combat the reformist influence promoted by reformist and opportunist forces, to point the way, to strengthen unity and to direct the struggle against the entire capitalist system.

Capitalism is destroying our lives: this system is not ours, we must fight it!

Only socialism, a new and better society without exploitation of the workers, can solve the problems in favor of the working class, the broad masses and the peoples.

France, May 2023

European Meeting of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations (ICMLPO)

Communist Party of the Workers of Denmark – APK

Communist Party of the Workers France – PCOF

Organization for the Construction of a Communist Workers' Party of Germany (Work Future)

Communist Platform – for the Communist Party of the Proletariat of Italy

Marxist-Leninist Group Revolusjon – Norway

Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist) – PCEML

Party of Labor (EMEP) – Turkey

Editorial

The people have only one electoral choice

There are eight presidential-vice presidential pairs who will take part in the presidential elections on August 20, but that does not mean that the workers and the people have eight alternatives: they only have one, the Yaku Pérez-Nory Pineda pair, presented by the alliance "Claro que se puede" ("We surely can"), made up of Popular Unity (list 2), the Socialist Party (list 17), Democracy Yes (list 20), Somos Agua (We are Water) and has the support of other political organizations and forces.

The camp of the democratic and leftist forces, the popular camp, has presented a single presidential choice (Pérez-Pineda) and single candidacies throughout the country for the National Assembly, lists 2-17-20. There is no precedent for a similar situation since the country returned to the constitutional system at the end of the 1970s, because on the few occasions that a single presidential candidate of the popular bloc has stood out, it was dispersed in the legislature.

The bourgeois press also presents the pro-Correa forces as leftists, but they are not. Correa and his gang represent the economic and political interests of a bourgeois faction, which is the one that benefited the most during the decade in which they were government, they also represent the interests of foreign capital, particularly Chinese capital. At the end of the Correa decade, all the official statistics showed how the income of the bank grew, how new powerful business groups emerged and grew; Correa's administration—in the institutional sphere—was aimed at modernizing and strengthening the capitalist State, for a better exercise of political-social control by the bourgeoisie and to facilitate capitalist accumulation. It also created a legal framework to facilitate corruption, the theft of State resources and guarantee impunity. One cannot be on the left, or represent the workers and the people, when one benefits the bourgeoisie, imperialist financial capital and when the bourgeois state is strengthened.

The rest of the candidacies are more easily identified with the political right, with business groups, which shows a division in this sector. But this does not mean that the people will automatically identify with the "Claro que se puede" project. The capacity of the bourgeoisie to deceive the people is great, the political limitations of the people are also evident; combined this creates the breeding ground from which bourgeois candidates are claimed to be saviors of the people.

That the popular bloc has only one presidential candidacy is a very important circumstance, but it is not everything. We must develop an intense campaign to win over the masses; we must travel the country with our message: we must fight for each vote.



To defend the Yasuní, vote Yes

The resources generated by the oil exploitation of the Yasuní can be compensated for with various proposed alternatives.

An intense campaign has been launched against the referendum proposed by the Yasuni-supporters who seek to prevent the oil from that area from being extracted. The main argument is that there is no money to make up for what will not be received.

These amounts can certainly be offset by the adequate collection of taxes evaded by about \$7 billion each year, or by reducing fiscal spending, which mainly benefits the big economic groups that also exceed \$6 billion annually. Also by making a real fight against corruption that takes up 20% of the state budget.

The government maintains that oil production in the area provides important resources to the national treasury. But that is not true. The difference starts with the cost of exploitation, which the government says amounts to US \$15.31 per barrel, while others say that it is US \$50 per barrel; this is more credible since the quality of the Yasuní oil is low and therefore more expensive to extract and transport. On June 11, 2023, according to reports from Petroecuador, 55,394 barrels were extracted and sold at US \$71.12 per barrel, leaving a daily gross profit of US \$1,169,921, although the government says it is US \$3,091,539.

