

International labor union actions support Palestine

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 21, 2023



Photo:1199 SEIU

Presentation given at the Socialist Unity Party national plenum on Dec. 16, 2023.

We have just learned that the Health Care workers 1199 SEIU has called for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip to allow for urgent relief amid the destruction of health and other infrastructure.

A deep shift is going on in the organized labor movement, shown by the emerging

support for Palestine. It's a turn away from what some call "business unionism," a narrow struggle for a few crumbs off the bosses' table. There is a new class consciousness rising — international solidarity.

The United Auto Workers' official call for a ceasefire is awesome. They are creating a "Divestment and Just Transition" study group on the history and the union's economic ties to the conflict. Union leaders thanked all the rank-and-file members who made this happen.

Truly, the UAW's position was initiated by the rank and file: Black, people of color, and gender-oppressed auto workers in the coastal regions, along with Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Alaska. The auto workers have been empowered by last summer's victorious strike wave.

Palestine workers call for support

On Oct. 16, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) issued an urgent call for action against governments, like the U.S., that are arming Israel.

Unions have been taking action, often in opposition to their own governments. The postal workers, auto workers and the National Writers Union are leading the U.S. labor movement. A Starbucks Workers United leaflet read: "We Stand with Palestine."

The UAW, UE, and UFCW 3000 initiated an online petition calling for an immediate ceasefire and end to the siege of Gaza.

It has been signed by some 3,200 unions, union locals, and sections of unions, including the CWA • IBEW • SEIU • Teamsters • AFSCME • OPEIU • Unite Here • USW • AFT and Education Unions more than a dozen states • Amazon Labor Union • Austin and San Antonio AFL-CIO Central Labor Councils • Coalition of Labor Union Women • Painters, Roofers • NJ State Industrial Union Council •

Pacific Media Workers • Philadelphia Labor for Black Lives Coalition • Pride at Work • Restaurant Workers United • Unemployed Workers United • Western Massachusetts (AFL-CIO). More unions are joining this list by the hour.

In the beginning of November, the Ports of Oakland and Tacoma were blockaded by protesters who delayed the departure of a U.S. military vessel after merchant marine workers told organizers the ship's cargo of weapons was destined for Israel. In New Orleans, where Healthcare Workers demand a ceasefire, workers groups are organizing to Stop Helping Israel's Ports - NOSHIP.

The longshore union ILWU Local 10 in San Francisco unanimously passed a resolution in solidarity with Palestine. They said: "The U.N. calls Gaza an 'open-air prison' of 2.2 million Palestinians. ... It is no surprise that there would inevitably be a rebellion." The Local 10 resolution was presented to the Oakland and San Francisco City Councils.

The Inland Boatmen's Union in San Francisco issued a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire as well as the delivery of life-saving aid.

ZIM, one of the world's largest shipping lines, is carrying military supplies to Israel. Workers in Palestine see ZIM as a strategic target. On Nov. 17 in Norfolk, Virginia, a demonstration at the ZIM headquarters organized by the Southern Workers Assembly shut down ZIM.



As reported on Labor Video, thousands of labor unionists from around Northern California rallied in Oakland on Dec. 16 to oppose the genocide in Gaza. It was endorsed by SEIU 1021 which has over 50,000 members, AFSCME 3299, OEA, UESF, SEIU 1021, ILWU Local 10, Inlandboatmen's Union SF Region-ILWU, UNITE HERE Local 2, IFPTE Local 21, CWA NewsGuild Pacific Media Workers Guild, Stanford Graduate Workers, Trader Joes United, IWW Bay Area, IWW 460-650 - Ecology Center.

A San Francisco labor group rallied on Dec. 14 in front of Google offices to stop Google's AI support for the Zionist apartheid regime. Google has the \$1.2 billion Nimbus contract with the Israeli military. The workers also reported that Google is targeting their Muslim workers who challenge genocide.

