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**VOICE OF REVOLUTION**

Publication of the U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization

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USMLO 3942 N. Central Ave, Chicago, IL 60634



## Organize Today for an Anti-War Government



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### INAUGURATION 2017: SALUTE RESISTANCE

## Our Security Lies in Our Fight for the Rights of All

*Voice of Revolution* salutes the many people joining in actions, in DC and across the country to defend rights and say, *Trump is Not Our President, This is Not Our Democracy!* We also salute

the immigrant rights actions, as well as those by African American organizers January 14, rejecting government attacks and contributing to the resistance. A variety

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## Confront Government of Police Powers by Building the New

*U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization*

*The following presentation was given by Kathleen Chandler of the U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization at the meeting on the significance of U.S. election results to the working class, organized by the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) in Hamilton, Ontario on December 10, 2016 (see p.11 for report)*

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The most significant issue to address when looking at

the U.S. presidential election results is that the U.S. ruling circles have resorted to a government of police powers. This has been developing for some time, especially since the Bill Clinton administration, with Bush and Obama further developing this direction. There is clearly very serious contention within the camp of the rulers in the U.S. and the election did not serve to sort out the differences

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BUILD THE NEW

# Organize Today for an Anti-War Government

A main feature of the election campaign and continuing today is the silence imposed on the issue of war and peace. There is to be no discussion on the Obama legacy and crimes, which include increased drone warfare, aggression against Syria, Yemen, Pakistan Palestine and others while continuing wars against Afghanistan and Iraq and

most recently greatly expanding operations for Special Forces (see p. 4). Special Forces have already conducted their illegal assassinations, raids and “training” actions in 147 countries worldwide. This includes having deployments to Africa skyrocket by more than 1600% – from just 1% in 2006 to 17.26% last year. Obama has now handed Trump power to expand and more directly control these Special Forces. Yet serious deliberation on these crimes, government accountability for them and the broad demands of the people to *Bring All U.S. Troops Home Now* is repeatedly blocked.

The many diversions and other pressures to react to every Trump tweet and get embroiled in the increasing fights among the rulers play this role. We are to be *reactive* and limited to responding to the rulers, rather than *pro-active* and fighting for our own anti-war agenda. We are to accept the old and dysfunctional pro-war political process and limit discussion to possible changes to it, like eliminating the Electoral College or counting votes differently or putting limits on campaign financing, as has been done repeatedly in the past. But we are not to take matters into our own hands and organize today for an anti-war government.

What is needed is not acceptance of the old, but building the new. A new democracy of our own making that empowers the people themselves to govern and decide. A modern definition of democracy is needed, that speaks to both the content and forms needed for the political empowerment of the people.

One cannot talk about democracy today without addressing the fact that the people do not have control over war and peace. This is particularly true given that in the current completely undemocratic set-up, the president has control over nuclear weapons and launching nuclear war. This power has eliminated



the possibility of deliberation on such a crucial matter, whether in Congress or the public more broadly. It is little wonder that since the U.S. crime of using nuclear weapons against the people of Japan, Congress has not exercised its power to declare war. All the many wars and invasions since then have been done by the president.

Essentially what has developed is a permanent war government and a permanent war economy, which are undemocratic and against the interests of the peoples here and abroad.

Further, the current situation, including the Trump election, shows that the rulers are resorting to a government of police powers. A government of laws has essentially been eliminated. This is evident in the fact that a political process involving functioning political parties and a functioning legislature where actual deliberation occurs have been eliminated. Trump and his cabinet represent this direction. In this context, the current pressure from the rulers and their monopoly media to react to and focus efforts on each member of the cabinet undermines the fight for the new. It serves to direct attention to, and reliance on the Senate to oppose the appointments. Targeting these individuals, limiting discussion to how bad one or the other is and pressuring politicians is part of the old. They divert from the reality of a government of police powers, where legitimacy is no longer a concern of government. Legitimacy rests with a government of laws, which at least attempts to appear to be concerned about the people and society. A government of police powers does not. Whoever makes up the cabinet, this reality will not change.

This poses the necessity to confront a government of police powers by building the new. It raises the need for organizing today for an anti-war government and keeping this issue to the fore as the many battles for rights go forward. Organizing today includes:

1) Organizing meetings large and small, such as small group meetings at schools, workplaces, in homes, as well as public forums, to engage all concerned in serious political discussion on the development of a government of police powers and the

necessity for an anti-war government. As we respond to all the attacks on the people, if we are pro-active, the resistance movement will advance. Political discussion and analysis on the significance of the election results is the starting point to creating a political movement that favors the people.

2) An anti-war government is not simply one that opposes a particular war, like the ones in Iraq and Afghanistan. Rather it is one that stands against the permanent war economy and war government that serves it. It is one that addresses the problem of how to have the anti-war stand of the majority implemented — what are the social forms and electoral process needed for this direction? What would be the features of a new constitution where government is constituted on an anti-war basis? These are issues to seriously think about and deliberate on. It is this

direction of building the new, of working out the content and form of a democracy of our making that is vital.

3) Organize among the youth, especially at high schools and universities where the military is active, to provide an anti-war alternative, to recruiting, to a backward curriculum, to the efforts to produce willing drones submitting to war, not thinking human beings;

4) Intervene in the many and varied actions taking place to bring to the fore the issue of war and peace and advance the stand that our security lies in our fight for the rights of all, abroad and at home. This can include developing anti-war committees in locations where there are none, and strengthening them where they do exist by organizing to unite and fight for an anti-war government.

### BARACK OBAMA'S LEGACY

## Obama Targets Entire World for Attack by Special Operations Forces

President Barack Obama recently issued an order to create a new “multi-agency intelligence and action force” to be known as the “Counter-External Operations Task Force,” or Ex-Ops. These “special forces” are empowered to attack anywhere in the world where the president sees fit under the pretext that there is a threat to the United States. Obama has expanded the powers of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) — a sort of praetorian guard directly under presidential command responsible for largely secret, illegal raids and assassinations (Black Ops) worldwide. JSOC includes Navy SEALs and the Army’s Delta Force, which Obama has equipped with drones, removing many of them from CIA operations. According to the U.S. Special Operations Command, or SOCOM, which JSOC comes under, JSOC has carried out actions of various kinds in 147 countries. Their field of operations also includes the U.S. -- anywhere the government claims a terrorist threat exists. As Pentagon officials have put it, it is not limited to battlefields in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya, where numerous attacks have repeatedly occurred, but anywhere from “Boston to FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan].”

Up until now, JSOC operations also came under the command of regional military commanders, such as for Central Command (CENTCOM), which commands the Iraq war and operations in the Middle East more generally, AFRICOM, SOUTHCOM for Latin America and the Caribbean, and NORTHCOM for the U.S., Canada and Mexico and some areas of the Caribbean. However, U.S. military officials inform that under the pretext of speed and removing obstacles to Special Operations, Obama’s new order puts in place a hybrid command system that can sidestep these regional commanders. It also serves to put greater power in the hands



of the President. Effectively, the head of SOCOM, currently Army General Raymond “Tony” Thomas, will be a decision-maker when it comes to going after “threats,” with White House approval. Support of the regional commands is no longer necessary, though it is said they will be consulted. As one Pentagon official put it “Layers have been stripped away.” He added, “There has never been an Ex-Ops command team that works trans-regionally to stop attacks.”

The defense official added that U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies will also support JSOC and offer recommendations on how to handle specific threats. This is a



further indication that it will be used inside the U.S. as well as abroad. In a situation where the presidency relies on police powers to govern, it also puts in place what could become a “presidential guard,” at the disposal of the presidency without interference from the Pentagon chain of command. JSOC operates worldwide, with no regard for international or U.S. law or laws of war. The legacy of the Obama administration is assassinations, raids by Special Forces and drone warfare. Now the use of U.S. Special Forces to carry out these crimes has been expanded and put more directly under the president.

### Crimes in the Name of “Collective Self-Defense”

Under the broad concept of “collective self-defense,” U.S. military air strikes can be used anywhere the U.S. claims its “partners” are threatened, even though the U.S. and its forces are not threatened. To facilitate this, one of the roles of the new JSOC task force is to offer intelligence, strike recommendations and advice directly to the militaries and security forces of allies, bypassing government officials, news sources inform. Reports indicate that already, over the past decade, JSOC has built strong relations with police agencies in Germany, Britain, France and Turkey, which would indicate that this is also the case with Canada, which is the most integrated with U.S. operations. The new task force will have even broader authority to involve special forces from these countries. Officials also said that in parts of the world where the U.S. claims there are “weak or no governments,” the JSOC would act unilaterally, again with no regard for law or evidence of an imminent threat to the U.S.

“Collective self-defense” strikes in support of foreign partners, even where there is no threat to the U.S. and no U.S. forces or contractors at direct risk means U.S. military forces, including JSOC, are now permitted to provide close air support, drones, etc. against what the U.S. brands the enemies of foreign ground forces, even if these people pose no threat to the U.S. and no call for assistance has been issued.