So, per year the income would be between US \$427 million according to our calculations and US \$1.2 billion according to the government, less than 3% of the General State Budget, in any case it could be replaced by the proposed alternatives.

The country must evaluate the importance for the biodiversity of Ecuador and the world, that Yasuní is one of the areas with the greatest biodiversity on the planet, against the possibility of exploiting oil and damaging this biodiversity. Even more so in time, like the present, when there is talk of other energy sources to replace those that produce waste such as carbon, one of the causes of global warming. Therefore, a national debate should take place about the use of wind and solar energy to replace fuels for cars, gas stoves, to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and exchange them for other alternatives. In the medium and long term, these decisions would benefit the national treasury and the environment, although the large pockets of some would remain empty.

Colombia

Mobilizations in support of Petro

Almost a year after Gustavo Petro's victory in Colombia, the reactionary and right-wing sectors, together with various media, have carried out a campaign to discredit and wear down the government that won the elections with a democratic and popular program.

Petro embodies a democratic, progressive, patriotic and anti-neoliberal project, which seeks to democratize the country within the framework of capitalist relations of production. It would be a mistake to believe that these proposed changes would end exploitation and exclusion. However, the Colombian bourgeoisie is not willing even to accept these transformations because, since he took possession of the Casa de Nariño [Colombia's presidential residence], a campaign was unleashed against him and his vice president, Francia Márquez.

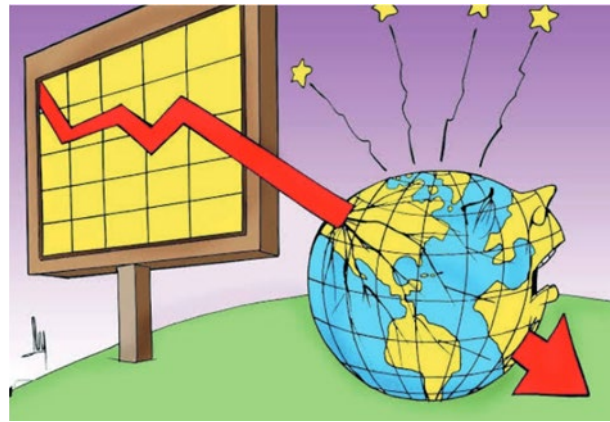
In this almost one year of government of the Historic Pact, there have been a series of errors that show the limits of the project, the lack of making the campaign proposals concrete and the denunciations of corruption in the circle around the President. These problems have been used by the pro-Uribe [former reactionary president] right to strike the regime and its program, who have hardened their offensive to prevent the discussion in Parliament of the reforms in health, labor relations and pensions.

Social and popular organizations took over Bogotá and other departmental capitals to support the labor reform and demand that Parliament approve it, which means in fact support for the program of the Pact. The right wing and the media are trying to minimize this action and question the intervention of Petro, who, while denouncing the existence of a "soft coup" as in Peru, pointed out that "there are people who have not yet understood what the popular decision at the polling stations last year means; they believe that it was simply a fad, a passing fever, a delirium that has passed and that left a president abandoned in his presidential palace. Well today we say very clearly, this was not the case".

It is necessary for the Colombian government to comply with the promises established in the Historic Pact, to disarm the neoliberal scaffolding in favor of the popular sectors; only this way can it strengthen its popular support and isolate the pro-Uribe right. The guarantee for the popular masses to defend this program will be the fulfillment of their promises.

Some elements on the world economy

The European Central Bank (ECB) acknowledges that inflation continues to rise and the Euro Zone economy is weak. Therefore, it has been "forced" to increase its official interest rate for the eighth consecutive time by 25 basis points to 4%, its highest level in 22 years. Its objective is to lower inflation to 2% and maintain it like this until 2025. It has reached 6.1% in recent days, reported Lagarde, the director of the IMF. He blamed salary increases as the cause of this, as the bourgeoisie has always done in order to keep wages low. Unemployment "is at an all-time low and with wage increases even though these are lagging behind inflation."



