

RAY O' LIGHT NEWSLETTER

November-December 2016 Number 99

Publication of the Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA



THE IMPACT OF TRUMP'S "SURPRISE" VICTORY ON THE U.S. EMPIRE AND THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS

by RAY LIGHT

The opening words of our first comprehensive statement on the 2016 Presidential Election, back at the very beginning of the year, explain the most dramatic result of the November 8th election, the election of Donald Trump as President of the USA.

At that time, even before the Iowa Caucuses and the New Hampshire Primary, we observed that, "The 2016 Presidential Race thus far reflects the bitter experience of the working class, the urban and rural poor, and the middle class with capitalist austerity for the 99% and the almost unprecedented boom years for Wall Street and finance capital. The assault on our conditions of life has been provided by the bipartisan 'Republicrats' under Republican

President George W. Bush and Democratic President Barack Obama since the economic crisis hit in 2007 and 2008." ("A Revolutionary Approach to the Sanders Presidential Campaign," *Ray O' Light Newsletter #94*, January-February 2016)

We continued, "... the TV debates, polls, rallies, and constant media coverage have revealed that there is remarkably little support for the 'Republicrat' '2016 heavy favorites' (mainstream Democratic and Republican candidates, Hillary Clinton and especially Jeb Bush)." "Instead, the strong showing of right wing, fascistic Tea Party candidates such as Trump, Carson, Fiorina, Cruz, Rubio et al. on the Republican side and the social-democrat Sanders

(contd. on p. 2)

A Letter to our Readers

A Special Feature Article in each of our 2017 Newsletters Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution

Dear Reader,

The election of Donald Trump as U.S. President just a few days ago should be a wake-up call to workers and anti-imperialists in the USA and throughout the world that the task of fighting for a Socialist future is urgent. The vote for Trump here, coming on the heels of the Brexit vote in Britain and with Marine Le Pen on the

French election horizon, and so much more, underscore the fact that, if the path to Socialist Revolution is not taken, the international working class and all toiling humanity are on a collision course to a major world war and possibly an end to the potential of the planet Earth to remain a human habitat.

Nine years ago I wrote:

"The imperialist propagandists wish for us to believe that socialism is an impossible dream. These bourgeois spokespeople have been given invaluable support in their effort by the liberals and pacifists, the social democrats, Trotskyites, and revisionists. To the extent that they have succeeded in getting proletarians and oppressed peoples to believe their propaganda in the first years

(contd. on p. 6)

Do you know who said it??

"More than anything, this election is an indictment of politics as usual. For too long, the political elites have embraced economic policies that hold down wages, increase inequality, diminish opportunity and ship American jobs overseas. Voters in both the primary and general election have delivered a clear message: enough."

Hint: This person is responding on November 9th to the news that Donald Trump has won the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. He was a major player in this dramatic and surprising election and needs to look in the mirror!! For he speaks here exactly the opposite of how he really operated.

—Still stumped? See page 6 for the mystery answer.

Also included in this issue:

Poking the Bear by Cindy Sheehanpage 7

(Impact of Trump Victory continued)

on the Democratic side reflects *some level of popular mass rejection of 'Republicrat Rule' and the Wall Street imperialist ruling class they represent.*"(ibid. Emphasis in original.)

Throughout this year, "popular mass rejection of Republicrat Rule and the Wall Street ruling class" has remained a constant feature of the campaign. In the Republican primary season, Trump's crude, militantly populist, as well as chauvinistic and disrespectful, rhetoric resonated with the angry and desperate white Republican voters and paved the way for his nomination over all the career politicians connected to each other and to wealthy patrons.