Around the world

All around the world, the union movement has been responding with solidarity actions to block the arming of the Zionist entity.

Belgian, Italian, Spanish, and French unions called on their members to refuse to handle arms shipments.

In the Port of Melbourne, Trade Unionists for Palestine are blocking ZIM. The red,

gold, and black flags of the Indigenous peoples of Australia are seen on the picket line.

The Liverpool dock workers are blocking the shipment of war materiel. They held a community meeting to talk about Gaza and the West Bank.

United Tech & Allied Workers of Britain called for the “international labor movement to end all complicity and take concrete action against arms supplies to Israel.”

British health workers, teachers, hospitality workers, academics, artists, and more — members of some eight union federations — set up a picket line to prevent deliveries to BAE Systems, England’s largest weapons firm, under a banner that read “Workers for a Free Palestine.”

The Japanese National Railway Union, Dora Chiba, has pledged to fight their government’s policy of arming the Zionist military.

Although not reported as much here, similar actions are occurring all over the world. The **Brazilian** trade union federation, representing more than 7.4 million workers, pledged unwavering support for Palestine. The **Canadian** Union of Public Employees called for the “end of arms sales to Israel.” In **Colombia**, the miners’ union is demanding a suspension of the supply of all minerals and fuels. The largest **Polish** confederation of trade unions is calling for an end to military cooperation with Israel.

India’s twelve union federations, representing one hundred million workers, are strongly opposing talks to send one hundred thousand construction workers to replace the Palestinian workers whose work permits Israel has canceled.

The Central Trade Union Council of **India**, representing more than 600,000 workers, is calling for a boycott of arms shipments.

Workers in Palestine, the group formed by Palestinian unions, has created a number of online resources, including a [guidance sheet for unions](#) on building solidarity with Palestine, a companion [guide for community activists](#), and a [model motion](#).

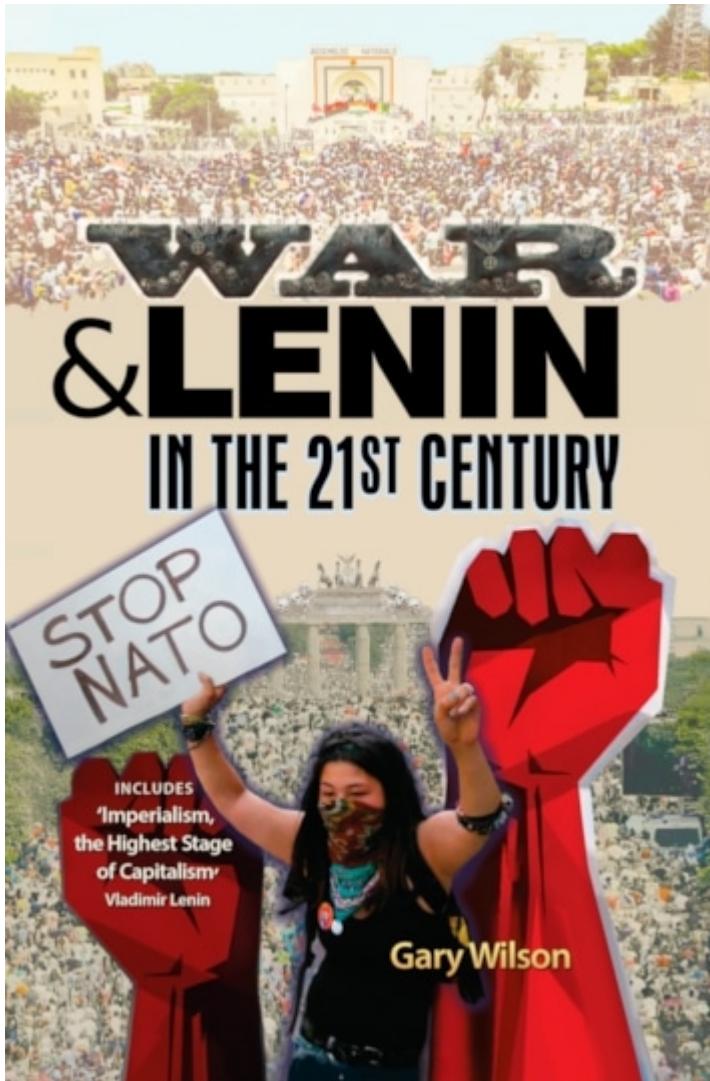
The comprehensive “[Who Arms Israel?](#)” toolkit offers guidance for action and suggests locations. Lockheed Martin, Boeing, BAE Systems, Leonardo, and Raytheon all provide arms crucial to the Israeli military.