This development means that actions already occurring in countries such as Somalia will be expanded while the U.S. has given itself the green light to intervene in situations such as the one in Syria where a functioning government refuses to give it permission to intervene as a lone wolf. On September 28, for example, a drone strike was conducted in Galcayo, Somalia, against what were said to be al-Shabab forces, on behalf of the local Puntland Security Forces. AFRICOM labeled this a “self-defense strike,” even though no U.S. advisors were present at the time. A subsequent AFRICOM press release stated that the strike killed no al-Shabab members, but rather ten members of “local militia forces” who themselves had



worked with U.S. advisers in the past.

As one military expert put it, the Trump administration now has “tremendously expanded capabilities and authorities.”

The further concentration of power in the hands of the Special Operations Forces and the president weaken the power of the various regional commanders and traditional armed forces which will without doubt, further exacerbate conflicts within the military and between the military and the presidency. It remains to be seen how the nomination by President-Elect Donald Trump of two retired Marine Generals in his cabinet, including one as Secretary of Defense, intended to unify the massive military bureaucracy, will play out in light of these new arrangements.



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### I • Build the New

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between them, as elections are supposed to do. Nonetheless, Donald Trump has now been selected to expand police powers, have them streamlined and unfettered — and to do so blatantly, openly and with complete impunity.

The election also shows how completely the old arrangements of government of laws, with functioning political parties and a functioning political process, are finished. A huge effort is being made by the imperialist rulers and their monopoly media to have everyone focus on and react to every tweet and comment Trump makes. This is to make it look like it is just a matter of Trump's bad policies, which is done to deprive the people of the outlook which leads them to conclude that it is they who must give birth to the new. They cannot depend on one camp or the other within the imperialist ruling class to resolve the problems they face.

The fact that now the peoples of the U.S. and the world will be saddled with a U.S. government of unfettered police powers shows that the old forms given rise to in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries no longer function to provide governments with legitimacy. They no longer serve to get the people to submit to the elitist rule. Today this rule is perceived as an instrument of making the rich richer and the poor poorer while the so-called American dream lies in tatters. Meanwhile, wanton aggression is launched against countries that refuse to submit to the U.S. dictate. As a result, now, the police powers are put forward as if they are a government of laws. On election night, we saw the contending factions immediately call for a peaceful transition of power, hailing the U.S. democracy to the skies.

The situation gives rise to grave dangers for the peoples at home and abroad. We need to be pro-active by having our own program that gives rise to new forms and gives birth to the new. As we respond to all the attacks on the people, if we are pro-active, the resistance movement will make great headway. Political discussion and analysis on the significance of the U.S. election results is the starting point to creating a political movement that favors the people.

The rulers have the problem of how to pursue a government of police power while keeping the people in check and the union preserved. The rulers see Trump as a dealmaker who can put and keep the U.S. in the game where everyone is threatening everyone else. He will on the one hand strike deals, likely behind closed doors and using his executive powers. On the other, brandish the full might of U.S. police powers without concern about legitimacy, abroad and at home. In their desperation this is how the faction of the ruling class championed by Trump thinks it can make headway.

The president's executive powers include powers to regulate important issues like immigration; implementation of environmental laws, or waiving them; trade and border regulations to favor U.S. annexation, as Canada is already experiencing; expanding use of drone warfare, torture, special forces, criminalization of those resisting abroad and at home; and more. This enforcing of police powers will take place internationally, where Trump will potentially strike deals directly with military forces,



or individual leaders, bypassing legitimate government channels. The relationship is to be a direct one with the president and it is one where deals are more an offer that cannot be refused, as the threat to use nuclear weapons is always on the table.

It is notable that in appointing South Carolina Governor Haley as UN Ambassador, Trump specifically said she was a “proven dealmaker.” Her experience as Governor is making deals to bring monopolies, including foreign ones, into South Carolina, usually by paying them millions, deferring taxes, etc. Trump's recent deal with Carrier is an example of more of the same in the future. He made the deal in secret with the CEO, with the union having no say. The state of Indiana, where Vice-President-elect Pence can deliver funds, agreed to pay the monopoly \$7 million. Then, when the union president Chuck Jones made clear the actual facts concerning the number of jobs to remain, 800, not the 1100 Trump promoted, Trump attacked him personally. So far, just on Twitter. But one can see that far more could occur in conditions where workers refuse a deal, or a state government, or a foreign government, does. The reason for personal attacks is to incite passions and reduce the level of political discourse to zero so that people cannot come together in a political movement for empowerment, peace and rights.

This mantra of jobs, jobs, jobs has been widely used in the U.S. to give the monopolies more than \$80 billion yearly in just state and local public funds. At least three-quarters of state and city subsidy dollars go not to local businesses, but to monopolies like Boeing, Intel, GM, Nike, and Dow Chemical. Foreign



operations like Royal Dutch Shell and Nissan rake in large amounts as well. Some of these are “megadeals,” like the \$5.6 billion that New York State gave Alcoa, or the nearly \$9 billion that war monopoly Boeing extracted from Washington State. These colossal packages carry with them an average cost-per-job of nearly \$500,000. And most of the time, while the funds are delivered, the promised jobs do not materialize. Trump now is positioned to streamline and increase such deals, putting the weight of the presidency openly behind them.

While Trump talks about jobs, the Carrier deal is one that serves the oligopolies, and likely includes promises for future contracts for government infrastructure projects for example, or defense contracts and the like. During the campaign Trump emphasized that he will treat government as a business, which is another way of saying social needs and services are not a concern. In his victory speech, he said, “I’ve spent my entire life in business, looking at the untapped potential in projects and in people all over the world” and “That is now what I want to do for our country.”

Business is run on the basis of the “bottom line” and treating human beings as things, even products, to be disposed of. Steelworkers are very familiar with being treated as things, to permanently lose jobs, pensions, whole communities destroyed. The choice of Wilbur Ross as Secretary of Commerce brings to mind that it was Wilbur Ross who made billions in the United States buying up bankrupt steel companies and eliminating the retiree benefits of 190,000 steelworkers before repackaging and selling the plants. Responsibility to society and to meet the needs of society are not main considerations of a government of police power.

In looking at these developments, it is important to recognize that police powers by their nature are arbitrary and implemented on the basis of broad impunity. It is not just a matter of police and military forces of various kinds taking action, but rather a means of governance in a situation where the rulers have no solutions and where they are compelled to block the striving of the people to modernize and broaden democracy. From its origins the U.S. state has had two aspects making a single unitary power. One is the government of laws, including the Constitution, treaties,

legislation, courts, etc. The other is police powers. What we are seeing now is the elimination of a government of laws, with Trump positioned to do so even more blatantly and with greater impunity than previous presidents.

It is also the case that while a government of laws must at least have the appearance of legitimacy and concern for social needs, a government of police powers does not. Its concern is to punish all dissenters so as to preserve the state.

Legitimacy of government is also not a main concern. Police powers are to criminalize, destroy, even whole nations and the human productive powers they encompass. This is what happened with Libya, what is happening with Iraq and Syria. The election also showed that at home, the rulers are no longer concerned with maintaining even the appearance of a functioning political process, with functioning political parties, which are all part of legitimacy. Trump is the embodiment of this reality.

This issue of legitimacy is a very important one when we are considering our tactics for resistance and advancing our own program of fighting for politics of empowerment in the course of defending the rights of all. A government concerned about legitimacy appears to “listen” to the public and to uphold the constitution, with freedom of speech and assembly and the right to life and liberty. A government of police powers has no such concern. It acts to criminalize protest and to make clear that you, as individuals and collectives, are to do as you are told or face the wrath of police powers. The current struggle at Standing Rock is an example of both this government wrath, and of building the resistance. And it is being done by the Obama administration not Trump.

### Standing Rock

Despite repeated claims by the federal government and media that the water protectors of Standing Rock are on federal lands, the fact is that the U.S. maps themselves show the land is unceded Sioux land. It is also the case that the government is required to do an Environmental Impact Study, which the Army Corps of Engineers has refused to do. Numerous other laws and treaty obligations are being broken, and this is being done openly and repeatedly. It is the federal government that



sent a letter to state and local police forces saying the water protectors were trespassing.

Hundreds have been arrested and serious injuries to those resisting, including women and children, have occurred. Yet in the face of National Guardsmen arming checkpoints on public highways, repeated use of tanks, the chemical weapon tear gas, concussion grenades, a sound canon, and water canon blasting the resisters with water in freezing temperatures, Obama said he will “let things play out.” We are all to get used to the exercise of police power with no regard whatever for the law and we are to keep sacrificing until Obama, or whoever is President, deems it sufficient.

And while the Army has now said they will not issue the permit until they do the Impact Study, they did not deny build-

present. The indigenous peoples involved, including mainly the Sioux but also hundreds of other tribes, together with many others from across the country have all rejected the police category of protester. For the police, a protester is a thing that can be told where they can protest, where they cannot, for how long, etc. At the Democratic and Republican conventions over the summer, people were told they could not have backpacks, or gas masks, or metal poles, or lengths of string, etc. That is, we were being regulated like things, not people with rights.

At Standing Rock people have taken the stand to have their humanity reflected. They are water protectors, for the water of millions. They are pro-active, organizing to demonstrate where needed, in various ways. They have organized to be self-sustaining and urged others across the country to join with them in being so. They have developed their own means of communication and organized to unite people in action across the country, all standing firm for their just demands for sovereignty, for no pipeline, and to defend their rights and Mother Earth. They have been and are acting to deprive the oligopolies of their ability to deprive the people of what belongs to them by right.

