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Democracy comes out on top on Nov. 6

By Sam Webb

After a long and bitterly contested battle, the forces of inclusive democracy came out on top yesterday. The better angels of the American people spread their wings, as they went to the polls.

Moreover, the balance of forces - that is, the ground on which people fight going forward - has shifted in a progressive direction. And thanks in large measure goes to what might be the most notable development in this election - the emergence of a multi-racial, male-female, working-class-based electoral coalition that has the potential to transform America in the years and decades ahead.

The Communist Party said a year ago that the 2012 elections would be the main front of the class and democratic struggle, and subsequent events have confirmed that fact.

Indeed, we argued (and not everyone on the left agreed and probably still don't) that defeating right wing extremism was the key to moving the whole chain of democratic struggle forward in the coming period.

While many things went into the victory, what was notable was the ability of the democratic movement to turn back Republican efforts to suppress the vote; what was history-making was the determination of the people's movement (with labor in the lead) to reach, educate, and turn out tens of millions of American voters on election day; what was not surprising was the continuing, strategic, and sometimes underappreciated role of the African-American people (93 percent voted



for the president) in the front ranks (at the head in many instances) of struggle for progress and democracy.

Above all, what was decisive was the unmistakable election imprint of a rainbow working-class based electoral coalition, which has the potential to effect a process of long-term political renewal and realignment the likes of which we haven't seen since the New Deal coalition of the 1930s.

The Republicans say that no sweeping mandate emerges out of this election, but if we think

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about it more deeply, we arrive at quite a different conclusion: the vote, and here I include more than a sliver of Romney supporters, is an insistent

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call for governmental action on the most pressing problems facing the working class and people.

In some ways, the bigger problem at this moment is that politicians on both sides of the aisle, major opinion makers, and the corporate elite are saying that a "Grand Bargain," is the order of the day, beginning with spending cuts for people's needs, a weakening of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, along with some extra revenue collected in the form of a tax increase on the wealthiest Americans. But the conventional wisdom in this case is problematic. Many mainstream economists correctly say that the real crisis is not a fiscal one, but a jobs and growth crisis.

Once people get back to work and once economic activity picks up, they go on to argue, the nation can turn its attention to reeling in deficits without endangering economic recovery, but along very different lines than proposed by too many politicians on both sides of the aisle. On the table must be cutting military spending, ending corporate subsidies, and increasing corporate taxes.

Without catching its breath, the AFL-CIO and its allies are organizing actions against a biparti-

san resolution that falls on working people. But organized labor can't do it alone.

The coalition that mined the country for votes over the past several months and the rainbow electorate that elected the president and defended democracy yesterday must spring back into action. Tens of millions must be mobilized.

Whatever the outcome of this immediate battle, the struggle to put the people's needs and nature before corporate profits and war spending will be a long one.

The task isn't to replicate the movements of the 1930s and 1960s, but today's activists would do well to draw the lessons from those movements and adapt them to current conditions.

Both have much to teach, but given the concentrated corporate economic and political power that the American people are up against, today's movement has to eclipse them in terms of scope, depth, and class and anti-racist understanding and unity. We are at the dawn of a new era.



Sam Webb is the CPUSA National Chair.

Time to leave the coastlines?

PW Editorial

We have seen and heard many, many tragic stories since the impact of Sandy - the base line for future storms.

The words "we will rebuild" have been heard from some politicians and from those who lost their homes. These words, this time, ring hollow.

It is time to use eminent domain for the common good. Eminent domain has been used in cases that were questionable, e.g. in a 5 to 4 decision in 2005, the Supreme Court ruled that local governments (in this case New London, Conn.) may force property owners to sell out and make way for private economic development regardless of whether the land mass in question was "blighted" or in need of redevelopment.

Considering the new reality we are faced with - rising sea levels due to climate change - eminent domain can be applied for the common good.

It's an opportunity to move families from harm's way and at the same time restore our shorelines.

We can recreate the sand dunes that existed in many places before they were filled in to build housing, plant foliage complementing the beach environment to help nature take over.

Beyond that, we need to address protecting cities such as New York, which are at sea level. Perhaps we need to look towards Holland for answers to these more daunting problems.

