



Elections seen as critical avenue to build working class power



By **J. Fishman** and **J. Henderson**

Delegates to the 15th Biennial Political convention of the Connecticut AFL-CIO were united in their determination to organize and defeat Trump and MAGA candidates at every level in this November's election. Meeting at the Omni Hotel in New Haven for two days, the themes of the elections and racial and economic justice filled the agenda.

"Voting rights, reproductive rights, access to affordable health care, Medicare, Social Security are all on the ballot this November," warned AFL CIO Secretary Treasurer Fred Redmond as the convention opened. "It's not who you like, personalities, names. This election is about us workers and our shared values," declared Redmond.

To loud applause Redmond recounted the battles underway to "get the workers share of the record profits generated" by big corporations during the pandemic. "This election is about us and what type of future our children will inherit," he concluded. "We have the ability to build momentum and get well across the finish line to build a better and more effective movement.

Telling the story of his family, sharecroppers from Mississippi, who came to Chicago in search of a better life. Redmond described how his mother took three buses to work, in the hope that her son would have a better life than she had.

He highlighted the impact of good union jobs, which allowed his father to build economic stability for their family. "These jobs made a significant difference for individuals with limited opportunities, enabling them to own homes, save for retirement, and provide a foundation for their children," he said.

Redmond emphasized the importance of endorsing a candidate who prioritizes working people, calling for accountability by delegates and members during the election period.

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"We have to lay out the serious contrast in this election as we did in 2020 and 2022, and give our members facts to encourage voters," said Redmond calling for an all-out effort to "show the nation what grassroots power looks like."

"There is no power that can defeat the united labor

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movement,” he declared. “Organized labor’s work will determine the outcome of this election.”

The Labor 2024 campaign plan’s to mobilize members by visiting them and their families at their homes to discuss the issues. The goal said political director Joelyn Leon is to “build a movement that transcends these elections for years to come.”

A focus of the convention was the work of the Racial and Economic Justice Committee including speakers and panels discussing the necessity to tackle racism and strengthen the unity of the labor movement in order to win progress for everyone.

New Haven Rising, a community affiliate of Unite Here, which has been instrumental in electing a majority pro-worker Board of Alders in New Haven since 2011, shared their stories. At the evening fundraiser hosted on their behalf, following a welcome by director Rev Scott Marks, statewide elected officials credited the work of New Haven Rising to making New Haven key to winning any state-wide election in Connecticut.

The convention opened with a welcome from New Haven Alder Brian Wingate, area vice president of the Greater New Haven Central Labor Chapter, who highlighted the benefits of union jobs in Black and brown communities. Union workers from Unite Here Local 217 at the Omni New Haven Hotel announced their ongoing contract negotiations to preserve wages and benefits, calling for solidarity from fellow union members across the state.

President Ed Hawthorne and Secretary-Treasurer Shelley Davis presented reports emphasizing solidarity, the need to be in the forefront for racial and economic justice, and supporting candidates who advocate for workers’ rights.

Redmond, who delivered the keynote address, was welcomed as the highest ranking African-American officer elected as Secretary Treasury of the AFL-CIO in 2022. His extensive experience with the United Steelworkers (USW) included working with union locals, leadership training, and contract negotiations.

Student groups calling for ceasefire and Palestine solidarity face repression by universities

By Eric Brooks

Tucson’s Salt of the Earth Labor College is celebrating its 30th anniversary amid growing working class militancy both nationally and locally. The school held its first class in September 1993 in a house left by Felix Padilla and Arvilla Jackson who wanted their home turned into a workers’ school.

The first meetings were held in one small room, but within a few years walls were removed, creating space with seating for about sixty people. The main advocates for the school were Lorenzo Torrez who was Arizona CPUSA Organizer, and his wife and comrade Anita. –

For 30 years Salt of the Earth Labor College has offered lectures, seminars, films, and cultural events. At the height of the pandemic classes switched to zoom, and are now hybrids. The school is also a venue for community and neighborhood events.

