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Climate change shows the global stakes of the November elections



By Juan Lopez

This may sound like the rant of a half-crazed street-corner preacher prophesying the end of the world, but a takeover of the presidency by the Republicans in November and their retention of a majority in Congress could set our nation and the globe on a potentially catastrophic course.

Right now, it appears the Republican side is unraveling, possibly putting in play not only the presidency but also the Senate and perhaps the House. But the fierce battle for control of the federal government - and the nation's direction - is volatile and, like sand, ever-shifting.

Almost absent from the Republican side of the debate in this election is the most consequential issue of all time - global climate change.

In an extensive March 21 interview with the Washington Post editorial board, Donald Trump parroted the line of the climate deniers: "I think there's a change in weather...but I'm not a great believer in man-made climate change." It's a repeat of a message he (and other Republicans) has been promoting for years.

Presenting a different image is, Ohio Governor John Kasich saying he acknowledges human-created climate change. His practice, however, tells a different story.

Last October, Kasich's administration

committed Ohio to joining with 25 other mostly Republican-led state governments to sue the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over the requirement that states slash greenhouse gas pollution emitted by coal-powered electric plants - the nation's biggest source of such emissions.

The EPA's action is the cornerstone of President Obama's national plan to curtail greenhouse gas emissions and demonstrate to the world the U.S.' commitment to contain global

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warming.

Meanwhile, President Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping will be the first two heads of state to officially sign the climate agreement on April 22 at the United Nations in New York. As leaders of the two largest greenhouse gas

Global warming would mean loss of the world's largest cities and all their history.

emitters, they are sending a signal to the rest of the world's leaders to join them. Countries have a year to sign, and after 55 nations do so, the accord will officially be enacted.

The agreement is widely viewed as a feat of historic proportions but significantly short of what's needed to keep the climate from spiraling out of control. The good news is that both of the two Democratic presidential contenders have expressed strong support for continuing and even improving on the president's environmental agenda.

On March 22, the team led by preeminent climate scientist James E. Hansen released a new study showing the drastically increased likelihood of devastating storms stronger than any in modern times, as well as the disintegration of large parts of the polar ice sheets. The study warns that a sharp rise of the seas will overtake earth before the end of the century - much faster than previously thought.

Unless aggressive measures are taken rapidly to combat global warming, Hansen said, "That would mean loss of all coastal cities, most of the

world's large cities and all their history."

Hansen, who first brought the issue to national and world attention in 1988 when he warned Congress that global warming had already begun, added, "We're in danger of handing young people a situation that's out of their control."

This is an extraordinary moment requiring extraordinary approaches.

They must emerge from the convention united and ready to expand into a grand coalition that will win over a much larger share of the electorate going into November, including new and infrequent voters.

This includes engaging in a battle of ideas to win over whites and men influenced by racism, sexism, jingoism, and other backward ideas, as well as those considering not voting or, even worse, voting for Trump if their Democratic favorite is not nominated.

For now, all out to November for the sake of Mother Earth and humanity's future!



Juan Lopez chairs the Northern California CPUSA.

Poll tax abolished 50 years ago

Special to PeoplesWorld.org

Fifty years ago, on April 8, 1966, in the last of a series of moves to abolish poll taxes, a three-judge federal court at Jackson, Miss., outlawed Mississippi's \$2 poll tax as a voting requirement for state and federal elections.

Payment of a poll tax was a prerequisite to register to vote in a number of Southern states. The tax emerged in the late 19th century as part of the Jim Crow laws. After the right to vote was extended to all races by the enactment of the 15th Amendment, a number of states enacted poll tax laws as a device for restricting voting rights. These laws, along with unfairly implemented literacy tests and intimidation, achieved the desired effect of disenfranchising African-American and Native American voters, as well as many poor whites.

Many states required payment of the tax at a time separate from the election, and then required voters to bring receipts with them to the polls. If they could not locate their receipt, they could not vote.

Challenges

The poll tax did not go unchallenged as an assault on the right of citizens to vote. In 1937, in *Breedlove v. Suttles*, the Supreme Court found that a prerequisite that poll taxes be paid for registration to vote was constitutional. The case involved the Georgia poll tax of \$1.

The 24th Amendment, ratified in 1964, abolished the use of the poll tax or any other tax as a precondition for voting in federal elections, but made no mention of poll taxes in state elections. In the 1966 case of *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections*, the Supreme Court overruled its decision in *Breedlove v. Suttles*, and extended the prohibition of poll taxes to state elections. It declared that the imposition of a poll tax in state elections violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

There is still much work to be done to assure that voting in America is free, universal, and democratic.

Voters had to pay a poll tax if they wanted to vote.

'Panama Papers' to expose global capitalist shell game



By Patrick J. Foote

Süddeutsche Zeitung, a German newspaper, has come into possession of a 2.6 terabytes of leaked data from the servers of Mossack Fonseca, a Panamanian law firm that specializes in providing dummy companies to move and conceal the money of the world's elite.

Over the last year, SZ has cooperated with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and investigative teams from notable news organizations across the globe to vet the materials. The results of their combined efforts have just begun to see the light of day and already have proven to be a thorn in the side of some of the most rich and powerful people on earth.