Most recently, thousands of veterans came to join the resistance at Standing Rock and defend the camps from threatened eviction by the state. This readiness of the vets to join in, to stand against the government, no doubt frightened the rulers. They need their soldiers, active and inactive, to be dutiful, submitting soldiers, not part of the organized resistance. It is to the credit of the indigenous peoples and their undaunted fight for their right to be and to be protectors of the land and of rights, that they have inspired such support. And the overall level of consciousness being developed against the state and its imposing of police powers is an important contribution to all those resisting.

### **Imposing Government of Police Powers While Maintaining Constitutional Form of Governance**

The struggle at Standing Rock is also indicative of the effort of the U.S. imperialist rulers to impose and consolidate a government of police power, while maintaining the constitutional form of governance. There is an effort not to declare martial law, or have open military rule. Trump himself is a civilian with no military background. As the executive, he has responsibility to preserve the union, while breaking the bounds of the constitution. This responsibility is given right in the U.S. Constitution, where the oath for the president has two parts. One is, to the best of his ability, preserve and protect the Constitution. But the other is to execute the office of the presidency. Executing the office involves use of police powers, to protect the state, against the Constitution.

Now, the rulers face a situation where the fetters of the Constitution, such as Congress holding the purse strings, such as treaties being law of the land, such as the arrangements in the Bill of Rights, need to be eliminated. The way the rulers hope to do this is to demand that everyone submit to their version of the Constitution, and any emergency powers they may dictate in the name of national security. Such powers are the president executing the duties of his office. The rulers want to maintain



ing of the pipeline. The monopolies involved, which include Canada's Enbridge, backed by billions in credit lines from major financiers, have said the pipeline will be completed. These monopolies can try to carry forward and simply pay the fines involved — and you can count on them not facing armed attacks by the state. Police powers are to protect and preserve the state, with the interests of the people having no consideration. This is why many of the water protectors have remained and said they are organizing to remain through the winter in order to protect the interests of the people.

This struggle also provides an example for resistance in the



the constitutional form, while breaking the bounds of the Constitution itself.

A recent example includes Obama's order to authorize U.S. Special Forces to carry out their assassinations, raids, torture and other Black Ops anywhere in the world against any person the government decides is a "threat." This includes inside the U.S., it includes U.S. citizens, as Obama's drone attacks already made clear. These Black Ops are known to be completely illegal and arbitrary with no due process. People are put on a kill list at the discretion of the president — again putting them in a police category of a "threat," with no regard for law. Operations of various kinds have already been conducted in at least 147 countries. This order opens the space for them to be anywhere and everywhere.

Obama basically declared that the whole world is open for attack by these Special Forces and that Black Ops are the new normal. Significantly, he also streamlined the chain of command, eliminating regional commanders and basically creating a direct tie between the president and general in charge of Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). The order also speaks about direct relations between JSOC and police and military forces abroad, such as in Britain, Germany, France and Turkey, all bypassing the usual government channels and creating these direct ties among the military forces. This streamlining, which also further concentrates power in the president's hands and imposes U.S. command of foreign forces, will no doubt be expanded under Trump.

### **Need for Anti-War Government**

Recently there has been a lot of promotion that Trump has now appointed three generals to his cabinet and that this somehow changes the long-standing practice of civilians at the head of the Pentagon, for example. It is being presented as a constitutional issue, when it is not. There have been presidents who were generals, like George Washington and Eisenhower. There have been military forces in the cabinet, like Colin Powell. The issue is not the individuals appointed but rather that there is a huge military bureaucracy that remains essentially the same from president to president. This bureaucracy, which has great conflicts and contention within its ranks, as seen during the campaign, has to be united as part of preserving the union. The appointments are connected to this effort.

As well, the two key issues to examine are not whether they are generals or civilians, but the fact that a government of unfettered police powers is being imposed and these individuals are instruments for this. All the talk of civilians vs. generals hides this reality. As well, it diverts from the fact that, as during the campaign, the issue of war and ending all aggressive U.S. actions, bringing all U.S. troops home, is not discussed at all. There is silence on this issue.

It is up to organized forces like ourselves to bring the issue of U.S. wars to the fore, raising the need to organize for the alternative of an anti-war government, something we will do at the inaugural actions. And, just as a government of police



powers is not simply police actions, an anti-war government is not simply one that opposes a particular war, like the ones in Iraq and Afghanistan. Rather it is one that stands against the permanent war economy and war government that serves it. It is one that addresses the problem of how to have the anti-war stand of the majority implemented — what are the social forms and electoral process needed for this direction? What would be the features of a new constitution where government is constituted on an anti-war basis? These are issues that our program for an anti-war government is addressing.

U.S. rulers are facing a situation where their previous overwhelming economic power is in decline and where military might alone is not sufficient to maintain and extend their world empire. They must contend with rivals and allies alike and all those who resist. They can only do so by continually threatening and upping the ante, including possible use of nuclear weapons. This brings on more violence and contention, as is already occurring at home and abroad. The U.S. is insistent on such world empire though, and prepared to risk world war and civil war, potentially dragging the world down with them. In such conditions, where they face decline, have no solutions and are not able to sustain a political process that provides legitimacy to their rule, a government of police powers is a necessity — and very dangerous to the peoples.

It is also the case that in current conditions, the rulers are not able to predict the outcome of various actions on their part. This was evident for the Iraq war, where it was announced the job was done and today the crime of U.S. war continues. They cannot predict the outcome, for example, of impeachment of Trump, which has been mentioned. There are too many contending forces, at the federal and state levels, all with armed forces to back them up. Already, for example, California, including the head of its assembly and senate, police chiefs and mayors of Los Angeles and San Francisco, are all openly challenging Trump on immigration. The same is true in Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia, Boston and elsewhere. Impeachment could actually

trigger the break up of the U.S. along state and/or regional lines. The same could be said for possible elimination of the Electoral College, which is a mechanism to preserve the union, as is Congressional certification of the election. Eliminating these mechanisms could also trigger a break up. And for those who find this hard to imagine, just remember the rapid breakup of the Soviet Union. And that states like California have economies large enough to easily be their own countries. There are various other examples of civil war scenarios where the outcome cannot be predicted.

Similarly, while the U.S. threatens use of nuclear weapons, the outcome of such use can also not be predicted, both in terms of the potential for world war and civil war. The rulers are hoping a government of police powers can help them escape their crisis and the crisis of their whole system.

But for the interests of humanity, contending with this situation and resolving it in a manner that favors humanity can only occur on the basis of the organized struggle of the people themselves for their rights, including their right to govern and decide.

### **Key Conflict of Interest is Rulers vs. the Working Class**

Another important issue being promoted is that Trump, with all his business interests, has more “conflict of interest” problems than previous presidents. Two things are hidden by all this talk. One is that the conflict of interest that needs to be addressed is that between the imperialist rulers, with their state that protects and preserves the oligopolies, and the working class. It is the interests of the rulers vs. the interests of the working class, and which will move society and all humanity forward at this time. Instead of focusing our attention on identifying these interests of the working class and how to defend and advance them, we are to continually react to everything Trump says and does and look into his many business holdings.

The problem to address is that the voice of the working class has been silenced and blocked. The problem to address is how to develop and strengthen our own independent institutions, for the press, for research, for political discussion, for developing our own thought material so that the interests of the working class are defended and our own institutions built. It is not our job to side with one faction of the rulers or another in their conflicts to sort out which is to emerge as the most powerful. The working class instead has the duty to lead the struggle for a democracy of our own making that serves the interests of the working class and people.

It is advancing the interests of the working class to eliminate wage slavery and all slavery by refusing to be slaves, by organizing to defend the rights of all on every front, that provides a way forward. All the talk about Trump’s “conflict of interest” diverts from this most vital task. It serves to hide the actual social relations and block workers from themselves organizing in their interests, with their own program. These social relations have produced massive wealth and power, yet the people are blocked from harnessing it and utilizing it to guarantee the rights of all, at home and abroad. The U.S. economy, for example, has doubled in size since 1970. But more than half of all families have seen no increase in their wages since then, while the wealth of the oligopolies has doubled and inequality has greatly increased. Such things are not in the

interests of the working class, but the debate about Trump does nothing to assist in finding solutions to these problems.

It is up to the working class to lead the struggle for the new, for modern social relations, for a modern democracy that empowers the people to govern and decide, for modern definitions that affirm rights by virtue of being human. We cannot replicate and remain stuck in the old, the old way of having elections, the old way of looking at problems. We need to strengthen our own thinking, our own discussion about our interests and how to advance them. We need to rally the people to strengthen their ability to refuse the old and begin to conceptualize modern political arrangements. Steelworkers here have the experience of the Thursday meetings as one means to activate the human factor/social consciousness and take independent political stands. This elevates the level of political discussion and unites workers behind solutions that favor them, not the rich. This is an important accomplishment, which we applaud and think should be replicated. We need more such forms to engage workers and youth in advancing their own cause for empowerment.