School programs usually try to connect to ongoing working-class struggles. For example, a talk by longtime Chicago activist Bea Lumpkin on the importance of the Coalition of Labor Union Women led to formation of a local chapter.

The seeds for several local union drives were planted at school discussions. This Fall’s schedule

will kick off on September 9 with a forum on the upcoming campaign for an amendment to the Arizona constitution to guarantee abortion and reproductive rights through a voter’s initiative.

Supporters will need to collect about 500,000 signatures to get it on the 2024 ballot and then campaign for votes. Polls indicate that Arizona voter support women’s rights and will vote to amend.

Supporters hope that putting the issue front and center will also help flip the legislature where ultra-right Republicans hold one seat majorities in both houses. It can also help defeat Trump.

In October Salt of the Earth Labor College President and Arizona Jobs with Justice leader, Steven Valencia will discuss the upsurge in organizing and rising militancy of organized workers. That will be followed by a class on why peace activists need to support workers’ struggles in defense industries.

Salt of the Earth Labor College is urging all its Arizona supporters on Saturday, September 2 at 6:00 pm to celebrate the anniversary. The party, at the school, will begin at 6 p.m. with food and drinks followed by a discussion of accomplishments over three decades. Local musicians Rebeca Cartes and James Jordan will perform.

Call for a ceasefire and you may be labeled anti-Semitic.

Wildfires sweep across Arctic circle, unleashing high levels of carbon into atmosphere



By Cristen Hemingway Jaynes

Intense wildfires are ravaging the Arctic Circle, bringing smoke and high carbon emissions, according to the European Union’s Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS).

The region had experienced 164 wildfires through June 24, most of which have been in the Sakha Republic of Russia, a press release from CAMS said.

According to data from the CAMS Global Fire Assimilation System, June wildfire carbon emissions are already the third highest since 2003.

The authors of the most recent study noted that wildfire conditions are being exacerbated by climate change and that fire behavior is getting worse in several regions with significant implications for human exposure and carbon storage.

Gail Whiteman, a professor of sustainability at the University of Exeter Business School and the founder of Arctic Basecamp said the Arctic is climate change ground zero.

“The increasing Siberian wildfires are a clear warning sign that this essential system is approaching dangerous climate tipping points. What happens in the Arctic doesn’t stay there – Arctic change amplifies risks globally for all of us. These fires are a warning cry for urgent action,” Whitecamp said in the press release.

CAMS and Arctic Basecamp have been working together to translate wildfire data into a climate events alert system in the Arctic.

The accumulation of wildfire smoke impacts air

quality at high latitudes. It also has the potential to cause aerosols in the smoke to deposit onto surfaces like snow and ice, reducing their ability to reflect sunlight, meaning they absorb more solar energy and are more prone to melting.

According to the most recent report from the Russian federal organization Avialesookhrana (The Aerial Forest Protection Service), as of June 27, 72 active wildfires were burning in the Sakha Republic, covering an area of nearly 700,000 acres.

When the wildfires started to break out on June 11, a state of emergency was declared by authorities.

The region’s wildfire activities come after a period of unusually high surface air temperatures in late May, with local media reporting forecast temperatures seven to nine degrees Celsius above normal. Copernicus Climate Change Service data confirmed the predictions, with warmer surface temperatures and drier soils in the first three quarters of June.

As global heating leads to higher temperatures in the Arctic, wildfires have shifted north and are burning through tundra and boreal forest, which releases enormous stores of greenhouse gases from the carbon-rich soils, reported the BBC.

Guillermo Rein, a professor of fire science at Imperial College London, referred to the wildfires as a “growing monster of climate change.”

“A decade ago, Arctic wildfires were considered rare events, hardly ever studied. Now they are happening in all summer sessions,” Guillermo told the BBC.

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French far right ahead in first round vote

By Morning Star

France's far right is in the lead after the first round of parliamentary elections that confirmed their dominance in French politics and brought them to the gates of power.

Supporters of Marine Le Pen's anti-immigration National Rally (RN) cheered Sunday as she said the president's "Macronist bloc has been all but wiped out."