According to the same source, inflation has subsided, but it will remain high for a long time. However, the "technical recession" in Germany led to the same situation in the Euro Zone (the GDP fell 0.1% in the first quarter of the year); according to Eurostat, despite this situation, the economy will grow a little.

On the other hand, but in the same economic context, a large part of US financial capital acknowledges that the world economy is de-dollarizing, currency trading is below all-time highs (88%) and international reserves "have been lowering their share" and have reached a record low (51%) in the banks' foreign exchange reserves. This drop has occurred beginning with the 2007-2008 crisis, which is why the economies have developed a diversification of currencies and other assets such as gold. This will lower world reserves for at least the next five years, according to the report of the World Gold Council. Added to these are the actions of the economies of China, Russia, Iran and India, which have stopped using the dollar for their economic transactions.

"The attractiveness of gold increased due to the fall of the dollar, after learning that the number of vacant jobs in the United States fell in February to its lowest level in almost two years, while factory orders also fell," financial spokespersons acknowledged.

Another element in this critical economic situation is the recent financial crisis of the Silicon Valley Bank, First Republic and Credit Suisse banks, which according to their representatives have launched risk reassessments. They state that "the banking system is solid and that many banks increased their cash holdings and borrowing capacity to protect themselves from depositor withdrawals." However, other financial sectors recognize that the recent banking crisis could be "systemic," since for years these episodes have been repeated and above all because they have been filled with "uninsured deposits" to reactivate them. This makes them more vulnerable to changes in monetary policy and financial conditions that are being created.

It is clear that the critical world economic situation can explode into a new crisis at any moment and it is not due to mismanagement, corruption or chance events, but rather due to the very nature of capitalism that has exhausted itself and does not give any more.

¡Saludamos el ascenso del movimiento obrero en Europa!

Comunicado de la sección europea de la CIPOML

En 2020, la crisis del capitalismo agravada con la pandemia del Covid 19, sacudió la economía mundial. Millones de trabajadores han perdido sus trabajos, todos los trabajadores han sufrido severos recortes salariales y sectores significativos de trabajadores se han visto obligados a trabajar en condiciones terribles y peligrosas. Los trabajadores de “primera línea”, especialmente las mujeres, fueron “célebres”, pero tuvieron que luchar por algún reconocimiento a través de modestos aumentos salariales. Los patrones utilizaron este período pandémico para aumentar la explotación, imponer recortes sociales, en nombre de “salvar” la economía, y recibieron miles de millones de dinero público.

Una vez superada la pandemia, los patrones y gobiernos han reprimido la movilización general para darle un empujón a la economía. Esto ha significado mayores ganancias y superexplotación. La inflación ha comenzado a aumentar, reduciendo los salarios reales.

La resistencia obrera comenzó a organizarse, en diferentes niveles, paso a paso; la necesidad de salarios más altos era generalizada. La invasión de Ucrania ha agravado enormemente los conflictos y rivalidades entre el imperialismo ruso y occidental. Los precios del petróleo, el gas y los alimentos se han disparado, haciendo que los trabajadores y las amplias masas paguen las consecuencias de esta guerra reaccionaria. Las sanciones y la militarización han llevado la inflación a niveles elevados, provocando un empobrecimiento brutal de los trabajadores y los pueblos.

¡Ahora es nuestro momento!

En todos los países han comenzado a crecer las demandas por mayores salarios y mejores condiciones de trabajo: movilizaciones, huelgas, manifestaciones se han convertido cada vez más en la forma de imponerlas a los patrones. Es una tendencia, con diferentes niveles y ritmos, que se puede ver en todos los países; la lucha de clases, la fuerza de los trabajadores cuando luchan juntos, la importancia de la clase obrera, se han afirmado cada vez más.