Across the U.S. the youth in their tens of thousands are already standing against this brutal direction, proclaiming Trump is Not Our President! Democracy Not Oligarchy! They will not be silenced. There is recognition among them, as among the water protectors at Standing Rock, that the political process in place is not acceptable.

We are intervening in a pro-active manner, to advance the fight for a political process that does empower the people, which brings into being an anti-war government, an anti-slave government, a government that serves the interests of the working class and people at home and abroad. We are taking steps in that direction now, organizing to raise the political discussion, to focus it on the interests of the millions upon millions of working people, to involve more youth and workers in it, to insist that a democracy of our own making is required, not the one of the rulers. This fight is a necessity of the present and it is the working class that can lead this battle forward.

Thank you very much for having me here to explain our views.



# Discussion on Elections Addresses the Way Forward

“What to do now that Trump has been elected?” is a concern being raised by many. A recent meeting in Hamilton, Ontario, on the U.S. Elections addressed this concern. The tone and orientation was given by the presentations made. As the main talk brought out, “Political discussion and analysis on the significance of the U.S. election results is the starting point to creating a political movement which favors the people.” Kathleen Chandler, *Voice of Revolution* Editor and leader of the U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization had the honor of giving the keynote, titled “The Need to Confront Government of Police Powers by Building the New” (see p.3). Rejecting the pressure to respond to every tweet and action by Trump, the presentation and discussion afterwards emphasized that providing analysis and a space for discussion and the thinking that develops *is doing a vital part* of what is needed. The presentation further emphasized, “We need to be pro-active by having our own program which gives rise to new forms and gives birth to the new. As we respond to all the attacks on the people, if we are pro-active, the resistance movement will make great headway.”

The meeting was attended by steelworkers and activists from Toronto and Windsor. Rolf Gerstenberger, President of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada, which hosted the event, and former President of United Steelworkers Local 1005 also presented (see p.12). The seriousness of participants was evident in their readiness to speak to the content of the presentations and raise questions on that basis.

An organizer among injured workers spoke to workers being treated like things, to be disposed of. Injured workers contend with this every day, with their medical needs denied and their right to a livelihood trampled on as though they were not human beings. He also pointed out that what Trump and his cabinet stand for is precisely what is being put in place in Ontario under the Wynne Liberal government. For instance, the Ontario government has adopted Bill 70 that permits employers to self-regulate on matters of health and safety.

A young worker spoke out about her experience with how politics are eliminated and people are pushed to look at matters like the U.S. election as entertainment. Concerns about how to put people in motion to defend their rights gave rise to more discussion on the significance of collective discussion and decision-making so that working people sort things out and proceed with confidence.

Steelworkers spoke about the impunity of companies such as U.S. Steel to attack the livelihoods of Canadians, and the cynical claims of governments to be concerned with the people’s well-being. Responding to the fact that more than \$80 billion in state and local public dollars are handed over to the monopolies — including the deal made by Trump to give Carrier \$7 million in public funds — another worker brought out that such use of public funds is unjust. He said for the U.S., in the fight for independence against Britain, people had put forward their call “No taxation without representation.” Now he said, we have taxation with representation and it is still unjust. It does not represent the workers.

The dysfunction of the political process in the U.S. which blocks



the people from having a say, especially when it comes to stopping war funding and paying the rich, was elaborated on in response. So too was the need to organize for a democracy of our own making, where we the people decide and govern. The existing set up cannot be reformed, and instead the fight is for the new. This includes thinking about how to ensure the political process empowers the people and, given U.S. history as an aggressor, provides for an anti-war government.

Additional comments also spoke to the danger of war and the U.S. dragging Canada into war. One steelworker, also a veteran, spoke to how veterans are told they are fighting to protect our freedoms, when there are no such freedoms and they are actually fighting for rich, for the same people that exploit and oppress them everyday. Another said the people of Canada and the U.S. share in common the need for an anti-war government that stands against aggression and war. Some of the demands such an anti-war government in the U.S. would need to meet were raised, including: All U.S. Troops Home Now; Outlaw Any and All Aggression and require the top politicians and military leaders involved in such crimes to be punished; Cancel the Debts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America; Pay Reparations for Slavery and all U.S. War Crimes. Such a government must stand against the permanent war economy and provide a new direction for the economy and political affairs that favors the peoples, at home and abroad. The anti-war spirit generated in the course of discussion was such that one of the steelworkers, known for his poetry and song, was inspired to present one of his anti-war poems.

Discussion continued on the need for an anti-war government and more specifically, the need for a new U.S. constitution in order to have the anti-war stand of the majority implemented. The various proposals now being made, such as to eliminate the Electoral College, or to count the votes differently, do not address the fundamental question that the U.S. is constituted on a pro-slave basis that keeps the people out of power. A new Constitution that blocks war and aggression and ensures the people are the decision-makers is needed. Working out such issues is a pro-active task of the present so as to contribute to development of a modern democracy that empowers the people.

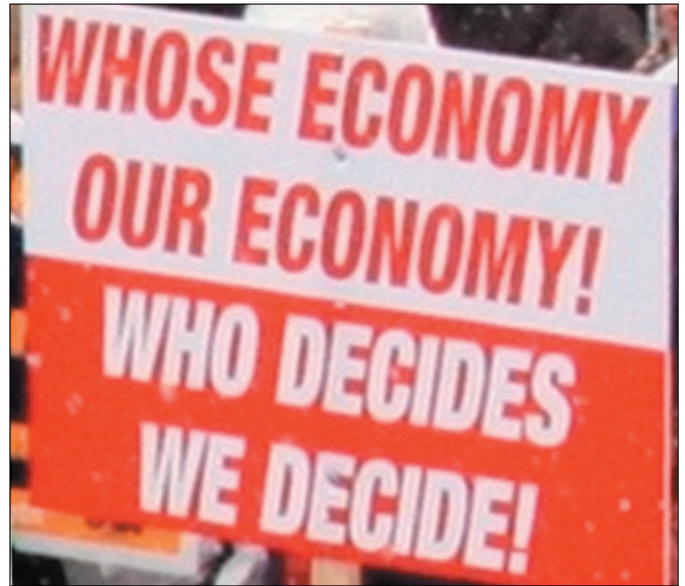
By the end of the meeting it was clear that having such discussions clarifies the situation by providing an outlook from which to assess developments in the U.S. and related issues. Serious, calm and informed discussion is very important and must continue at this time when the pressure is to make everything about Trump, rather than discussing and developing our own agenda.

## **Practical Measures Needed to Change the Situation in a Way that Favors the Workers**

As part of the meeting in Hamilton, Ontario to discuss U.S. elections, Rolf Gerstenberger, former President of United Steelworkers Local 1005 and President of the Marxist Leninist Party of Canada, which hosted the event, gave an important presentation. Gerstenberger brought to the fore the experience of Hamilton steelworkers fighting to defend their rights, jobs and the steel industry, and how this gives them a perspective on what is going on in the U.S. He gave the example of President-Elect Donald Trump's nominee for Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross. He recalled that as steelworkers fought Stelco's bankruptcy in 2003, they necessarily had to find out what had happened in the U.S. steel industry. They had been told that the U.S. steelworkers had "helped out" their companies and now Hamilton steelworkers should do the same for Stelco. At that time, some 40 U.S. steel companies sought Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection or actually went bankrupt and this was used to shaft 250,000 pensioners who had their benefits cut by 10 to 70 per cent. It was none other than Wilbur Ross who bought up various steel plants and was responsible for some 190,000 of these pensioners being deprived of their pensions and benefits, whom he termed collateral damage.

Gerstenberger explained that Local 1005 categorically rejected any fraudulent use of bankruptcy proceedings to shaft the workers. The view of some U.S. labor leaders was that, "The house is on fire, you have four kids, but you can't save all of them — which ones do you save?" Hamilton steelworkers rejected this craven position as an unacceptable capitulation to the neo-liberal agenda of the rich. He pointed out that neither parents nor first responders approach emergency situations by making such calculations. For instance, first responders go all to save all the victims of a fire. Only by fighting on a principled basis and putting all the necessary organization in place and devising strategies and tactics to achieve success, can the result be found acceptable, Gerstenberger said. Instead, the sacrifice of pensioners in the U.S. was presented by Wilbur Ross as an economic necessity. Some labor leaders still consider Ross a friend of the workers and they "have not raised a peep about his nomination." Gerstenberger pointed out that knowing this about Trump's pick for Secretary of Commerce gives an idea of the agenda of the incoming administration, despite its claims that it will look out for the "little guy" and support the workers.

Similarly, Gerstenberger pointed out that Trump's nominee for Labor Secretary is Andrew Puzder, who is a fast food oligarch and CEO of the monopoly that owns the Hardee's and Carl's Jr. restaurant chains. He is known for his anti-worker positions and support for the use of "undocumented" workers as "cheap labor." Gerstenberger noted that the economy of California and much of the southwest would not be able to function without exploiting these vulnerable workers. Puzder's openly anti-worker stands have given rise to objections on the part of organized labor in



the U.S., he added. Puzder opposed the \$10.10 an hour minimum wage under Obama and will oppose the workers' current fight to raise this to \$15 an hour. Likewise, he will be opposing pensions, saying that no one wants them anymore and they are a drain on society.