One thing is for sure, the bravado intoned in statements such as "we will rebuild," whether by politicians or residents, and take back the land (shore), is in my opinion a mistake.

As reported in the New York Times Wednesday, Oct. 23, "For nearly a decade, scientists have told city and state officials that New York faces certain peril; rising sea levels and more frequent flooding and extreme weather patterns."

Hopefully after this disaster, the American people will take a hard look at the issue of global warming and its impact on all facets of life in America and not walk away once things return to relative normalcy.

"After rising roughly an inch per decade in the last century, coastal waters in New York are expected to climb as fast as six inches per decade," said the New York Times Oct. 23.

Consider this: for every inch of rising sea level, we lose approximately three feet of shoreline!

America has the resources to do these things.

The words "we will rebuild" have been heard. These words, this time, ring hollow.

Clergy: “Reject grand bargain, tax the rich”

By John Bachtell

Federal budget cuts will devastate social programs, “plunge communities into ruin and destruction, and cost lives,” charged Pastor Michael Russell, vice president of Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation (SOUL), here in Chicago.

Russell was referring to negotiations taking place in Congress to avert a looming “fiscal cliff” Jan. 1, 2013, that would result in cuts of \$600 billion to social programs and tax increases to working class Americans, if no agreement is reached.

“People will die if these programs are not funded,” he declared.

Forty clergy representing hundreds of congregations in churches, synagogues and mosques across Chicagoland had gathered at the office of Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) joined Russell.

Durbin, the US Senate Majority whip, was part of a bipartisan group of six senators negotiating a “grand bargain” to solve the \$4 trillion federal deficit through benefit cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid while cutting taxes to the rich.

Durbin has not pledged to oppose cuts to Social Security and Medicare, a pledge signed by 28 Democratic senators.

The clergy are part Make Wall Street Pay Illinois, a grassroots coalition demanding Congress choose people over corporate profits during the negotiations.

To dramatize their demand, Rev. Tom Gaulke of First Lutheran Church of the Trinity smashed a golden calf, representing a rejection of Wall Street worship of the false idol of greed.

The action helped kick off a week of nationally coordinated protests urging Congress and President Obama to side with the people not the wealthy interests and block the cuts.

Instead, they said, allow the Bush tax cuts to the richest 2% to expire, something Pres. Obama reiterated.

The AFL-CIO, and scores of organizations involved in the reelection of President Obama also hit the ground running days after the election to stop the cuts.

According to the clergy the cuts would mean in Illinois a loss of 15,000 HIV tests, 57,000 low



income children will see cuts to their schools, and 300,000 women and children will lose maternal health benefits, 820 Head Start jobs will be lost and nearly 4000 children will be dropped.

The AFL-CIO blog posted a poll by Democracy Corps and the Campaign for America’s Future (CAF) showing 70% of voters on Nov. 6 rejected cuts to Social Security and Medicare.

“The respondents said that protecting education, Medicare and Social Security was more important than broad cuts to reduce the deficit.

This supports a poll done by the AFL-CIO that showed protecting Medicare and Social Security from benefit cuts is more important than reducing the deficit (73% to 18%).

Voters believe making the wealthy pay a higher tax is more important than reducing tax rates across the board (62% to 33%), clearly showing the direction they want the country to go in.

“Fiscal budgets are not merely administrative line items, they are reflections of our most cherished sacred values whether it be in our homes, our communities or nation,” said Rabbi Bram Rosen of the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation in Evanston.

“We cannot stand by on the wayside while a battle is being waged for the soul of our nation,” said Associate Pastor Barbara Morgan of St. Mark United Methodist Church. “The battle is a conflict between the values of shared prosperity and the common good on the one hand and attitude of winner take all on the other.”

The clergy are part Make Wall Street Pay Illinois, a grassroots coalition.

The 2012 elections changed Texas

By Jim Lane

The 2012 election did not bring decisive change to Texas, possibly because the jobs crisis was less severe in the Lone Star state, but the incremental changes were worth noting.