Demos algunos ejemplos

En **Alemania**, una ola de poderosas movilizaciones, huelgas, no vistas en décadas, se ha desarrollado en muchos sectores, con demandas concretas más altas que antes. Un “nuevo espíritu” se ha manifestado entre los trabajadores, más determinación de ganar y un sentimiento general de apoyo a los que están en la lucha: los trabajadores de la salud, la educación, el transporte público han experimentado esto, ya que el gobierno y la patronal no pudieron movilizar otros sectores contra los huelguistas. Los dirigentes sindicales reformistas tuvieron que tener en cuenta esta situación, se vieron obligados a una demagogia más radical e incluso a prolongar sus huelgas. Los patrones, los líderes sindicales y el gobierno de coalición han llegado a un compromiso, para detener la ola de huelgas, con un aumento de salarios, muy por debajo de la inflación oficial. En esta lucha se ha formado una nueva generación de trabajadores activistas, ganando más confianza en sí mismos y en la fuerza de los trabajadores. Es obvio que seguirán más peleas.

En **Italia**, el gobierno de extrema derecha al servicio del gran capital ha lanzado un ataque brutal contra la clase trabajadora, los pobres, los inmigrantes. Se ha liberalizado y precarizado el mercado laboral, se han bloqueado las ayudas sociales, se ha eliminado de la agenda el salario mínimo, se ha suprimido la protección especial a los migrantes. En estas condiciones se desarrolla la lucha por mejores condiciones de trabajo, por aumentar los salarios y frenar los despidos: por ejemplo en las plantas de Stellantis y Arcelor Mittal, en los sectores de logística, transporte, salud y asistencial, mientras continúa la lucha ejemplar liderada por el Colectivo de Trabajadores GKN.

En **Noruega**, la burguesía y los grandes monopolios son los "especuladores de la guerra", principalmente debido a los altos precios del gas. Así, el ingreso real de los trabajadores ha disminuido en los últimos tres años. Después de cuatro días de acción sindical en el sector privado que involucró a 25.000 trabajadores, la dirección reformista de la confederación sindical negoció un compromiso salarial en abril que compensa la inflación solo para una minoría. Sin embargo, los trabajadores han puesto a prueba su fuerza y capacidad para repeler los ataques a sus condiciones de vida y de trabajo.

En **España**, la inflación es del 7,5%, el paro del 13,1% (entre los jóvenes el 29,26%) y el 28% de la población vive por debajo del umbral de la pobreza. Se realizaron dos grandes manifestaciones con cientos de miles de participantes en apoyo al sistema de salud pública, organizadas por iniciativas locales. Sectores de trabajadores (limpieza, albergues...) que tenían poco contacto con los sindicatos entraron a la lucha, tratando de coordinar la misma. En la agenda está la necesidad de organizar la oposición al proyecto de privatización del sector público. Con las recientes elecciones locales y la anticipación de las generales, el panorama político es inestable y los partidos de derecha amenazan con tomar el gobierno.

En **Dinamarca**, donde las ganancias de los grandes monopolios son altas, las expectativas de los trabajadores de aumentos de salarios reales en las negociaciones nacionales eran altas. En cambio, los patrones y los líderes sindicales llegaron a un acuerdo con pequeños aumentos reales y lo dejaron en manos de las negociaciones locales para lograr más, obstaculizando la fuerza de la lucha de clases colectiva. Algunos trabajadores comienzan a tomar en sus propias manos la lucha por salarios más altos, mientras que los patrones la rechazan. El tema del "dumping social" y la sobreexplotación, especialmente de los trabajadores migrantes, es un tema importante para que los trabajadores luchen y fortalezcan la solidaridad entre ellos. El gobierno también decidió convertir un día festivo en día laborable, para financiar el aumento del gasto militar, lo que derivó en una gran manifestación y protesta.

En **Turquía**, las elecciones presidenciales y parlamentarias dominaron el escenario político. Han ocultado la dramática inflación del 100% en los primeros cuatro meses de 2023, y todos los grandes problemas que están enfrentando los trabajadores y los pueblos, como el terremoto. En Turquía, donde el 60,4% de la población vive por debajo del umbral del hambre y el 87% por debajo del umbral de la pobreza, donde los activos del Banco Central se han vuelto negativos, donde es inevitable que la restricción monetaria que seguirá el gobierno hará que el desempleo se dispare, es inevitable que todos estos problemas vuelvan a estar en la agenda después de las elecciones mientras el país ya no tenga las mismas condiciones políticas de ayer.