Regarding Trump's disposition to the workers and his claim that he will "Make America Great Again" by bringing jobs back to the U.S., Gerstenberger referred to Trump's intervention with the Indiana factory — air conditioner manufacturer Carrier — that Trump claimed saved 1,100 jobs from being moved to Mexico. Trump tweeted that this is what he will do for all U.S. workers. The local union leader responsible for those workers pointed out only 800 jobs will stay and that hundreds of others will still be lost to a plant in Mexico. For presenting the real facts, the union leader was then subjected to all manner of personal attacks, first by Trump and then others unleashed by Trump's example.

Trump used Twitter to attack the union president, calling him a "union boss" to imply that he is a parasite and claiming the union is taking excessively high dues, and other anti-union, anti-worker venom. The polity is then set in motion to either support or oppose what the Trump tweets say and this becomes the agenda until the next personal attacks are tweeted against somebody else. People not only in the U.S. but worldwide are supposed to hang on Trump's every tweet and the media speculation about them. Reducing politics to personal attacks and defamation on the part of the rulers is the level to which U.S. governance has degenerated, Gerstenberger pointed out, saying that this is how police powers operate where there is no modern political process of any kind, let alone due process of law when it comes to crime and punishment.



The main issue in this situation, said Gerstenberger, is to take practical measures to change the situation in a way that favors the workers. In Hamilton, the steelworkers face a sales process and a company that is using the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) to attack the active and retired workers through a court process that is considered perfectly legal. How do the workers fight on this basis? The federal government and MPs say nothing can be done from their point of view because the matter is before the court and the federal government does not have standing there. However, once a deal has been reached, they can give money to the new owner. Once again Wilbur Ross' line that in order to "save the company" some of the pensioners and other things have to be sacrificed is shamelessly followed, Gerstenberger said. Steelworkers' own bitter experience shows that making the rich richer has nothing to do with saving companies, he pointed out, and anyone who says differently is merely indulging in self-serving argument to get

what they want.

Gerstenberger then addressed the positions of some of the main unions in the U.S. Some labor leaders say they are in disagreement with Trump's values but are willing to work with him when it comes to jobs. They have written Trump to say that they can find common ground on the economy. How can the issue of values and the economy be separate, Rolf asked, adding that all of this backwardness is being presented to split the working class so that it does not defend its class interests as a united front. This is also why the election results are presented as if the working people of the U.S. do not exist as American workers, but only in terms of race, gender, religion, and so on. The people are presented as divided in every possible way with disparate interests. All of it is to deny that there is one working class with its class interests, that people have rights by virtue of their being human and that everyone must unite to open society's path to progress on this basis.

## Civil War Scenarios Increasing

The contradictions in the United States between those asserting authority at the city and state level and those imposing federal powers and the prerogatives of authorities at various levels are so sharp that civil war scenarios are unfolding at a rapid rate. Especially since the election of Donald Trump to the presidency, this and that authority are declaring they will refuse to follow his command on issues such as immigration, deportations, policing and even military operations abroad. Los Angeles police have stated they will not cooperate with federal forces on immigration matters, as have New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. Various officials from what are called sanctuary cities, like Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Seattle have said the same.[1]

Recently, referring to Trump's statement about massive deportations, New York Governor Cuomo said he will protect people from racism and discrimination. New York is notorious for state-organized racist attacks yet Cuomo is now attempting to paint the state as opposing discrimination. He is also doing so in a manner that directly challenges the federal government.

In an open letter to all students across the state, Cuomo said, "After the harsh and ugly rhetoric of the campaign, many of you are concerned about what might happen next. Let me be clear: This is the State of New York, not a state of fear. We will not tolerate hate or racism." He goes on, "As long as you are here, you are New Yorkers. You are members of our community, and we will stand up for you." He emphasizes that New York has strict laws against "hate crimes" that will be enforced. A special hotline has been established to report incidents of discrimination. Cuomo again repeats, "Our responsibility is to protect all who are here, whether native-born or immigrant, whether documented or not."

Two things are particularly significant here. One is Cuomo's statement that "As long as you are here, you are New Yorkers." He does not say residents of New York, or that you are New Yorkers and Americans, but simply New Yorkers. Why such emphasis?

Given that it is known that New York policing agencies are all used to enforce government racism and discrimination, it cannot be seen as a defense of rights. Rather, it is more an assertion that he may use these police forces against federal agencies. It is not rights that he will protect, as his many actions as Governor against rights indicate, but rather his authority as Governor in relation to the authority of the federal government.

Cuomo further indicates this when he says he will protect all who are here in New York, whether documented or not. This sounds like a direct challenge to Trump, with his calls to target undocumented immigrants. It has the appearance of "protecting" the undocumented, when in reality it has more to do with asserting his powers as Governor while also making it appear the government can be relied on to oppose discrimination. Cuomo, like the Mayor of New York City who made similar comments, is using the substantial armed forces at his disposal to back up whatever negotiations are to take place with the federal power. It is a dangerous game that the people need to take into account when they wage resistance struggles.

The notion promoted by some that the problem of state-organized racism lies solely with Trump, while state-level governments can be relied on to protect the people is dangerous indeed. Cuomo, as a representative example, is coming forward in the context of various individual acts of a racist nature that have occurred, particularly on campuses. While these acts are widely promoted by media, the same media are generally quiet about the broad and united response against these attacks by students across the state. Similarly, the various organizations taking actions, long before and since the Trump election, including those that bring Muslims and Jews together to defend rights, are not given recognition. For every one act there are dozens and dozens of actions in support of the individuals or mosques targeted. Cuomo's stand at once opposes the stand of the people in defense of the rights of all, by giving the appearance that it is sections of the people who are racist and the government can be relied on

to protect the people, while trying to unite people behind him to oppose the incursions of the federal power.

### **Racist State Responsible for Racism and Discrimination Against the People**

The racist states at both the federal and state levels are responsible for the broad racism and discrimination against the people, such as racist mass incarceration and segregated schools and neighborhoods. This is also apparent from the ongoing police killings and brutality and continued government targeting of Muslims at home and abroad. The Justice Department investigations of 17 police departments confirmed widespread discrimination and unjust use of force, but have done nothing to stop these injustices.

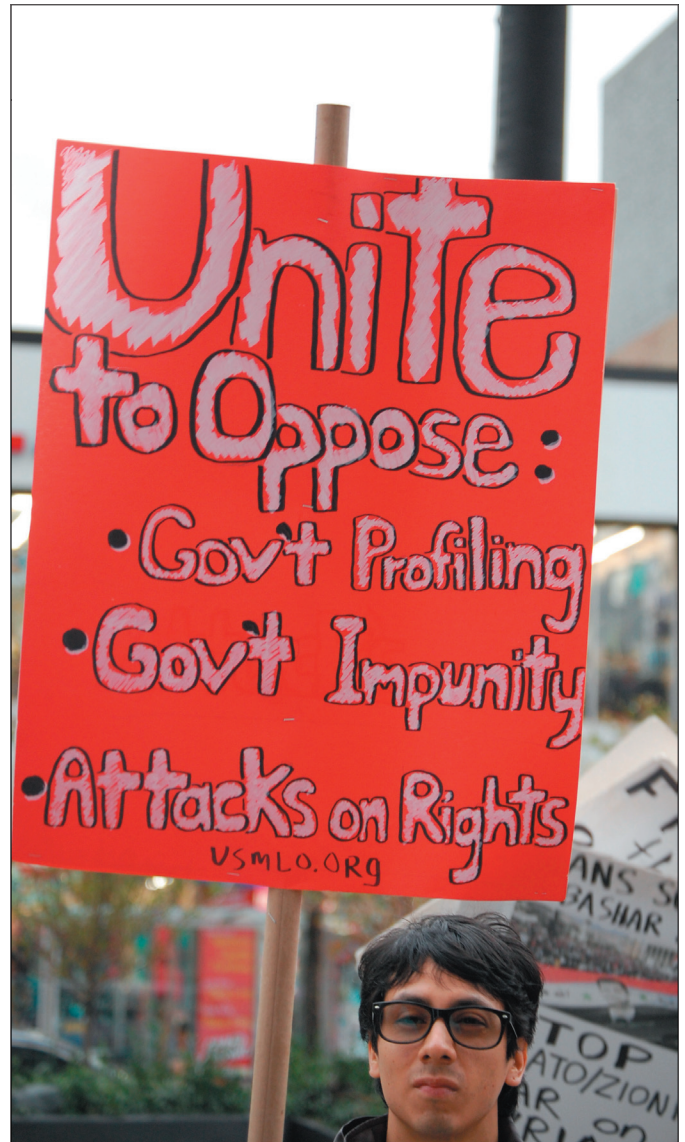
The resistance from state and local forces that Trump is facing in regards to immigration and policing are an indication of the difficulties the imperialist rulers face in imposing their dictate. The various authorities are all contending for power and Trump may not be so successful in uniting them, especially considering the various mayors have huge police forces of their own.

The centralization of police powers in the hands of the presidency is in part designed to avert civil war by either unifying and/or destroying various policing agencies to end the competition in their ranks. It highlights a main problem the imperialist rulers face. Keeping the Republic united is the responsibility of the president, charged with preserving the U.S. state. Various recent police actions, including those at Standing Rock where many police from different states and National Guard were brought together to repress resistance, are part of such efforts. All of it is done in the name of *Making America Great Again*.