During the Democratic Primaries, the Sanders campaign made an excellent showing, attracting thousands of enthusiastic old and young (but also mostly white) voters to his rallies and millions of small campaign donations to his coffers. Like Trump, Sanders, too was angry but his anger was more consistently and constructively focused against Wall Street and its rigged system. On the eve of the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, thanks to Wikileaks, the fact that Sanders was being cheated out of the Democratic Party nomination by the Democratic National Committee was exposed. DNC Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz had to abruptly resign and forfeit her prominent role in the Convention. Cynically and brazenly, the Clinton Campaign immediately hired her "because they could."



Sanders had made a deal to support the ultimate Democratic nominee when he joined the Democrats (he was previously "an Independent"). Even when it turned out that the DNC had rigged the Democratic primaries against

him and in favor of Hillary Clinton, he refused to break with them. During the convention, Sanders tried to convince his disillusioned and devastated supporters to transfer their allegiance to Clinton. But, for the most part, this most enlightened sector of the electorate didn't buy it. Despite Sanders, and despite the skillfully choreographed Democratic Convention featuring a superstar lineup of entertainers, politicians including the sitting president and first lady, war heroes, military leaders and intelligence chiefs all praising Hillary Clinton

to the skies, the Clinton campaign could not hide the fact that it represented "business as usual." In a year when the voters were passionate about making "change," could there have been a more compromised and entrenched representative of the status quo?!

In our leaflet passed out at the Democratic National Convention site, we addressed "the Trump menace." We pointed out that, "In style and substance, **Donald Trump** is a fascist politician in the classic Adolph Hitler and 'National Socialist' (Nazi) sense." He combined "demagogic populist rhetoric proclaiming the system is rigged against the majority of us, on the one hand, with hatred toward Latino immigrants, Muslim religious believers, Afro-American citizens and many other 'non-white American' ethnic groups here and around the world , on the other." We continued, "But Trump's similarities to Hitler and German fascism of the 1930's does not automatically make him the *main* political target who must be stopped at all costs at this particular historical moment. Fascism comes to power through different paths..."



In this context, we then stated that, "**Clinton, the Democrat, is the absolute worst candidate to support 'against Trump.'**" As a loyal tool of Wall Street, Clinton will not educate the voters against the financial oligarchy but will apologize and cover up for Wall Street. Coupled with her Democratic Party rhetoric, this will only enrage the voters all the more, moving them further into the Trump camp. It was precisely Sanders' focus on the rigged Wall Street economy and politics that allowed his candidacy to thrive against all odds. With Sanders out of the race the same old 'Republicrat' rhetoric will provide new fuel to the Trump fire." ("Wall Street Has Rigged the System," *Revolutionary Organization of Labor (USA)* leaflet distributed at DNC, July 2016)

This is precisely what occurred. As the campaign unfolded, no matter how scandalous Trump's personal conduct and how massive the media exposures of Trump became, starting way behind after an amateurish Republican National Convention, Trump's strength continued to grow. Clinton remained the candidate of Wall Street and the status quo; Trump remained the candidate of "change." The defection from the Trump campaign of such Republican ruling class mainstays as the Bush family, including the last two Republican

presidents, 2012 Republican presidential nominee, Mitt Romney, and so many others, only served to convince impoverished, angry and alienated voters that Trump represents them. In fact, 37% of union members and 41% of union families voted for the billionaire who blatantly stated that workers are paid too much! Indeed, there can be no doubt that many of those who had supported Bernie Sanders, the leftist Democratic candidate, ended up voting for Donald Trump, the rightist Republican candidate.

-What was surprising about the Trump Triumph-

What the pollsters and pundits of the monopoly capitalist controlled media got wrong was based on voter turnout. They universally overestimated the turnout of the Clinton voters and underestimated the turnout of the Trump voters, especially the white working class vote that many ignored entirely.

Corporate media's arrogance and complacency was strengthened by the following: The rich and powerful and the political, cultural and media movers and shakers of both the Republican and Democratic parties were promoting Clinton. And it served the interests of the Wall Street ruling class to offer as few promises to the voters as possible while getting their candidate elected. What resulted was a "scandal of the week" campaign by Clinton, echoed and magnified by the monopoly capitalist-controlled media, that played into the hands of the petty, ignorant and imperious Trump.