Francia: "No a los 64 años"

El potente movimiento de manifestaciones (13 hasta el momento, incluido el Primero de Mayo) y huelgas que comenzó en enero de 2023, contra la reforma del sistema de pensiones, ha movilizado a millones de trabajadores, jóvenes, mujeres... El movimiento se ha unido en torno a la reivindicación concreta: "No a los 64 años", que contó con el apoyo de una amplia coalición de los principales sindicatos, organizaciones juveniles, con el apoyo de un amplio abanico de asociaciones, partidos políticos de izquierda... Este movimiento es también una continuación de los movimientos anteriores contra las reformas antiobreras y antipopulares y se da en el contexto de una ola de huelgas por el aumento de salarios que comenzó en 2019. La contrarreforma de las pensiones ha llevado al sentimiento común: "Ya basta, esta vez es no", "No a la explotación, no al trabajo hasta la tumba".

Este movimiento tiene muchos aspectos que, en conjunto, han conformado su fuerza, su determinación, expresada en el lema "No nos rendimos". Al frente de esta lucha está la clase obrera que participó en todas las ciudades, centros fabriles de todo el país... Atrajo a grandes sectores de trabajadores y masas, y aún hoy el 90% de los trabajadores están en contra de esa reforma, aunque el gobierno la haya impuesto. La forma en que hizo cumplir la reforma, usando todos los trucos de la Constitución -muchos de ellos

completamente desconocidos para las masas-, usando provocaciones y represión policial, aumentó la determinación de lucha de los trabajadores, de la juventud.

El movimiento no logró bloquear la economía, a pesar de que sectores importantes estaban involucrados en huelgas constantes. Pero el bloqueo de la economía es un factor importante en el equilibrio de fuerzas necesario para hacer retroceder al gobierno. Esta es una lección que muchos trabajadores tienen en mente hoy.

El sentimiento general es la satisfacción de haber demostrado la fuerza del movimiento obrero, su capacidad de unión en torno a reivindicaciones concretas. Hay muchas lecciones para compartir y discutir; crece la conciencia de que es todo el sistema, el sistema capitalista-imperialista, el principal obstáculo a derribar.

Ese movimiento fue seguido con gran simpatía a nivel internacional. Estimuló a los trabajadores, a los militantes y los animó en la idea "sí es posible que los trabajadores luchen, se unan, tomen la iniciativa" contra el capital y su sistema.

Algunas conclusiones

Las graves consecuencias de la política adoptada en la pandemia para empobrecer a los trabajadores y los pueblos, la inflación y los enormes costos de la guerra en Ucrania, han provocado un despertar del movimiento obrero en Europa a diferentes niveles, que va en la misma dirección con similares demandas.

Los trabajadores y los pueblos están en un punto de inflexión, ya que no pueden soportar más los ataques constantes de los capitalistas y sus estados. En esta lucha, la conciencia de los trabajadores ha crecido y ha aumentado su confianza en sí mismos.

Obligada por los crecientes ataques del capital y la creciente incapacidad del sistema para satisfacer las necesidades y expectativas de las masas obreras y populares, la lucha se desarrollará e intensificará en el próximo período.

Es nuestro deber desarrollar la conciencia de clase, combatir la influencia reformista promovida por las fuerzas reformistas y oportunistas, señalar el camino, fortalecer la unidad y liderar la lucha contra todo el sistema capitalista.

El capitalismo destruye nuestras vidas: este sistema no es nuestro, ¡debemos combatirlo!

Sólo el socialismo, una nueva y mejor sociedad sin explotación de los trabajadores, puede resolver los problemas a favor de la clase obrera, las amplias masas y los pueblos.