Trump's appointment of Alabama Senator Jefferson Beauregard Sessions – named after the President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis and Confederate General Pierre Gustave Toutant-Beauregard – to be Attorney General in his cabinet also represents an effort to unify forces among the rulers in the north and south in conditions where civil war scenarios are already evident. Trump's means to do this is to openly embrace those known to support the slave-power of the south. It remains to be seen if this will be successful.

Sessions has also voiced support for Trump's plans to quickly begin deporting immigrants and to do so even more rapidly than Obama has done. Immigration is one of the areas where the executive can act with broad impunity and take action without Congress.

Trump and Sessions are also backing expansion of the previous government registry, known as the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS). It targeted non-citizens living legally in the U.S. as well as those entering legally, many with student visas, from 25 Asian and African countries, many mostly Muslim, including Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, and Syria. It existed from 2002-2011, with portions of it still in place, including a giant biometric database of registrants, used by the many policing agencies at all levels. While Obama recently acted to eliminate it, Congress can revoke this action and Trump can easily re-establish a similar registry



with a new rule.

The use of a special registry is not a Trump invention. It is part of the direction of governance towards one of police powers that has been developing and that Trump seeks to build on and expand. It is also a means to bring the various agencies involved together, in the name of national security. Such registries and plans more broadly for biometric ID for immigrants, then all workers, are also means by which to criminalize the workforce and enable the imperialist rulers to more readily impose their government of police powers. These are among the reasons that stepping up the broad resistance to all such measures is critical.

### **Note**

1. In the wake of Trump's renewed threats of mass deportations following his election, mayors of several "sanctuary cities" explicitly stated that they will not be changing their policy of non-cooperation with the federal government on immigration matters. These include New York City Mayor de Blasio, Chicago



Mayor Emanuel and Seattle Mayor Ed Murray. As president, Trump says he will cut off federal funding to any cities that do not assist in deportations.

Across the U.S. there are some 31 cities referred to as sanctuary cities. While not a formal designation, the term indicates that either by law or by practice, local law enforcement officials do not cooperate with the federal agency Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Non-cooperation with ICE varies from place to place, and may be for pragmatic reasons that have nothing to do with taking a stand for rights, for example to avoid lawsuits from those unjustly incarcerated. Law enforcement in some cities will only turn over suspects to ICE if they are charged with major crimes.

Mayor De Blasio said that by year-end, New York City will delete from its database the names of hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants who have received a city ID card, so

they cannot be identified or deported.

Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck said on November 14 that the force would not change its policy, in place since 1979, that bars officers from contacting people solely to investigate whether they are in the country legally. Under Chief Beck, the department has also stopped bringing suspects for minor crimes to federal authorities. Similarly, Denver Police spokesman Doug Schepman said in a statement, "Immigration enforcement is handled at the federal level, not by local law enforcement. The Denver Police Department has not participated in those enforcement efforts in the past and will not be involved in the future."

This situation raises the possibility of a clash between major U.S. cities, such as New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, whose massive police forces are increasingly militarized, and ICE, which like other federal agencies has also been increasingly militarized.

## **Eliminating the Human Factor/Social Consciousness**

Following the election in the United States, much time was spent expressing the shock of the Clinton camp at the Trump victory. Time and again, reference was made to Hillary Clinton's superior "ground game" which it was presumed would prevail over Donald Trump's "weak ground game." Clinton's "ground game" was the organization put together in states her campaign identified as key and areas within those states called Designated Market Areas (DMAs) – the trademark name used by Nielsen Media Research to identify TV stations that best reach an area and attract the most viewers.[1] These "DMAs" were identified as crucial for Clinton to win. The impression was created that as the Democratic Party candidate, Clinton had legions of volunteers and strong organizations as well as money but despite this she still lost. Some also now claim that she lost due to her campaign not "field testing" its decisions and following what was happening "on the ground" and that her campaign deployed its "ground game" to the wrong places.

This is meant to cover up the fact that the U.S. system of elections, political parties and governance is exhausted. The elections, far from re-establishing a new equilibrium within the status quo, are being used to complete the process of "change" towards ways of governing which bypass political parties and government structures. In fact, elections are being used to bring in government of police powers to replace government of laws.

In this regard, the U.S. presidential election is also an example of the destruction of political parties, which is one of the salient features of the crisis of the system called representative democracy. This, in turn, destroys any participation of members of the polity in governance. Once political parties cease to func-

tion as primary organizations, the link is also broken between the governed and those whom they entrust to represent them in government. To speak of citizen participation in governance is meaningless.

Furthermore, there can be no equality in a system based on privilege where the only role given to "we the people" is to hand over all decision-making to a select few. In the United States, Britain, Canada and all other countries which adopted the same electoral system, the process was designed in such a manner that "we the people" only have a role to play during an election. Membership in a political party was supposed to be the link between the individual member of the polity and the political power through which the individual members of the polity were supposed to have a say over the candidates and representatives and the vision they and their party put forward for the country.

This link to political parties was always a way to preserve the class rule of the property owners and, since the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries, its elitist nature to serve the very rich and preserve privilege became evident, especially once universal suffrage was won by the people. During the 20th century the form served the monopolies and today it has been usurped by the oligopolies, which have taken over governments and thus control the political process and electoral systems.

The way in which the recent election campaign was carried out reveals a vicious struggle for power within the factions of the ruling class conducted by powerful oligopolies. Its aim to prevent anyone from thinking and acting as part of a political movement of the people which changes things in their favor was also paramount.

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# Bot Use in the Presidential Election

Studies and media reports before and after the November 8 presidential election point to an unprecedented use of social media robots known as “bots.” While the government and media have been focusing attention on claims concerning hacking, the use of bots to manipulate public opinion and influence the elections is largely ignored.

A November 1 article in *The Atlantic* speaks to this, stating that in the election “the size, strategy, and potential effects of social automation are unprecedented – never have we seen such an all-out bot war.” *The Atlantic* reports that while in the final debate, Trump and Clinton readily condemned Russia for attempting to influence the election via cyber-attacks, “neither candidate has mentioned the millions of bots that work to manipulate public opinion on their behalf.” Researchers in the field who are part of the Project on Computational Propaganda of the Oxford Internet Institute at Oxford University indicate that “the U.S. election saw perhaps the most pervasive use of bots in attempts to manipulate public opinion in the short history of these automated political tools.” Recent findings of the Project on Computational Propaganda’s work can be found at [politicalbots.org](http://politicalbots.org).

## What Are Bots?

A bot is software that automates online tasks. They are used for commercial purposes and also increasingly by political campaigns. In the latter case, bots refer primarily to software that automates social media profiles and their interaction. They operate accounts presenting as real people, produce content, and interact with real users. Bots on social media platforms are designed to rapidly deploy messages, replicate themselves, and pass as human users.

Bots are easily programmable through the Twitter application programming interface (API) and can be deployed by anyone with basic coding knowledge. Their use in political campaigns is referred to as “automated propaganda” or “computational propaganda.”

Governments, militaries, candidates and their marketing agencies use bots for everything from creating fake accounts that attack individuals, directing followers to “fake news” and manipulating and distorting online polls to artificially inflating social-media traffic and the popularity of individuals or campaigns.

Whereas one person could produce, at best, several hundred messages on social media sites per day, bots can tweet, for instance, thousands upon thousands of times. These efforts drive up the numbers surrounding particular conversation elements on social media, making them spread further, “going viral” or “trending.”

Bots are also linked through what are called “botnets” or networks of bots. These are bot-controlled social media accounts that are connected to one another and built to message and follow one another. They can be comprised of hundreds of unique accounts but can be controlled by one user from a single computer. They can be used to carry out coordinated attacks against individuals.

Researchers indicate that “political bots tend to be developed and deployed in sensitive political moments when public opinion

is polarized.”

## Bot Use in the U.S. Election

The study *Bots and Automation over Twitter during the U.S. Election* published November 17 by researchers from the Project on Computational Propaganda reveals the extent to which bots were used during the campaign.[1]

The authors indicate that the use of automated accounts was deliberate and strategic throughout the election. They emphasize that bots attacking the Clinton campaign were more sophisticated and targeted than those which targeted the Trump campaign.

The research team concluded that more than a third of pro-Trump tweets and nearly a fifth of pro-Clinton tweets between the first and second presidential debates came from automated accounts, which produced more than 1 million tweets in total.

One pro-Trump bot, @amrightnow, had more than 33,000 followers and spammed Twitter with “anti-Clinton conspiracy theories.” It generated 1,200 posts during the final debate.

@loserDonldTrump retweeted all mentions of @realDonaldTrump that include the word loser -- producing more than 2,000 tweets a day.

The study found that for the first two presidential debates, pro-Clinton bots were outnumbered by pro-Trump bots four-to-one. By the final debate, that gap had widened to seven pro-Trump bots for every pro-Clinton bot.

It also found that during waking hours, highly-automated accounts were generating between 20 and 25 per cent of the traffic on Twitter about the election during the days leading up to the vote.

