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## ***A historic crossroads: Socialism or Fascism?***

*The following is a slightly edited talk given during the Workers World Party webinar “What Road to Socialism?” on May 16.*

We are at a great crossroads in the history of humanity. With the pandemic and the social and economic crises caused by it, this is the most significant moment in recent history. The challenges we face are only a precursor to the great existential threat of the climate crisis.

This is the beginning of the end of capitalism and the U.S. empire. The great contradictions are sharpening. Our society has within it the potential for life and death. Ultimately the question of which class rules will define the future of humanity. The question facing us now is: Socialism or genocide? Socialism or mass death of thousands of species? And politically, Socialism or Fascism?

We all are living the data. April saw the fastest rise in unemployment ever since the U.S. Department of Labor began collecting statistics: 38 million people filed for unemployment.

The labor force participation rate — this number includes the unemployed — dropped significantly from 63 to 60 percent in April, its lowest number in recent history. The unemployed make up about 10 percent of this, meaning only about 50 percent of adults — excluding those who are incarcerated, institutionalized or in the military — are currently employed.

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Millions of small businesses have been closing. Almost 7.5 million small businesses in the United States are at risk of closing forever over the next five months. (cnbc.com, April 14) The small bourgeoisie is facing ruin. This class, often referred to as the upper middle class, has no independent future. They must decide: Be on the side of an increasingly violent and desperate ruling class, or join the ranks of the working class and fight for workers' control of the economy and the government?

Meanwhile, trillionaire Bezos and the ruling class continue to get richer. All this must come at the expense of the working class and the more privileged small bourgeoisie. Decades of neoliberal destruction of the middle classes in the imperialist world have given social fodder to the rise of right-wing extremism. This is how Trump builds his base.

### **The terror of fascism**

White male terrorists have struck in all the imperialist countries of the world, pulled to the extreme right by the growing crisis of capitalism. This is only the beginning of the terror of fascism.

The U.S., through its “heritage” of white supremacy and genocide, has a powerful social base for fascism. The history of colonization, slavery and national oppression is paired with the world's most violent ruling class ever.

The small bourgeoisie are those who make a living by exploiting labor as well as those with specialized skills — business owners, doctors, higher level managers, lawyers, etc. They are a massive class in this country because we live in the biggest empire. Their collapse is what we are seeing.

Meanwhile, right-wing billionaires are funding the fake “reopen” movement to “fight for people's right” to get a haircut, play golf or drink beer. Egged on by President Trump, they are trying to recruit the middle class and the working class to their campaign of genocide and racism. **We must not let them succeed.**

At the same time we see the massive growth of the state, meaning fascists will continue to have employment — in Philadelphia, the only budget increase is for more cops on the streets to assassinate Black youth, arrest protesters and incarcerate drug users and people

without homes. Guaranteed, the next federal budget will grow the military. We must fight this tooth and nail.

### **Which way forward?**

How do we defeat the rise of fascism? What road to socialism?

It has nothing to do with Joe Biden. The Democrats have not halted the spread of fascism. It has a lot more to do with John Brown.

We will not be quiet while the fascists mobilize. We must meet the threat with increasing efforts to organize and provide an outlet for revolutionary anger.

Capitalist “democracy” cannot last. We have learned a lot from the 20th and 21st centuries about the development of capitalism, imperialism and the rise of fascism in Europe and beyond. We are nearing a particularly deep crisis in which the capitalist ruling class seems unwilling to allow basic human rights in the heart of the empire.

Class struggle will intensify. But where will it go?

How do we answer the danger? We organize the working class into unions, workers’ assemblies, community organizations and revolutionary parties like ours.

The working class in the U.S. has the power to change human history. The same boss that exploits workers in the U.S. is the one oppressing and exploiting the entire world. The working class of the U.S. must be victorious. Who wins the working class in the U.S. — the fascists or the revolutionaries? — will have a telling role in the future of the world — or what’s left of it after global warming and habitat destruction leave their mark.

Workers World Party knows how to fight fascism. With lead pipes, banners, agitational literature and our incredible ability to speak to the working class, we are ready. We must continue as we did in Philadelphia a year ago when we helped to mobilize 5,000 workers who met 10 Proud Boys in the streets. We must continue our great tradition of militantly fighting fascism.

Workers World Party has always been filled with the best professional revolutionary fighters for our global class and the oppressed of the world. We must keep finding ways to

build workers' solidarity, to build workers' assemblies, to deepen the ties of our mass organizations to those in our class who are fighting back against dead-end capitalism.

As Woody Guthrie's song goes, "you fascists bound to lose." Mild in manner, bold in matter, but always fighting racism, white supremacy and all forms of oppression, we will build a workers' world.

*Scott Williams (he/him) is an organizer with the Philadelphia branch of Workers World Party, a member of WWP's Executive Committee and the Field Staff. Scott has helped to organize many significant campaigns and mobilizations, including a major demonstration in Philadelphia against the white supremacist Proud Boys, and protests against the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia in 2016.*

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