Francia, mayo de 2023

Encuentro regional de partidos y organizaciones de Europa, miembros de la CIPOML

Partido Comunista de los Trabajadores de Dinamarca – APK

Partido Comunista de los Trabajadores de Francia – PCOF

Organización para la Construcción de un Partido Comunista de los Trabajadores de Alemania (Arbeit Zukunft)

Plataforma Comunista - por el Partido Comunista del Proletariado de Italia

Grupo Marxista-Leninista Revolusjon – Noruega

Partido Comunista de España (Marxista-Leninista) – PCE(M-L)

Partido del Trabajo (EMEP) – Turquía

Editorial

El pueblo tiene una sola opción electoral

Son ocho los binomios que participarán en las elecciones presidenciales del 20 de agosto, pero eso no significa que los trabajadores y el pueblo tienen ocho alternativas: solo tiene una, el binomio Yaku Pérez-Nory Pineda, presentada por la alianza «Claro que se puede», conformada por Unidad Popular (listas 2), Partido Socialista (listas 17), Democracia Sí (listas 20), Somos Agua y que cuenta con el apoyo de otras organizaciones y fuerzas políticas.

El campo de las fuerzas democráticas y de izquierda, el campo popular, ha presentado una sola opción presidencial (Pérez-Pineda) y candidaturas unitarias en todo el país para la Asamblea Nacional, listas 2-17-20. No hay un precedente de una situación similar desde que el país retornó al régimen constitucional al finalizar la década de 1970, porque en las pocas ocasiones que del bloque popular se ha destacado una sola candidatura presidencial, para la legislatura se ha producido dispersión.

La prensa burguesa también presenta al correísmo como una candidatura de izquierda, pero no lo es. Correa y su banda representan los intereses económicos y políticos de una facción burguesa, que es la que más se benefició durante la década en la que fueron gobierno, representan también los intereses del capital extranjero, particularmente chino. Al finalizar la década correísta, todas las estadísticas oficiales dieron cuenta de cómo crecieron los ingresos de la banca, cómo crecieron y surgieron nuevos grupos empresariales poderosos; la gestión del correísmo —en el ámbito institucional— estuvo orientada a modernizar y fortalecer el Estado capitalista, para un mejor ejercicio del control político-social por parte de la burguesía y para facilitar la acumulación capitalista. También crearon un entramado jurídico para facilitar la corrupción, el robo de los recursos del Estado y garantizar la impunidad. No se puede ser de izquierda, ni representar a los trabajadores y al pueblo cuando se beneficia a la burguesía, al capital financiero imperialista y cuando se fortalece el Estado burgués.

El resto de candidaturas son más fácilmente identificadas con la derecha política, con los grupos empresariales, lo que da cuenta de un fraccionamiento de este sector. Pero no por ello significa que de manera automática se producirá una identificación del pueblo con el proyecto «Claro que se puede». La capacidad de la burguesía para engañar al pueblo es grande, las limitaciones políticas del pueblo también son evidentes, combinadas crean el caldo de cultivo del que se proyectan candidatos burgueses como supuestos redentores del pueblo.

Que el bloque popular tenga una sola candidatura presidencial es una circunstancia muy importante, pero no es todo. Hay que desarrollar una campaña intensa para ganar a las masas, hay que recorrer el país con nuestro mensaje: hay que pelear voto a voto.



Para defender el Yasuní, votar Sí

Los recursos que genera la explotación petrolera del Yasuní pueden ser compensados con varias alternativas propuestas.

Intensa campaña se ha iniciado contra la consulta impulsada por los “Yasunidos” que busca que el petróleo de esa zona no sea extraído. El principal argumento es que no hay dinero para cubrir lo que se dejará de recibir.

Esos valores perfectamente pueden ser compensados por la adecuada recaudación de impuestos que son evadidos por cerca de siete mil millones cada año, o reduciendo el gasto fiscal, que beneficia principalmente a grandes grupos económicos que también superan los seis mil millones anuales. También haciendo una verdadera lucha contra la corrupción que se llevaría un 20% del presupuesto estatal.

