

Recession, racism, repression: Are you ready to fight back?

written by Greg Butterfield
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Which side are you on?

In December, two children died in Border Patrol custody — that we know of.

Jakelin Caal Maquín, age 7, died on Dec. 8 after being detained many hours in high heat on a prison bus. Sixteen days later, on Christmas Eve, 8-year-old Felipe Alonzo-Gómez died of flu complications [after being shunted between four different detention facilities](#) in the six days following his detention.

Both of these children trekked thousands of miles from Guatemala as part of the Central American Exodus of refugees fleeing political and economic violence. Both were accompanied by parents who protected them on that long journey but were powerless to help them in the clutches of the white-supremacist border cops.

Are you ready?

On the evening of Jan. 8, U.S. President Donald Trump gave a televised national address in which he again demanded billions of dollars to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. Trump justified the federal government shutdown by [repeating his racist claims](#) that the refugees are criminals, drug runners and sexual assailants.

He threatened to declare a “national emergency” granting him special powers to bypass Congress and build the wall, including using funds that are supposed to go for disaster relief in Puerto Rico and California.

Two days later, Trump visited the border at McAllen, Texas, for a “border security roundtable.” Surrounded by [stacks of drugs and weapons](#), he admitted it was nothing but a glorified photo-op.

Are you ready?

Democratic Party leaders, meanwhile, show far more concern with using the shutdown as propaganda for their war-mongering campaign to paint Trump as a “Russian asset” than they do for thousands of children in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention, furloughed federal workers, or millions of poor and oppressed suffering from cuts in vital public services.

Robert Reich, former Clinton administration labor secretary and frequent spokesperson for the liberal group MoveOn.org, tweeted on Jan. 13: “Trump’s wall and shutdown are designed to distract from the real issue. The president of the United States was asked over the weekend by a friendly interviewer whether he is a Russian agent. He refused to answer.”

To which [independent journalist Max Blumenthal aptly responded](#): “It’s actually the other way around. Trump’s xenophobia, border militarization and cynical shutdown of the federal government are real issues that resonate with real people. Russiagate

is the elite moral panic that establishment Dems have chosen to focus on instead.”

Are you ready?

The Pentagon has [extended the U.S. military deployment along the border](#) to “assist” the Border Patrol through Sept. 30, ABC News reported on Jan. 15. Currently there are 2,350 troops illegally stationed at the border in violation of the Posse Comitatus Act, down from 5,900 in November. But the number is expected to go up again as the Army has been ordered to lay 1,600 miles of razor wire between ports of entry.

Here’s a glaring example of how the capitalist state — those repressive forces that protect the power of the billionaire U.S. ruling class, like the military, police and prisons — are completely exempt from the so-called “government” shutdown, which is actually an attack on jobs and programs relied upon by the working class.

Are you ready?

Speaking of the state: the U.S. war machine is rolling full steam ahead. After pulling a fast one in Syria — Trump claimed Pentagon occupation troops would be quickly withdrawn, and then White House national security adviser [John Bolton announced they would remain](#) for months or years – Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spent the first weeks of the new year [on an international junket trying to drum up support for war against Iran](#).

The U.S. has nearly 1,000 foreign military bases — 95 percent of the world’s total, [according to the international Coalition Against U.S. Foreign Military Bases](#). The [U.S. spends more](#) on the military than the next seven biggest military powers combined.

U.S. troops and proxies are at war in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Ukraine, throughout much of Africa and elsewhere. Countries currently facing U.S. military threats include Iran, Russia, China, Venezuela and the Democratic People’s Republic

of Korea, to name a few.

Are you ready?

It all comes down to a system in crisis: the system of private ownership for profit, which we call capitalism. For decades the rich and powerful in the United States have propped up this system by spending lavishly on weapons, wars and occupations, while taking it out of the hides of workers through high-tech speedups, lower paying jobs and shredding the social safety net.

They have increased the power of the police and ICE, winked at the rampage of racist killer cops in Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities, and mass incarcerated whole generations of young people to keep the working class in check. And increasingly since Trump's political rise, they are unleashing violent white supremacist gangs to further their agenda of divide and conquer.

Business media are speculating [that the next recession is coming](#) or may already be underway. There is [overproduction of big ticket items like cars](#). [Retail stores are closing](#) and their stocks are falling. [Rents are out of control](#) and homelessness is rampant while millions of housing units go vacant or are purchased by Airbnb speculators. Even workers fortunate enough to have steady, full-time jobs are drowning in debt and only one paycheck away from disaster.

When the bottom falls out of the economy, big hirers like Amazon.com will slash their payrolls too.

Are you ready?

With their powerful strike, Los Angeles teachers are showing the way to fight back, uniting workers, students and communities to defend the future of public education. Im/migrants and refugees who brave Border Patrol tear gas attacks to demand their international right to asylum are showing the way.

Yellow Vest protesters in France who defy police repression to fight government austerity are showing the way. People from Venezuela to Donbass to Palestine, who refuse to be silently butchered by U.S.-backed fascists, who stand up and fight back against impossible odds, are showing the way.

Are you ready?

Are you ready to end the shutdown of jobs and services? Are you ready, instead, to throw out this rotten system that values rich profits over people?

Are you ready to make a vote of no confidence in capitalism? Are you ready to struggle for a new system, one that puts people's needs first — for socialism?

Here's one way to start: Mark your calendar for a public conference on Revolution and Socialism on March 16 in Los Angeles, organized by Struggle □ La Lucha. Come in person or participate online. Get an orientation; learn what actions you can take now; strategize with like-minded people. Meanwhile, [join us in the streets](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2019/01/19/recession-racism-repression-are-you-ready-to-fight-back/).