Internationally, many global federations like that of the Transport Workers have pledged to support the [Palestinian workers’](#) struggle for justice, dignity, and peace.



Announcing a new book: War and Lenin in the 21st Century

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Excerpted from a presentation given at the Socialist Unity Party national plenum on Dec. 17, 2023.

First, we are excited to hear that Melinda Butterfield's book "U.S. proxy war in Ukraine and Donbass" is in production. Much of it is based on eyewitness reports and interviews, starting before the U.S.-staged 2014 coup in Kiev and continuing up until 2022. This richly informative book is an essential counter to the U.S./NATO campaign of disinformation on Ukraine.

Then, commemorating the 100th anniversary of Lenin's death on Jan. 21, 1924, Struggle-La Lucha is publishing a book titled: "War and Lenin in the 21st Century." It is now available in bookstores online. We've been struggling with online publishers for weeks, several of whom flatly refused to accept the book.

There's a witchhunt going on — one to bury the truth and allow Genocide Joe to voice his many lies.

"War and Lenin in the 21st Century" comprises a series of articles written by Gary Wilson in the Struggle-La Lucha newspaper based on Lenin's historic book "Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism." The new book is written about the current global class struggle in the framework of Lenin's analysis of imperialism. Lenin's book on imperialism is available in the appendix.

While laying out the book, I was amazed at how closely the first section on current conditions reflects Lenin's work.

The book covers NATO's proxy war in Ukraine; Lenin's five key features of imperialism; the new Cold War; and prospects for the world's working class.

Lenin laid the groundwork for explaining the cause of wars that are happening now — back in 1916. His grim prospect wasn't a prophecy. It was an analysis based on the dialects of Marx's historical materialism. That means it was an objective or scientific study of the developing struggle between the capitalist class and the world's workers and oppressed.

Fidel Castro warned about the power of the big-time media. Recently, when the president of the University of Pennsylvania, Elizabeth Magill, was forced out, the New York Times reported that she "appeared to evade the question of whether students who called for the genocide of Jews should be punished."

After reading this alarming front-page report, one has to go to the end of the story

buried inside the paper to find out why Magill is facing such heinous charges. It appears that the accusations stem from her refusal to cancel a Palestinian literary conference on campus last September.

At a Congressional hearing, Rep. Elise Stefanik said that students had chanted support for “intifada.” Intifada means uprising or a call for the end to occupation. To equate the call for an end to the apartheid occupation with a call for the genocide of Jews is a vicious charge that turns the victims into aggressors.

Keep in mind that Rep. Stefanik has been spouting Trump’s white supremacist rhetoric on the “great replacement theory,” which in its original form claims that Jews are orchestrating the mass immigration of people of color into Western nations to replace their white populations.

We need to produce and spread media that lays bare the real forces behind genocide.

The economic essence of imperialism

In his preface, Lenin summarized: “I trust that this pamphlet will help the reader to understand the fundamental economic question, that of the economic essence of imperialism, for unless this is studied, it will be impossible to understand and appraise modern war and modern politics.”

Lenin’s subtitle is “A Popular Outline.” It wasn’t intended to be a scholarly work. It was written for the anti-war movement in his time, for those who wanted to understand the war and what could bring an end to it.