The authors note that the pace of automated political campaigning dropped off after Election Day – “a reminder that campaigners and programmers behind bot accounts often disable their purpose-built automation on victory.”

The findings were based on a collection of about 19.4 million Twitter posts gathered in the first nine days of November. Tweets were selected based on hashtags[2] identifying certain subjects and identified automated posting by finding accounts that posted at least 50 times a day. These accounts are described as bots that are “either irregularly curated by people or actively maintained by people who employ scheduling algorithms and other applications for automating social media communications.”

“For example, the top 20 accounts, which were mostly bots and highly automated accounts, averaged over 1,300 tweets a day and they generated more than 234,000 tweets,” the researchers note. “The top 100 accounts, which still used high levels of automation, generated around 450,000 tweets at an average rate of 500 tweets per day.” They also note that they expect the actual number of bots to be much higher; many bots, after all, are built to avoid obvious methods of identification.

The researchers note that as the election continued the extent and sophistication of bot use increased, especially bots operating against Clinton or for Trump. They say, for example, that pro-Trump hashtags were inserted into more and more combinations of “neutral and pro-Clinton” hashtags, such that by the time of



the election fully 81.9 per cent of the highly automated content involved some pro-Trump messaging.

They add that automated accounts tweeting with pro-Clinton hashtags also increased their activities over the course of the campaign period but never reached the level of automation behind pro-Trump traffic.

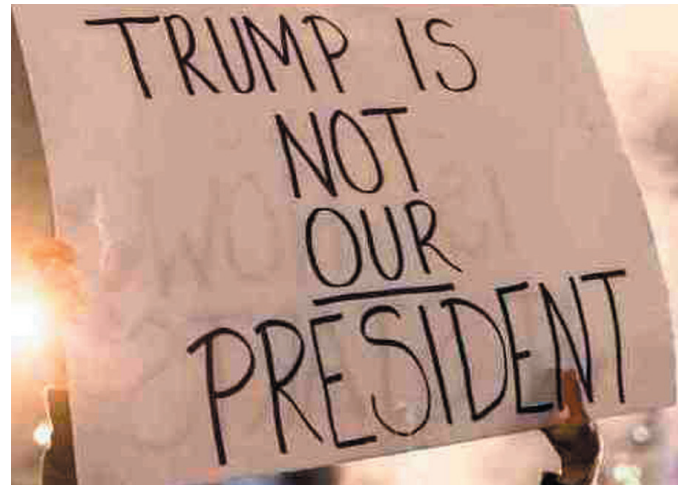
On August 4, *Vanity Fair* author Nick Bilton wrote about Trump's claims of having over 22 million Twitter followers, asserting that many of them were in fact bots. He wrote, "According to the site Status People, which tracks how many Twitter accounts are bots, inactive, or real, only 21 percent of Trump's Twitter followers are real, active users on the platform. The rest are either bots, dead bots, or real people who no longer log into Twitter."

Bilton also reported on bots used to ridicule Trump: "One example of such a bot was created by Brad Hayes, a roboticist and artificial-intelligence researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who runs a bot called @DeepDrumpf. This fun little bot, which has 22,000 mostly real followers, uses a neural network that has been trained to tweet based on past transcripts from the real Trump. Just by looking at a couple of examples, the @DeepDrumpf bot shows how easy it is to make something sound real, or at least like a real Trump sound bite, even though it is completely fake. One tweet, in reply to Ted Cruz, notes, 'If I get elected president, believe me folks. I will bring unbelievable aggression. I bring that out in people. @tedcruz #Trump2016.' Another tweet reads: 'I can destroy a man's life by firing him over the wall. That's always been what I'm running, to kill people and create jobs.'"

Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, Hillary for America, built a bot to text users Trump's quotes on selected topics. People who signed up to "Text Trump" received messages in a style intended to mimic Trump, asking them to question [the bot] on topics such as the economy, Hillary Clinton or China. When it responded with quotes from Trump himself, users could type "Source," and receive video or text evidence that Trump had said those things.

Although much emphasis is being placed on the use of bots on Twitter, especially "pro-Trump" bots, their use against Trump has been less publicized. For example, U.S. author Sasha Issenberg was interviewed by the Liberals' chief data strategist for the 2015 federal election, Tom Pitfield, at a December 14 event, "What Just Happened? Inside the 2016 U.S. Election," hosted by neo-liberal think-tank Canada 2020. Issenberg noted that in past elections the Obama campaign had a system whereby its supporters would give access to their Facebook account to the campaign which would then, using a bot based on an algorithm, indicate who they should contact and how (through social media, phone calls etc.) based on merging this data with voter registration data for what were identified as battlegrounds and user profile information. Issenberg noted that this would encourage supporters to interact with people who they might not otherwise talk to about "politics," all directed by algorithm.

The November 1 article in *The Atlantic* quotes two of the Oxford study's authors. Samuel Woolley and Douglas Guilbeault write that bots "silence people and groups who might otherwise have a stake in a conversation. At the same time they make some users seem more popular, they make others less likely to speak. This



spiral of silence results in less discussion and diversity in politics. Moreover, bots used to attack journalists might cause them to stop reporting on important issues because they fear retribution and harassment."

In an October 19 article in the *Washington Post* titled, "One in four debate tweets comes from a bot. Here's how to spot them," Caitlin Dewey writes: "Bots aren't attempting to change hearts and minds – that is an ambitious task for a bit of code. Instead, most bots exist simply to muddy the facts, making it difficult for neutral bystanders to discern the truth and easier for partisans to reject any views that may clash."

Paraphrasing Philip Howard, another of the Oxford study's authors, Dewey says, "Bots, particularly pro-Trump bots, tend to circulate links to persuasive conspiracy sites -- often, they're the primary force keeping these links in circulation. In fact, Trump bots tend to be more sophisticated than Clinton ones, utilizing hashtags and including pictures that make them more persuasive.

"During the first debate, pro-Trump bots focused on Clinton's email scandal and Benghazi; during the second, they honed in on the whole 'I'll-send-her-to-jail' thing. Pro-Clinton bots, meanwhile, spread a number of messages about Trump's taxes during the first debate, and pivoted to his treatment of women in the second."

Quoting Howard, she writes, "In 2008 and even 2012, Twitter bots were used to make someone seem more popular. Now they're more about keeping negative messaging, misinformation, suspicion and even hate speech alive."

### Notes

1. Bence Kollanyi, Philip N. Howard, and Samuel C. Woolley. "Bots and Automation over Twitter during the U.S. Election." Data Memo 2016.4. Oxford, UK: Project on Computational Propaganda, [www.politicalbots.org](http://www.politicalbots.org).

2. A hashtag is a comment or statement that begins with the pound sign (#) that users add to their social media posts so that all those interested in the topic that hashtag refers to can follow it. Users generally see social media posts that have been re-posted by others, or liked or commented on by other users. This is done using social media sites' algorithms which boost popular content further.

of actions, including rallies and marches Friday and Saturday, direct actions of various kinds, a teach-in, summit, forum and concerts are all being organized. As well sister rallies are being organized both on Friday, the day of the inauguration, and Saturday, when the Women's March on Washington takes place. Actions in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and cities worldwide are taking place Saturday as part of efforts to oppose government attacks on women's rights and reject the Trump agenda attacking all.

All the many participants are contending with a situation where a government of police powers is being imposed and discussion on how to be effective in organizing resistance is taking place. An important factor to consider is the reality that with the rulers resorting to a government of police powers, they are no longer concerned with legitimacy. Police powers by their nature are arbitrary and implemented on the basis of broad impunity. It is not just a matter of police and military forces of various kinds taking action, but rather a means of governance in a situation where the rulers have no solutions and where they are compelled to block the striving of the people to modernize and broaden democracy. What we are seeing now is the elimination of a government of laws, with Trump positioned to do so even more blatantly and with greater impunity than previous presidents.

While a government of laws must at least have the appearance of legitimacy and concern for social needs, a government of police powers does not. Its concern is to punish all dissenters so as to preserve the state. The election showed that abroad and at home, the rulers are no longer concerned with maintaining even the appearance of a functioning political process, with functioning political parties, which are all part of legitimacy. Trump is the embodiment of this reality.

This issue of legitimacy is a very important one when considering tactics for resistance and advancing a pro-active program of fighting for politics of empowerment in the course of defending the rights of all. A government concerned about legitimacy appears to "listen" to the public and to uphold the constitution, with freedom of speech and assembly. A government of police



powers has no such concern. It acts to criminalize protest and to make clear that, as individuals and collectives, all are to do as you are told or face the wrath of police powers. The many arbitrary checkpoints at actions, the police presence and live-exercise for policing agencies of all varieties for the weekend, decisions by these police as to allow or not allow particular actions, are indicative of the exercise of these police powers. Protesters are a police category, considered things, not human beings with rights. And all is done in the name of security.