Moreover, the Trump campaign was amateurish from beginning to end. By contrast, the Clinton campaign, was the slickest and most traditional that money could buy — so slick that even the labor leaders at the Democratic National Convention were prevented from saying "working class" or "TPP." Thanks to the Sanders campaign, the Democratic National Platform was the most progressive in memory. But once Sanders was disposed of and Clinton was battling Trump, there was hardly any mention of issues that might motivate desperate and dissatisfied voters to support Clinton. On the contrary, reflecting the widespread difficult circumstances of the 99%, Trump wanted to make "America Great Again." In a year that voters were seeking "change," Clinton countered with, "America is *still* great – everything's coming up roses."

Clinton and the Democrats also allegedly had a strong "ground game," a well organized machine for identifying, mobilizing and turning out their voters. But the union men and women who generally staff such a machine were especially uninspired by the status quo candidate and the campaign. Many top bureaucratic and corrupt AFL-CIO and Change to Win union leaders were privately concerned about their members' alienation from Clinton and the Democrats but kept their mouths shut and continued to play the same old game with the Democrats. Likewise, most Congressional Black Caucus members, NAACP leaders and other privileged Black leaders had fronted for Clinton in helping to block and cheat the Sanders campaign and they did the same. In light of Obama's record number of deportations of undocumented workers and their families, a point emphasized by Trump in the last debate, the fact that Clinton clung so tightly to President Obama's coattails, also had to have diminished her Latino support. Thus, the corrupt and bureaucratic labor, Afro-American and Latino leadership tied to the Democratic Party's corporatist candidate played right into the hands of the white supremacist Republican forces carrying out voter suppression efforts.

The powerful influence of the monopoly capitalist-controlled mass media was reflected in the expectation among all strata of the population that the question was not whether Clinton would defeat Trump but by how much Clinton would win the presidency and whether she could lead a Democratic sweep that would bring about a Democratic Senate and maybe a Democratic House. Indeed, though he received a phenomenal amount of TV time that amounted to tens of millions of dollars of free advertising, only one major city newspaper in the entire USA endorsed Trump.

-The white working class vote-

Elsewhere we have pointed out: "In the post World War II period, during sixty years of U.S. imperialist hegemony in the world capitalist camp, the U.S. working class, especially its more privileged sector, was bribed out of the U.S. imperialist super-profits. Even more problematic for the U.S. working class was the dissolution of the socialist camp as well as the dismantling of the international communist movement. Taken together, this resulted in *extreme political isolation of the U.S. working class from the rest of the international working class.*" (page xviii, Introduction to Ray O. Light's "Nothing to Lose But our Chains – A World to Win!," 2013)

(contd. on p. 4)

Especially the white sector of the U.S. working class became politically subordinate to the U.S. monopoly capitalist ruling class, helping to provide a relatively stable home base area as U.S. imperialism expanded its exploitation and domination of the world's peoples. Thus, as the U.S. Empire has begun to decline and the workers, under "Republicrat political rule" on behalf of Wall Street have been forced to shoulder the main burden of economic crisis and decline, it is "natural" that many white workers would seek to "make America great again" under the baton of an egotistical, perhaps maniacal, billionaire bully such as Donald Trump who offered a chauvinistic path backwards and even appeared to be "independent" of Wall Street. Trump's flights of fancy and combination of chauvinism and populism is reminiscent of Adolph Hitler's appeals to the defeated and humiliated German people in the 1930's.

While Sanders was in the running, there was the opportunity for some union workers and others to rally around pro-labor, pro-worker demands on Wall Street finance capital in unity with the Afro-American people, Latino immigrants, and Muslim workers. Once Sanders was out of the race, however, Trump was the only "serious" candidate for "change."

