

Voter Suppression and Right-wing Threats Fail to Keep Millions Away from the Polls

Many prepare for inevitable conflict over national elections outcome beginning on November 3

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Global Research, October 22, 2020

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

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Efforts aimed at thwarting the fundamental bourgeois democratic rights of the majority of people in the United States are well underway.

President Donald J. Trump has said repeatedly that mail-in voting and early opportunities to cast ballots are inherently fraudulent and designed to deny him a second term in office.

Trump and his allies are encouraging their supporters to prevent others from voting in large numbers prior to election day and on November 3. Incidents have been reported of right-wing militia groups and zealots engaging in attempts to intimidate voters.

The current administration has flooded the airwaves with campaign commercials which largely ignore the existence of the worst public health crisis in more than a century. These political ads focus on what are considered wedge issues which have almost nothing to do with the COVID-19 pandemic, the worsening economic downturn and the burgeoning racial unrest which has swept the U.S. since the police execution of African Americans **Ahmed Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd**, along with many others.

These expensive advertisements are designed to sway people to either vote for the Trump-Pence ticket or to stay away from the polls all together. Within the African American community, the Republican presidential candidate and others from the same party running for congressional and senatorial seats, are emphasizing issues related to opposing gender equality, the rights of women in regard to reproductive health and purported threats to religious freedom.



Georgia lines up in early voting during Oct. 2020 (AJC photo)

None of these talking points from the right-wing say anything about guaranteeing health insurance for all residents of the U.S. Absent from their narrative is any reference to the need to end police brutality, racism, national oppression, gender discrimination and to guarantee jobs at a living wage, quality education, environmental justice, affordable housing and safe running water for people across the country.

In the South, North, West and East of the country voter suppression tactics utilizing numerous methods are creating an atmosphere of political uncertainty. Earlier in the year, administration attacks on the U.S. Postal Service were designed to hamper the capacity of the system to deliver ballots in a timely fashion.

Voter Suppression and the Legacy of the Jim Crow South

Of course, a major concentration of voter suppression is in the South due to history of African enslavement and the resurgence of African American voters in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Over the last four decades or more, it has been nearly impossible for Democratic presidential candidates to win a majority of votes in these states.



African American tenant farmers evicted after registering to vote in Fayette County, Tennessee, Winter 1960

Repeatedly Republican candidates work in conjunction with local business interests and political officials to ensure the maintenance of the status-quo. Obstacles to voter registration such as previous criminal convictions has disenfranchised hundreds of thousands in Florida.

Georgia has been notorious along with Florida for purging thousands from voter registration lists on spurious allegations of criminal records and failure to prove residency in the states. Two major gubernatorial elections in 2018 for Georgia and Florida were marred by concerted and well-organized voter suppression techniques.

A report published recently by the group [Public Integrity](#) said of the situation in a major Southern state that:

“Georgia was infamous in the last century for its Jim Crow-era poll taxes and other intimidation tactics used to suppress Black citizens’ right to vote. This century, the state is known as an epicenter for battles over restrictive policies that civil-rights activists denounce as modern-day voter suppression.”

The State of Georgia through cooperation with local officials disenfranchised 54,000 people during 2018 when then Secretary of State Brian Kemp ran for governor against former Democratic legislative leader Stacey Abrams. Although the Abrams campaign held out for several weeks without conceding, the state government bureaucrats and politicians prevailed placing Kemp in the governor’s seat. Since his assumption of office, Kemp has been a major obstacle to the mitigation efforts aimed at controlling the pandemic in the state, which has disproportionately impacted African Americans in both rural and urban areas.

Voter registration among African Americans, people of Latin American ancestry, Asians and other people of color communities accelerated during the first decade of the 21st century. This was in part due to the candidacy of former President Barack Obama.

This same above-mentioned article from Public Integrity also says:

“Controversy over purging and other practices hangs over the Nov. 3 general election as a record number of Georgia residents are lining up for in-person early voting, which started Oct. 12 and ends Oct. 30. With its fast-growing population, Georgia voter registration has surged. And the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a record number of voters requesting mail-in ballots.”

Building Resistance to the Escalating Threats to Democratic Rights

Electoral suppression efforts have been bolstered by the 2013 Shelby County v. Holder Supreme Court decision that eviscerated the enforcement provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act was a concession granted by the administration of former President Lyndon B. Johnson in the aftermath of mass demonstrations in Alabama and other Southern states.

Yet despite these setbacks, many African Americans and other oppressed peoples are

determined to drive Trump from the White House and the Republican majority from the Senate. Events of the last seven months have provided impetus for not only electoral initiatives notwithstanding mass actions requiring independent organization aimed at mobilizing millions to end police brutality and other forms of racist state violence.

Although the Democratic Party is attempting to ride the tide of discontent and the yearning for fundamental change, it will take the workers and oppressed utilizing their own organizational capacity to deliver a decisive defeat to the right-wing. Beyond the elections on November 3, the threat of neo-fascist violence directed at the oppressed and others designated as potential threats to the Trump administration, could very well result in mass arrests, serious injuries and loss of life.

Several organizations from various regions of the U.S. issued an appeal during September calling for the formation of People's Committees to Defend Democratic Rights. This campaign launched by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition in Michigan, the Wisconsin Bailout the People Movement (BOPM) and the Bay Area People's Alliance in California represents a growing trend among the working class and oppressed.

An article published in [Fighting Words](#) in late September emphasized:

"The aim of People's Committees should be very clear. They must prepare to shut the entire country down if Trump tries to steal or ignore the election. They must popularize the idea of, and prepare for, a General Strike. Some will argue that such an action is illegal. But it is the only serious answer to the outrageously illegal actions of the president. We will be told that general strikes are not done in the United States. Perhaps not recently, but there are a host of examples of general strikes going back into the 1800's to contradict that claim."

These mass organizations are not alone in their quest to prepare for the potential of post-election confrontations involving millions. Statements have been issued by various AFL-CIO metropolitan councils including their national leadership. Groups of various progressive, liberal, socialist and community-based groups are meeting and making plans for mounting a formidable resistance to the threat of a political coup by the Trump regime and its allies.

Even beyond the possible resolution of the election crisis, such formations as People's Committees will be needed to ensure that the interests of the masses be upheld. The Democratic Party leadership represents the powerful corporate forces on Wall Street and at the Pentagon. Working people and the oppressed need independent organizations in order to speak and act in their own names.

There can be no solution to the crisis of governance in the U.S without a total transformation of the racist-capitalist system. Socialism provides the only solution for the survival and well-being of working people in the U.S. and around the world.

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Featured image: Georgia voters stand for hours to vote during Oct. 2020 (ABC News photo)

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