In this situation, the old notion of organizing actions with the aim of pressuring politicians to respond has little place. Our security does not lie with relying on the politicians and the existing political process, which has shown itself to be completely dysfunctional and against the interests of the people. *Our Security Lies in Our Fight for the Rights of All*, with actions aimed at stepping up the organized character of this fight and quality of political discussion and analysis. This means putting forward our own anti-war, pro-social program and putting organizing for it to the fore. The pressure all are facing is to be reactive and fall into the many traps to remain stuck in the old. This includes focusing on reacting to Trump the individual, to individual cabinet members, to expecting politicians to be political when their whole role, and that of the existing set up is to depoliticize the people so as to keep them out of power. Organizing discussion to analyze developments and being pro-active in developing a political movement for empowerment, a democracy of our making, points the way forward.



# Inauguration Events January 19-21

*CodePink*

## Thursday January 19

### **What: Peace Ball**

**When: 8 pm to 1 am**

**Where: National Museum of African American History and Culture, 1400 Constitution Ave. NW**

The night before the inauguration, at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the 2017 *Peace Ball: Voices of Hope and Resistance* takes place. It will celebrate the accomplishments and successes of the past four years and speak to continuing to be the change we want to see in the world. Speakers and hosts include Medea Benjamin, Jodie Evans, Alice Walker, Angela Davis, Danny Glover, Eve Ensler, Van Jones, Amy Goodman, and many more. There will be food, open bar, live music, and dancing. All museum exhibits will be open during the Peace Ball.

### **What: Protest the "Deploraball"**

**When: 8-10pm**

**Where: National Press Club, 529 14th St NW.**

A protest at the Deploraball, backing Trump, will take place outside the Press Club.

## Friday, January 20: Inauguration Day

### **What: Protest Inaugural Prayer Breakfast**

**When: 7:00 am**

**Where: Trump Hotel, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave NW**

The 2017 Inaugural Prayer Breakfast will include Donald Trump, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, Mike Pence, and others. A protest is organized outside the hotel, where participants will rise and resist the racism, occupation, and apartheid of Trump and Netanyahu.

### **What: Demonstration along inaugural parade route**

**When: 7am**

**Where: Freedom Plaza, 1355 Pennsylvania Ave NW at 14th St**

Answer Coalition is organizing a protest along the Inaugural Parade route. <https://www.facebook.com/AnswerCoalition/7am>

### **Disrupt J20 Schedule of Events for January 20**

*disruptj20.org*

**Early Morning Blockade Actions** (see webpage for locations and times)

Movement for Black Lives

Trade Justice

Climate Justice

Showing Up for Racial Justice

Labor Direct Action

The Future Is Feminist

Qockblockade Brigade: Queer Resistance on J20

Communities Under Attack Fight Back!

**9am Outdoor Convergence Space @ McPherson Square opens**

**10am Anti-Capitalist Anti-Fascist Bloc @ Francis Scott Key Memorial**

**12pm Festival of Resistance**, permitted march starting @ Columbus Circle (in front of Union Station) to McPherson Square, K Street and Vermont Ave. NW, near Lafayette Park

Permitted march that includes marching bands, drummers, puppets and displays of art and culture showing the diversity and power of resistance. Rally at McPherson Square, where various groups will converge.

### **#J20Resist:**

**What: Rally and March**

**When: 6am**

**Where: Union Station**, at "Anti" Columbus Circle; march at 10 am to rally at McPherson Square



## Occupy Inauguration Events for January 20

### **What: Occupy Inauguration**

**When: 9:30am Rally and March 12:30pm**

**Where: Malcolm X Park, 2400 15th St NW**

**2:00pm Rally at McPherson Square**

From day one of the new administration, our movements will need to unite and fight to advance the revolution. We reject the domination of Wall Street and the billionaire class over our society, and oppose this rigged political and economic system. We stand against both the danger Trump represents and the corruption that backed Clinton. Neither party represents the interests of the 99%.

## UnNaugural Event for January 20

**What: UnNaugural Concert: Playing it Forward Voices for Social Justice**

**When: 7:30 pm**

**Where: Cultural Arts Center, Montgomery College, 7995 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, Maryland**

The UnNaugural Concert will feature Grammy-nominated vocalists Sweet Honey in the Rock and musical duo Emma's Revolution. Funds raised by the event will go to support the American Civil Liberties Union, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, League of Conservation Voters, National LGBTQ Task Force, and Planned Parenthood. Tickets are \$100, limited income \$60 and student \$25. Get your tickets at [unnaugural.org](http://unnaugural.org)

### Anti-Inauguration Event for January 20

**What: The Anti-Inauguration at The Lincoln Theatre**

**When: 8-10:00 pm**

**Where: Lincoln Theatre, 1215 U St NW.**

This free event is organized by Haymarket Books, Jacobin Magazine, and Verso Books and features Naomi Klein, Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor, and Anand Gopal. Doors open at 7:00 pm.

### One Billion Rising

Throughout Inauguration day, and during the January 21 Women's March on Washington, CodePink and others will participate in One Billion Rising Revolution Solidarity Against the Exploitation of Women flash mobs. Each Valentine's Day CODEPINK joins groups across the world to rise against personal, systematic, and state-sponsored violence against women. This year we will also join One Billion Rising to dance and rise through Inauguration in a call to action for the coming four years. Start learning the Break the Chain dance choreography now!



### Saturday, January 21: Women's March on Washington

**What: March and Rally**

**When: 10 am:**

**Where: Independence and Third Ave.**

The march begins at the intersection of Independence Ave and Third St SW, near the U.S. Capitol. Participants will march together with our partners and children for the protection of our rights, our safety, our health, and our families and in solidarity with those who were most insulted, marginalized,

and threatened during the election cycle – immigrants of all statuses, Muslims and those of diverse religious faiths, people who identify as LGBTQ, Native people, Black and Brown people, people with disabilities, survivors of sexual assault. We will send a bold message to the Trump administration on their first day in office, and to the world, that Women Say No to War and that defending the most marginalized among us is defending all of us.

### WeRise Teach-In

**What: #WeRise Teach-In**

**When: 2pm-8:30 pm**

**Where: All Souls Church Unitarian, 1500 Harvard St NW**

J21 #WeRise Teach-In, organized by Public Citizen, will take place right after the women's march. It will be a warm space for folks to come to gain a deeper understanding of the critical challenges facing our nation, find ways to plug into grassroots campaigns that tackle those challenges, and connect with people from an array of movements and acquire skills to become more effective organizers at home.

Panel discussions will focus on peace, democratic rights and the basic rights of women, immigrants, Muslims, people of color and the environment.

Food trucks will be present from 4-7pm for folks to be able to buy food of their choice as needed.

#### Program

**1-1:30pm**

Doors open — Registration, Tea, Coffee & Snacks

**1:30-2:10** Kickoff programming – building movements, protecting vulnerable communities

**2:10-2:20** Break

**2:20-4:20** Building Social Movements Across Race and Class (Training)

**2:20-3:15** **Workshops and Panels Session A**

*Protecting Women's Rights (Panel)*

*Pushing the Envelope: Local Campaigns in D.C. (Panel)*

*Trumped Up Trade (Panel)*

*What's Race Got to Do With It? (Training)*

*Tactics to Defend & Expand Democracy (Training)*

**3:15-3:25** Break

**3:25-4:20** **Workshops and Panels Session B**

*Standing Green & Strong (Panel)*

*Resist, Restore & Reimagine: The Fight for Democracy in 2017 (Panel)*



**Following the Women's March**

**#WeRise A Teach-In**

**A warm place for activism, inspiration, learning & movement building.**



**Jan 21, 2017  
1:30 - 8:30 PM  
All Souls  
Church Unitarian  
1500 Harvard St NW  
Washington, DC**

**Details & RSVP at [www.j21teachin.org](http://www.j21teachin.org)**

*Organizing on Safety Pins & Needles (Training)*  
*Youth Advocacy & Organizing (Training)*  
*Mini Unconference Space*  
**4:20-4:30** Break (Food Trucks Outside All Souls Church)  
**4:30-5:30** Large Unity Panel: Fighting for Democracy

**5:30-5:40** Break (Food Trucks Outside All Souls Church)  
**5:40-6:35** State Caucuses (Connect & plan engagement in state & local campaigns)  
**6:35-6:45** Break (head over to solidarity sing-in)  
**6:45-8:30** Solidarity Sing-in and Closing Speaker

**What: Public Deliberation: The Multigenerational Resistance of Black Women**

**When:** 2-5pm  
**Where:** MLK Library Auditorium, 901 G. St NW (between 9th and G. St.)  
 From SNCC and Civil Rights to Black Power and the Women's March. Dialogue and deliberation.

**What: Occupy Inaugural**

**When:** 11-4pm Green News Network Live stream  
**5:30pm:** Inaugurate the Resistance  
**Where:** Hamilton Crown Plaza  
 Inaugurate the Resistance with Jill Stein, Kshama Sawant, Chris Hedges, and Chase IronEyes

**Sunday, January 22**

**What: Occupy Inauguration Summit**

**When:** 10am  
**Where:** Contact CodePink for location

CodePink is proud to invite individuals, speakers, and organizers to the "Occupy Inauguration Summit" to ensure the momentum gained from protests of the inauguration of Donald Trump continues with conversations on uniting our causes forward. There will be a continental breakfast and light lunch on January 22 for the Summit discussions. The goal of these events is to build relationships amongst organizations, leaders, and activists and to discuss how we can work together moving forward.





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## YOUTH BUILDING RESISTANCE IN 2016

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