SOME CONCLUSIONS:

During this 2016 election campaign, the voters, especially those who backed Trump and Sanders have expressed their disgust with Wall Street and its Republicrat political puppets. And this disgust and rejection of Wall Street needs to be nurtured and activated in the period ahead. In the 2016 presidential election, after critically supporting the Sanders Campaign in the primary season, ROL, USA urged a boycott of the presidential vote coupled with down ballot voting or promoted a third party (Green Party, etc.) presidential vote in opposition to the Republicrat Parties with the most unpopular "major" candidates in memory.

But, as we repeatedly pointed out, even while we critically supported the Sanders campaign, *none of the candidates* of either the Democratic or the Republican wing of the Republicrat party, including Sanders, *opposed the U.S. Empire* and its brutal imperialist wars and occupations in the Middle East and North Africa, in Latin America and elsewhere across the globe. It is *this international dimension of the U.S. Empire* that has been the leading edge of the drive toward fascism in the USA.

In that light, a Clinton presidency would have been more dangerous for the international working class and the oppressed peoples of the world. One example: The anti-Russia hysteria fomented by the Clinton/Democratic Party campaign in concert with the monopoly capitalist-controlled mass media turned Clinton's Wikileaks problem into a Trump problem of allegedly being "soft" on Russia and promoting Russian interference in the U.S. election. A President Clinton could have led in short order to a major war between Russia and the USA, as Clinton's bloody record as Secretary of State in Libya, Syria, Honduras et al. demonstrates. Certainly the Trump election has made this specific horrific prospect less likely at least in the near future.



Indeed, all the world's forces outside of the USA that are in contradiction with the U.S. Empire, with U.S. finance capital, with the U.S. state apparatus, including the international working class and

oppressed peoples, should have a period of opportunity to advance their causes and to hasten the decline of the U.S. Empire. For Trump's orientation is that of an isolationist, and an ignorant one at that, and it will take time for the Republicrats to take control of his foreign policy, including his military policy. But proletarian revolutionary forces should be seeking maximum proletarian internationalist unity in the struggle against international capital. Comrades around the world should be awakened to their own narrow nationalism and self satisfied sectarianism that has plagued international communism for decades and helped create the electoral base that produced Trump in the USA.

In our view, a fascist was elected U.S. president, but strong elements of fascism had already arrived here long before Trump's election. In our leaflet at the 2016 Democratic National Convention, *the Revolutionary Organization of Labor (USA)* pointed out that, "U.S. fascism has significantly advanced on the shoulders of every U.S. president at least from Reagan to Bush I to Clinton to Bush II to Obama."

While Clinton was more immediately dangerous regarding the U.S. Empire's unceasing war abroad against the rest of the international working class and the oppressed peoples of the world, Trump represents a more immediate danger to the

(contd. on p. 5)

(Impact of Trump Victory continued)

workers and oppressed nationalities *within the U.S. multinational state*. The Trump campaign with its outrageously chauvinistic attacks on Muslims, Latino immigrants, Afro-Americans, its misogyny toward women as well as antipathy toward LGBT, disabled and other marginalized folks, the violence encouraged toward so many by Trump himself, all *point toward an increasingly fascist culture and society to match the fascistic bipartisan Republican foreign policy that has included an unending war of terror over the last 15 years against the peoples of the world, including those of us in the belly of the beast itself*.

Certainly, the unprecedented role of the FBI, the *domestic* national police arm of the U.S. Empire, during the last week of the campaign, helped carry Trump to victory. And it is a sign of Trump's capacity to be the catalyst for a consolidated fascist U.S. society.

At the same time, with Trump as president, promoters of harmful illusions about Obama, Clinton and the Democrats such as the social democratic gatekeepers at the helm of the AFL-CIO unions, most Afro-American and Latino NGOers, etc. will be in a weaker position to subvert and defuse anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and democratic struggles against Wall Street capital and the U.S. state apparatus. So activist forces around issues like Black Lives Matter, Fight for \$15/hour and a union, and opposition to deportation of Latino immigrants should immediately take on a more militant and determined character. The spontaneous protests following the election of Trump reflect this potential to a degree.