El gobierno sostiene que la producción petrolera en la zona entrega importantes recursos al erario nacional. Pero no hay tal. Las divergencias comienzan por los costos de explotación, para el gobierno ascienden a USD 15.31 por barril, mientras que otros señalan que son de USD 50 por barril, que resultan más creíbles debido a la calidad del petróleo que en Yasuní es deficiente y, por tanto, más costoso de extraer y transportar. El 11 de junio de 2023, según reportes de Petroecuador, se extrajeron 55394 barriles que se vendieron a USD 71.12 por barril que dejaron una utilidad bruta diaria de USD 1'169,921, aunque para el gobierno es de USD 3'091.539.

Entonces, al año los ingresos estarían entre USD 427 millones según nuestros cálculos y USD 1200 millones según el gobierno, menos del 3% del Presupuesto General del Estado, en cualquier caso dentro de las posibilidades de ser reemplazados por las alternativas propuestas.

El país debe valorar la importancia que tiene para la biodiversidad del Ecuador y del mundo, que el Yasuní sea una de las zonas con mayor biodiversidad del planeta contra la posibilidad de explotar el petróleo y dañarla. Más aún en épocas, como las actuales, en las que se habla de otras fuentes energéticas que sustituyan a las que producen desechos como el carbono, una de las causas del calentamiento global. Se debería, entonces, provocar un debate nacional sobre el uso de la energía eólica y solar en el reemplazo de los combustibles para los autos, las cocinas a gas, para reducir el consumo de combustibles fósiles y cambiarlos por otras alternativas. En el mediano y largo plazo, esas decisiones beneficiarían al erario nacional y al medio ambiente. Aunque algunos grandes bolsillos quedarían vacíos.

Colombia

Movilizaciones en apoyo a Petro

Hace casi un año del triunfo de Gustavo Petro en Colombia, los sectores reaccionarios y de derecha junto a varios medios de comunicación, han desarrollado una campaña por desprestigiar y desgastar al gobierno que ganó las elecciones con una propuesta democrática y popular.

Petro personifica un proyecto democrático, progresista, patriótico y antineoliberal, que busca democratizar el país en el marco de las relaciones capitalistas de producción. Sería un error creer que, esos cambios ofrecidos, terminarían con la explotación y la exclusión. No obstante, la burguesía colombiana no está dispuesta ni siquiera a esas transformaciones pues, desde la posesión en la Casa de Nariño, se desató una campaña contra él y su vicepresidenta, Francia Márquez.

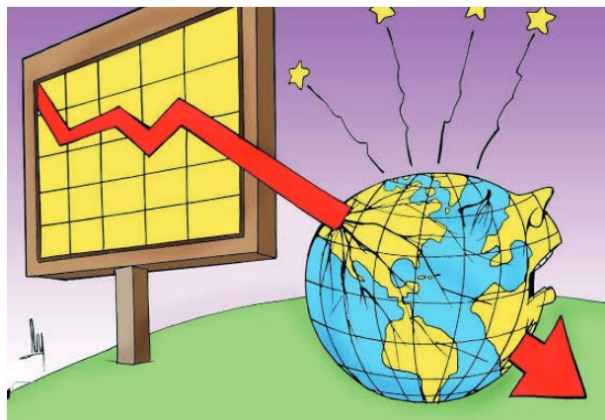
En este casi un año de gobierno del Pacto Histórico, se han dado una serie de errores que evidencian los límites del proyecto, la falta de concreción de las ofertas y las denuncias de corrupción en el círculo del Presidente. Estos problemas han sido utilizados por la derecha uribista para golpear al régimen y el proyecto, quienes han endurecido su ofensiva para impedir la discusión, en el Parlamento, de las reformas en salud, relaciones laborales y pensiones.

