

Elections: The empire strikes back

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Protesters march down 5th Avenue in New York City in Black Lives Matter demonstration on June 10, 2020.

Whatever happens in the midterm elections, a mudslide of racist and bigoted filth is pouring down from the heights of capitalist society. Teaching Black history is under

attack by labeling it Critical Race Theory.

Using an increase in street crime — the result of a massive increase in poverty and homelessness — politicians are encouraging more police brutality and killings.

A special target has been transgender people, particularly transgender youth. The measures in Florida forbidding transgender youth from receiving gender-affirming care guarantee more deaths.

This wholesale hate campaign is the reaction of bankers and billionaires to the Black Lives Matter movement, the [largest series of protests](#) in U.S. history.

The 26 million people who took to the streets in 2020 forced the ruling class to discuss the deadly racist violence of the police. The conviction of the Minneapolis cops who killed George Floyd was one of the few actual concessions made to oppressed people.

It was only because of an uprising in Minneapolis that any justice was administered to these killers in uniform. It took a mobilization in Georgia to send the murderers of Ahmaud Arbery to jail.

Now, as reflected in the Wall Street Journal, most capitalists want to take back the primarily verbal concessions that were made concerning police violence.

They don't want their politicians to kneel in imitation of the courageous Colin Kaepernick. Billionaires want their elected flunkies to kneel before them. None of the football clubs' super-rich owners are willing to hire Colin Kaepernick.

Capitalists form public opinion

The tiny percentage of society that consists of the big capitalist families is dragging

millions of others behind them, including many workers. There's nothing new in this.

Almost 180 years ago, Karl Marx wrote that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch," meaning the time period, "the ruling ideas." The not-so-dead hand of slavery continues to brainwash millions of white people.

It takes an upsurge of millions for people to break with the lies of the master class. That's a reason why Black Lives Matter is so hated by the wealthy and powerful. It reached into small, largely white towns that had never seen a protest before.

That movement, like any upsurge, has receded for the time being. Voters are subjected to billions of dollars of TV ads. More selective are Facebook and other social media posts that attempt to target individual voters.

The effect of this media barrage can be seen in Wisconsin. The Trump campaign in 2020 flooded the state with racist ads attacking the demonstrations in Kenosha following the police shooting of Jacob Blake. Trump lost Wisconsin by only 20,000 votes.

Two years later, the Republican candidates for governor and U.S. senate are again flooding the state with racist ads attacking the Kenosha anti-racist uprising.

A special target has been the liberalized bail laws instituted in New York state and some other places. The eighth amendment to the U.S. Constitution declares that "excessive bail shall not be required."

Any bail that's unaffordable to poor people is excessive and amounts to ransom. In [Arizona](#), 80% of jail inmates haven't been convicted of anything. Their real crime is being poor.

The Black youth Kalief Browder spent three years in New York City's Rikers Island prison because his family couldn't afford to bail him out.

He spent 700 days in solitary confinement before his charges were dropped. Then, on June 6, 2015, Kalief Browder hanged himself in his family home.

This tragedy doesn't prevent Lee Zeldin, the New York Republican candidate, from demanding the new bail laws be repealed.

We must struggle

The capitalist offensive can also be seen in the union representation elections conducted by the National Labor Relations Board. The tremendous victory by the Amazon Labor Union at a Staten Island, New York, warehouse in April took the establishment by surprise.

Jeff Bezos, Amazon's executive chairman whose fortune exceeds \$120 billion, counterattacked. Amazon is spending untold millions for union busting. The union victory in Staten Island has not yet been repeated.

Despite workers at over 200 Starbucks locations voting for union representation, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz refuses to discuss a union contract.

Frederick Engels — the co-worker of Karl Marx — described capitalist elections as a barometer of the consciousness of the working class.

For millions of people, the 2020 elections represented a break with more than 40 years of reaction and increased racism. But President Biden has given little in the way of help to poor and working people.

The White House and Congress can find \$70 billion for the war against Russia, yet it can't house the homeless. Inflation is cutting families' income while corporations declare record profits. People line up at food banks.

Reactionary and bigoted politicians feed off this increased misery. The only way

forward is more struggle in the streets and workplaces.

Capitalists want to cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid while jacking up the retirement age to 70. We won't let them!

The future can be seen in thousands of railroad workers who've had enough and may go on strike. As dangerous as the election of Trump-supporting candidates are, the future is more struggle.