Even though Trump ran "against Wall Street," there is little doubt that accommodation is already well under way. It should not take too long before the white working masses who voted for Trump have had enough experience to begin a serious struggle

against this reactionary billionaire. Proletarian revolutionary forces around the world, including the few in the USA, should reach out and struggle for the hearts and minds of all the workers in the USA, including those who voted for Trump, to point out the need and path toward a Socialist USA.

In the meantime, militant Afro-American, Latino, Muslim, Native American and white workers, men and women, need to unite in struggle against Wall Street. As we concluded in our leaflet to the DNC protesters in Philadelphia and is even more urgent as the Trump Regime takes the helm of the U.S. Empire:

We need to organize to oppose the drive toward fascism in the USA — including defense of the Afro-American people against police brutality and Latino immigrants against ICE raids, against increased militarization of the domestic police and U.S. society [and against the tyrannical TPP and other international treaties that "legally" deprive us of our rights.]

We need to stay in the streets and ... protest the ... U.S. imperialist wars, including the current wars throughout the Middle East.

We need to involve our newly organized political groupings in Referenda campaigns on Sanders Campaign-type issues like single-payer universal healthcare, defense of the environment and breaking up the big banks, and run independent candidates in local elections around the country.

We need to expose and isolate the Democratic Party [which set up the U.S. population for the Trump presidency] and work to build an anti-fascist labor / oppressed nationalities Third Party.

We need to make "a political revolution." If you are serious about a political revolution leading to socialism, we would love to hear from you.

**Workers of the World and
Oppressed Peoples Unite!**



(100th Anniversary continued)

following the dismantling of the socialist camp, it made it much easier for the imperialist masters to vanquish our struggles throughout the globe. As the international proletariat and oppressed peoples feel the intensified lash of imperialist exploitation and oppression, and increase their determination and resolve, they will come once again to discover the remarkable achievements of the first Socialist state, the USSR. And they will recognize the need to take the same path.” (“The Revolutionary Significance of the Great October Socialist Revolution on its 90th Anniversary,” *Ray O’ Light Newsletter* #46, November-December 2007)



Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, on the eve of the Russian Revolution, 1917.

This 99th issue of *Ray O’ Light Newsletter* happens to coincide with the 99th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia which took place on November 7, 1917 (“October” under the old Tsarist calendar). At the Second Conference of International Coordination of Revolutionary Parties and Organizations (ICOR) two years ago, all the affiliated organizations agreed to carry out a year-long 100th anniversary

celebration of the Great October Socialist Revolution in 2017. The Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA has decided to publish a feature article in each of the half dozen issues of the *Ray O’ Light Newsletter* to be published in 2017 focusing on some of the monumental achievements accomplished by the workers and all the toilers in the Soviet Union, over an almost forty year period beginning in 1917. Armed with this knowledge, I am confident that many of you will be ready to take up this most noble cause in all the world, the liberation of humanity.

—Ray Light, Editor

Let the serious and honest proletarian revolutionaries of today drink deeply of the wisdom of our great communist poet of Latin America and the world, Pablo Neruda:

*“Soviet Union, if we could gather up
all the blood spilled in your struggles,
all you gave as a mother to the world
so that freedom, dying, might live,
we would have a new ocean
larger than any other
deeper than any other
vibrant as all rivers
active as the fire of Araucanian volcanoes.
Sink your hand into this sea,
man of every nation,
then withdraw and drown in it
all that has forgotten, outraged,
lied and stained,
all that joined the hundred small curs
of the Western dump-heap
and insulted your blood,
Mother of free men!”*

(Pablo Neruda, “*Let the Railsplitter Awake*,” 1948)

**Still stumped?! See answer below
to front page mystery quotation.**

Richard Trumka is the President of the AFL-CIO. On this basis he is widely considered the chief spokesman for the millions of U.S. workers in organized labor. For most of the 2016 campaign Trumka tried to appear “neutral” in the race for the Democratic Party nomination between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders. Thanks to Wikileaks we discover that he was in close consultation with Clinton campaign manager, John Podesta, about how to get the AFL-CIO Executive Council endorsement for Clinton, the “politics as usual” candidate, long before the primary season came to pass.