Among the notables implicated thus far are Sergey Roldugin, an associate of Vladimir Putin, who has been identified as a "behind-the-scenes player in a clandestine network operated by Putin associates that has shuffled at least \$2 billion through banks and offshore companies."

The ICIJ reports that about 100 Putin associate-connected transactions are documented in the leaked files backdated documents, questionable financial penalties, loans sold between shell companies for as little as \$1.

Other heads of state named in the documents

include the current prime minister of Iceland, former prime ministers of Georgia, Iraq, Jordan, Qatar, and Ukraine, the King of Saudi Arabia and the current presidents of Argentina and Ukraine. Officials in several other countries are implicated through family ties, including UK Prime Minister David Cameron through his father.

All of those who have responded to allegations of misconduct connected to Mossack Fonseca have denied any wrongdoing, as has the firm itself.

Regardless of potential vested interests, the people of the world will learn about how the global elite curries favor and moves money over the next 14 days as the ICIJ continues to release their analyses. Only 149 of 11 million documents have been released in their raw form.

The extent of the fallout from the Panama Papers cannot be predicted, but it is already a topic of conversation going into the Russian elections.

Given Hillary Clinton's support for the trade agreement that made the hiding of money in Panama easier and Trump's history of copping to gaming the system in his corporate ventures, it's safe to say that the reverberation of the Panama Papers all may be felt in the U.S. elections too.

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Democracy Spring kicks off in Philly

By Ben Sears

Activists from a coalition of labor and grassroots political groups have begun a march, called Democracy Spring, which they say will culminate with a massive civil disobedience action in the nation's capital. Hundreds of supporters gathered on a rainy morning to celebrate the growing movement of activists for democracy; and to hail those starting their trek to the nation's capital.

The primary demand is to get big money out of politics; according to the campaign's website, organizers want "a Congress that will take immediate action to end the corruption of big money in our politics and ensure free and fair elections".

Kai Newkirk, a co-founder of 99rise, who made news in December when he disrupted a Donald Trump speech, noted the wet weather when he told the crowd, "When we stand together, we can change the political weather in this country." We believe in a simple moral principle: we are all created equal, and an equal voice is our birthright...."

The Poeticians, two youthful poet/rappers had a message of unity and hope, saying "We gotta hold on; we gotta save the young ones..." and target the one percent: "They segregate and humiliate...."

The last speaker was Rain, a Lipan Apache from south Texas who told the crowd, "You are all my people...welcome to my land. He said that when he heard Bernie Sanders speak, he thought, "He sounds like my chiefs. He is humble." Rain told People's World earlier that he plans to walk the entire distance to Washington with his wife Xalchi, who is Aztec and hails from Mexico.

Urge articular fuerzas contra el neoliberalismo

Prensa Latina

Hay una ofensiva de restauración conservadora para hacer retroceder todos los procesos progresistas que cambiaron la faz de este continente, expresó el escritor y político cubano Abel Prieto, en el marco del XII Encuentro Internacional de la Red de Intelectuales en Defensa de la Humanidad, que se celebra en Venezuela.

Prieto, presidente del foro, consideró necesario que los intelectuales, activistas y artistas se unan para formar un frente que acabe con la "muralla mediática" al servicio del neoliberalismo.

Asimismo subrayó la necesidad de articular las diferentes fuerzas que luchan en contra de los intereses neoliberales.

El escritor cubano manifestó que "América Latina y el Caribe dejaron de ser el patio trasero de Estados Unidos y hay una ofensiva para que esa condición deplorable y subordinada regrese [pero] hay mucha gente digna, muchos grupos, corrientes, muchas tendencias en contra, mucha gente joven buena que uno va descubriendo en estos encuentros", citó Telesur.

También explicó que el objetivo era precisamente hacer creer a través de los diferentes medios de comunicación que esas reuniones entre intelectuales y artistas solo se realizan entre personas maduras, como una estrategia para posicionar el pensamiento de que la ideología revolucionaria es solo cosa del pasado.

"La jugada es que eso no se conozca, hacer que la gente joven se dedique a

la tontería, a seguir la vida privada de los famosos, a perder el tiempo.

A vivir una vida de un supuesto presentismo donde no hay pasado", reflexionó Prieto.

De allí que el presidente del foro subrayara la capacidad de aprovechar todos los espacios pertinentes y posibles, como foros, ferias del libro y festivales, para utilizar la red de intelectuales, de artistas y movimientos sociales como instrumento de la defensa de la verdad y la humanidad, y medio de articulación para luchar en la medida de sus posibilidades en contra de los medios de comunicación hegemónicos.

El XII encuentro de la Red de Intelectuales en Defensa de la Humanidad, llamado Venezuela en la encrucijada. Nuevos tiempos, nuevos desafíos, se instaló el viernes último en Caracas y se extenderá hasta el 14 de abril.

El XII Encuentro de la red será escenario propicio para la entrega el próximo martes del Premio Libertador al Pensamiento Crítico 2014, que mereció el filósofo boliviano Juan Bautista.

Según la agenda, los intelectuales y artistas también disertarán en foros públicos por efectuarse esta semana en los estados venezolanos de Barinas, Trujillo, Yaracuy, Miranda y Zulia.

Asimismo, el dictamen condena la decisión del gobierno argentino de Mauricio Macri de abandonar el convenio con el canal multinacional Telesur.

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