Las organizaciones sociales y populares se tomaron Bogotá y otras capitales departamentales, para apoyar la reforma laboral y exigir que el parlamento apruebe la misma, lo que significa, en los hechos, un respaldo al proyecto del Pacto. La derecha y los medios de comunicación tratan de minimizar la acción y cuestionar la intervención de Petro, quien a la vez que denunció la existencia de un “golpe blando” al estilo del Perú, señaló que “hay personas que aún no han leído lo que significa la decisión popular en las mesas electorales del año pasado, creen que fue simplemente una moda, una fiebre pasajera, un delirio que ya pasó y que dejó a un presidente abandonado en su palacio presidencial, pues hoy decimos, hoy lo decimos con toda claridad, no fue así”.

Se hace necesario que el gobierno colombiano cumpla las ofertas establecidas en el proyecto del Pacto Histórico, desarme el andamiaje neoliberal y favorezca a los sectores populares, solo así podrá fortalecer su apoyo popular y aislar a la derecha uribista. La garantía para que las masas populares defiendan este proyecto será el cumplimiento de sus ofertas.

Algunos elementos sobre la economía mundial

El Banco Central Europeo (BCE) reconoce que la inflación sigue al alza y la economía de la Zona Euro está débil. Por lo que se ha visto “obligado” a aumentar su tasa de interés oficial por octava vez consecutiva en 25 puntos base hasta el 4%, su nivel más alto en 22 años”. Su objetivo es bajar la inflación al 2% y mantenerlo hasta el 2025 así, la que ha llegado al 6.1% en estos últimos días, informó Lagarde es directora del FMI, culpando al aumento salarial como reproductora de esta, como siempre lo ha hecho la burguesía para mantener los salarios bajos. El desempleo “está en sus mínimos históricos y con aumentos salariales aunque estos están por detrás de la inflación.”



Según la misma fuente, la inflación ha cedido, pero se mantendrá alta por mucho tiempo. Sin embargo la “recesión técnica” en Alemania llevó a la misma situación a la Zona Euro (el PIB cayó 0.1% en el primer trimestre del año), que según Eurostat, a pesar de esa situación crecerá la economía un poco.

Por otro lado pero en el mismo contexto económico, una gran parte del mismo capital financiero estadounidense reconoce que la economía mundial se está desdolarizando, la negociación de divisas está por debajo de los máximos históricos (88%) y en las reservas internacionales “ha ido bajando su cuota” y ha llegado a un mínimo histórico (51%) en las reservas de divisas de los bancos. Esta baja ha sucedido a partir de la crisis del 2007-2008, por lo que las economías han desarrollado una diversificación de divisas y de otros activos como el oro, que bajará las reservas mundiales por lo menos en los próximos cinco años, esto según lo informa el Consejo Mundial del Oro. A estos se suman las acciones de las economías China, Rusia, Irán e India, que han dejado de usar el dólar para sus transacciones económicas.

“El atractivo del oro, aumentó por la caída del dólar, tras conocerse que el número de puestos de trabajo vacantes en Estados Unidos cayó en febrero a su nivel más bajo en casi dos años, mientras que los pedidos de fábrica también bajaron”, reconocieron voceros financieros.

Otro elemento presente en esta crítica situación económica, es la crisis financiera reciente de los bancos Silicon Valley Bank, First Republic y el Credit Suisse, que según sus representantes han puesto en marcha reevaluaciones del riesgo, afirman que “el sistema bancario es sólido y que muchos bancos aumentaron sus tenencias de efectivo y capacidad de endeudamiento para protegerse de los retiros de los depositantes”. Sin embargo otros sectores financieros reconocen que la crisis bancaria reciente pueda ser “sistémica”, ya que por años estos episodios se han repetido y sobre todo porque se han llenado de “depósitos no asegurados” para reactivarlos y que por el eso los hace más vulnerable a los cambios de la política monetaria y las condiciones financieras que se van creando.

Queda claro que la crítica situación económica mundial en cualquier momento puede estallar en una nueva crisis y no es por los malos manejos, la corrupción o por la suerte de los acontecimientos, sino por la naturaleza misma del capitalismo que se ha agotado y no da más.