—the Editor

Poking the Bear

by CINDY SHEEHAN



It won't come as a surprise to many reading this that the US has been sowing seeds of imperial disaster around the world for several centuries, but not since the "Cuban" Missile Crisis has the world been on the brink of such a disaster as the US has put all of us in right now.

What's happening in Syria today has been going on for over five years and is not a civil war. The conflict began as a US funded and supported effort to depose President Bashar Assad and install a puppet government in Damascus friendly to US interests. I am sure there are some legitimate forces in Syria who oppose the government of Assad, but the US does not care about democracy: after all Assad was elected by his people.

Also in Syria, dozens of militias are not only trying to overthrow the Assad regime, but are fighting each other. The ranking Democrat on the US Congressional House Intelligence Committee is uber-Zionist Adam Schiff of California. Recently Schiff said of the phenomena of CIA funded militia fighting Pentagon militia in places like Aleppo: "It's part of the three dimensional chess game." This chess game played by empires for millennia profit the wealthy and as always, the citizens of the country pay the heavy price.

We are learning that China with its array of nuclear weapons and military force is contemplating joining Russia (with its array of nukes and military force) and Syria in its alliance to protect the sovereignty of Syria and for stabilization in the Middle East.

The US has long provoked weaker countries like Afghanistan and Iraq which had little hope of retaliating, but have used what resources they do have to fight off US imperialism. However, this provocation of Russia in places like Syria and Ukraine seems to be the height of arrogance and stupidity for a nation not known for much restraint when it comes to war, anyway.

For many years, Vladimir Putin (although blamed for everything from Crimea to email hacks) has been the rational actor to this insane US provocation, but the Russian Bear is getting ready to fight back: reportedly holding civil defense drills, warning Russians abroad, and even testing nuclear missiles. The Bear can only be poked for so long before it roars and the inevitable result is another world war that could really be the "War that Ends all War" and we as a species.

Some of us here in the US see no hope for the misleaders here to provide some sanity in its foreign policy. Recently, in the US presidential debate between Hillary Clinton (D) and Donald Trump (R), the war criminal Clinton (just as bad as her husband, the Bushs and Obama before her) reaffirmed her hardcore stance to go to war with Russia, through Syria, if necessary. Clinton also declared her support for a No Fly Zone (NFZ) over Syria which the chair of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford said would require 70,000 US troops to maintain and would definitely mean war with Russia.

The only thing that can really stop ruling-class carnage is a force of the International working-class organized around socialism, national sovereignty, and the demand for workers to refuse to be used as "hired killers for Capitalism."

Our very survival as a species could depend on such international solidarity.



* * * * *

*“The great appear great to us
Only because we are on our knees:
Let us rise.”*

— Camille Desmoulins

Revolutionary Organization of Labor (ROL), USA is a revolutionary working class organization that fights for working class power and the elimination of all human exploitation. ***Ray O' Light Newsletter*** is the regular publication of ROL, USA. We believe, with comrade Lenin, that the working class "... needs the truth and there is nothing so harmful to its cause as plausible, respectable petty bourgeois lies." In the spirit of Karl Marx who taught that "our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action," we welcome your comments.

Comradely the Newsletter Staff,

Ray Light, Editor

Rose Brown, Assistant Editor

Carl Pappos, Production Coordinator

Boxholder, 607 Boylston St., Lower Level Box 464, Boston, MA 02116 USA