Before November 6, Texans suffered from a "super majority" of anti-worker Republican delegates to the State House. In the State Senate, where 11 delegates are the minimum necessary to block any legislation, the Democrats had only 12. The Governor, the Supreme Court, the Court of Civil Appeals, and all other state offices were held by Republicans.

Republican gains in 2010, and the increasingly anti-worker nature of Republican candidates, had left the impression that their domination of state politics would continue to increase.

When the vote totals came in this year, President Obama had lost the state 58-41 percent. Unlike his run in 2008, he did not even take all the major metropolitan areas and even lost, barely, in Houston. On the other hand, Democrats broke through the "super majority" in the State House, and they thwarted a multi-million dollar attempt to switch one seat in the Senate, which would have made it impossible for Democrats to stop state legislation.

Through redistricting, they expected to gain three of the four new U.S. House seats that the census had allowed for Texas. Instead, they split two and two.

The growing Latino vote, much discussed in national politics, may have accounted for the Democrats' successes in Texas. A lot of the new Democratic state reps and one of the U.S. Congressmen came from San Antonio, where the growing Latino vote may have been decisive.

Our governor made a complete ass of himself during his run for president. There may be some carryover effect in 2014.

Legisladores apremiados por acuerdo en Congreso

By Prensa Latina

Legisladores demócratas y republicanos están apremiados hoy en el Congreso estadounidense por encontrar la solución que evite la caída del país en un abismo fiscal.

Para los congresistas, es necesario un compromiso urgente ya que el venidero 31 de diciembre finiquitan varias leyes sobre privilegios impositivos.

Por lo que, a menos que el fragmentado Congreso logre un acuerdo, unos 600 mil millones de dólares en recortes de gastos gubernamentales y mayores impuestos deben entrar en vigor el 1 de enero.

Tal escenario amenaza con hundir otra vez la mayor economía del mundo en una recesión.

La administración estadounidense asegura que no quiere caer en el precipicio fiscal, pero en este momento no nos pueden decir cómo exactamente van a enfrentarlo, advierten algunos analistas.

El secretario del Tesoro, Timothy Geithner, alertó ayer contra extender todas las exenciones de impuestos para darle más tiempo a Washington de negociar un pacto de reducción del déficit.

"Sé que hay algunos que dicen: (...) ¿por qué no dejar todo como está para ganar tiempo, por qué simplemente no prolongar" todas las medidas existentes?", declaró Geithner.

Según el alto funcionario, este abismo "no tiene nada de seductor" y provocaría muchos daños a la economía estadounidense que "son perfectamente evitables".

El abismo presupuestario alude a una combinación de incrementos de impuestos y reducciones de gastos del Estado federal, que de acuerdo con la legislación vigente entrará en vigor de

forma automática a inicios del próximo año.

Lo anterior, de no llegarse a un acuerdo en el Congreso sobre un plan de reducción de la deuda pública, que equivale a 103 por ciento del Producto Interno Bruto.

Y aunque el reelecto presidente Barack Obama y el líder de la Cámara de Representantes, el republicano John Boehner, expresaron su deseo de alcanzar un acuerdo para evitar la debacle, mantienen posiciones irreconciliables.

Los desencuentros son, particularmente, sobre el tema del aumento del impuesto a los más ricos, impulsado por el bando de Obama, algo que rechazan los republicanos.

En otras noticias, Barack Obama, fue sorprendido cuando se destapó el escándalo del jefe de la Agencia Central de Inteligencia (CIA), David Petraeus, informó hoy la Casa Blanca.

Según dijo el portavoz, Jay Carney, el mandatario quedó evidentemente sorprendido cuando fue informado el jueves de la situación acerca del general Petraeus, obligado renunciar tras conocerse su relación extramatrimonial.

Obama está muy agradecido con el general Petraeus por los servicios prestados.

También destacó que el gobernante mantiene su confianza en el general John Allen, comandante de las fuerzas de la Organización del Tratado del Atlántico Norte en Afganistán, cuyo nombre está enrolado con el escándalo de Petraeus.

Carney enfatizó que Obama valora el trabajo de Allen y espera que continúe al frente de las tropas en la nación centroasiática, mientras es investigado por el Departamento de Defensa.