RN was on course to win 33.2% of the vote, with the left-wing New Popular Front alliance in second with 28.1%, and the Macron alliance behind at third with 21%.

Most constituencies will go to run-offs in a week's time, with many likely to see a second-round choice between Le Pen's National Rally and the New Popular Front.

The New Popular Front is an agreement between the Socialist Party, Communist Party, Greens, and Jean-Luc Melenchon's France Unbowed.

On polling day, it stressed its platform of radical opposition to the status quo, encouraging citizens angry at falling living standards to choose social justice rather than the anti-immigrant hysteria of RN.

In the first 100 days of a New Popular Front government, it pledged to reverse the recent raising of the retirement age from 62 to 64 and commit to bringing it down to 60.

It would cap gas prices and bring in price controls for food, both limiting what supermarkets can charge customers while imposing a price floor to protect producers, standard policy in many developing countries including India and China but viewed as anathema by governments in the "free market" West.

Victoria de la Primera Enmienda: la Corte Suprema de Oklahoma veta los fondos públicos para las "escuelas autónomas" religiosas

By Press Associates

La AFT (Maestros) y su filial de Oklahoma están aplaudiendo un abrumador fallo de 7 a 1 de la Corte Suprema del Estado que prohíbe canalizar dólares de los contribuyentes públicos a una escuela autónoma establecida religiosamente.

Los jueces dictaminaron el 25 de junio que la junta de escuelas autónomas del estado violó tanto la constitución estatal como la federal al intentar canalizar fondos públicos a la Diócesis Católica para administrar la Escuela Charter Virtual San Isidoro de Sevilla, con sede en Tulsa.

Irónicamente, en el profundo estado de Oklahoma, el fiscal general estatal republicano, Gentner Drummond, tuvo que defender la constitución de su estado y contra la junta de escuelas autónomas del estado. Las escuelas charter son una causa clave para la derecha radical, cuyo objetivo final es cerrar las escuelas públicas desviando su dinero hacia las charter, a menudo administradas por privatizadores que ven a los estudiantes como una fuente de ganancias.

Y muchas cartas religiosas también discriminan a los estudiantes de color. En Oklahoma, eso representa el 55% de todos los estudiantes, incluidos los estudiantes negros, latinos y especialmente nativos americanos.

Esta vez, con la iglesia involucrada, San Isidoro entró en conflicto con las dos constituciones, dijo el tribunal.

El presidente de la AFT, Randi Weingarten, profesor de educación cívica de la ciudad de Nueva York que también tiene un título en derecho, y la presidenta del estado de AFT en Oklahoma, Mary Best, elogiaron el fallo de St. Isidore como "una victoria crucial

para la libertad religiosa y la libertad sobre las fuerzas del extremismo y el sectarismo. "

"Uno de los fundamentos más claros de la democracia es la libertad de practicar o no practicar la religión", dijeron Best y Weingarten en una declaración conjunta. "Los redactores nunca tuvieron la intención de exigir financiación pública a las instituciones o escuelas religiosas y, de hecho, la libertad religiosa en sí depende de esta distinción.

"La libertad termina cuando alguien se ve obligado a apoyar las creencias privadas de otra persona, y si el Fiscal General hubiera perdido, Oklahoma se habría visto obligada a desviar millones de dólares de las escuelas públicas a manos privadas.

"La combinación de la cláusula de libre ejercicio [de la religión] de la Constitución y el concepto de separación de la Iglesia y el Estado sustenta nuestra democracia, y esta decisión preserva esa distinción. En primer lugar, este caso nunca debería haberse presentado. Una escuela autónoma con fines religiosos financiada con dinero público debería haber sido rechazada por inconstitucional desde el principio".

Pero también advirtieron que si la iglesia apela el fallo del tribunal estatal, la financiación pública de las cartas religiosas "seguirá presentando una amenaza existencial para... Oklahoma y los Estados Unidos en general".

NATIONAL CONTACT

Editorial: (773) 446-9920 Business: (212) 924-2523
Email: contact@peoplesworld.org