At the time, Lenin was talking about Karl Kautsky’s betrayal. Kautsky had been a leader of the great German socialist movement. In an abrupt turn, he became instrumental in wrecking that movement by backing the belligerent German government in WWI. In the end, he became an anti-communist ideologue for the

capitalist class.

The new book on “War and Lenin in the 21st Century” presents the ideas of other Marxists, like John Parker, Kwame Nkrumah, and Walter Rodney.

Parker wrote: “The trajectory of the latest vampiric deals of the foreign investors was set when Zelensky signed over even more of his country’s sovereignty to a U.S. firm that will help broker the deals of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and independent foreign investors.”

Nkrumah explained how foreign capital is used for exploitation rather than for development. He wrote: “The struggle against neocolonialism is aimed at preventing the financial power of the developed countries being used in such a way as to impoverish the less developed.”

In this book, Gary Wilson wrote: “The dollarization of the world capitalist economy meant U.S. domination of the global economy. The U.S. Federal Reserve System controls the supply of U.S. dollars. The U.S. Federal Reserve System is, in effect, the world’s central bank. Indeed, most U.S. currency – green dollar bills – circulate outside the U.S.”

One important chapter deals with the opportunism of the more privileged sectors of the working class in the Imperialist countries. Lenin wrote that “capitalism has now singled out a handful of exceptionally rich and powerful states which plunder the whole world ... Obviously, out of such enormous superprofits (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their own country), it is possible to bribe the labor leaders and the upper stratum of the labor aristocracy. And that is just what the capitalists of the advanced countries are doing: They are bribing them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert.”

In the current era, advances in science and technology have increased workers' productivity. Monopoly corporations are reshaping global production and supply chains, breaking down borders, internationalizing jobs and wages, and incorporating hundreds of millions of low-wage workers worldwide into industry and services.

By accessing labor in the Global South, monopolies are driving down wages and benefits of workers in the imperialist industrialized countries, thus enabling a new phase of exploitation and oppression in a relentless pursuit of profit. The capitalist advantage of opportunism is losing its bloody grasp over workers in the richer countries.

The summer of 2023 was marked by a wave of strikes across the United States. In order to win, these strikes require unity across the working class through solidarity with the fight for equality among Black, Latinx, Asian, Native peoples, and immigrant workers, support for the struggle of lesbians, gay, bi, trans, queer, and women workers.

Labor has to build support beyond their membership. Isolated strikes will struggle. But strikes backed by a united working-class front can win. Solidarity is the key.

We can all commemorate the anniversary of Lenin's death with classes centered on this book, "War and Lenin in the 21st Century." Classes can enable a wide discussion of the challenges facing the global working class. Sharing our thoughts will deepen our understanding and will help generate new actions in the struggle for socialism.



To support the struggle of Palestine is to support the struggle against anti-Semitism

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In these crazy days, the mainstream narrative in many Western countries, especially the U.S., is that to attack the apartheid state of “Israel” is to attack the Jewish community. This narrative is pushed by [corporate media](#), [politicians](#), [academic institutions](#), and even [Evangelical Christian churches](#).

This multi-institutional blitz has been effective. In the wake of Oct. 7’s “Operation Al-Aqsa Flood,” many individuals and institutions in the United States rushed to the defense of the Zionist entity. A [Gallup poll](#) conducted between Nov. 1 and Nov. 21 found that 50% of people in the U.S. support the Israeli Occupation Forces’ military actions in Gaza.

Now, 45% answered they did not support the IOF’s action in Gaza. It is important to note that this poll does not ask whether the individual sympathizes with Israel or

condemns Hamas. 50% of these individuals responded that they **supported** the IOF's specific actions in Gaza. As the IOF's actions in Gaza constitute genocide, to support the IOF is to support genocide.

A [Marist poll](#) conducted from Nov. 6 to Nov. 9 found that 60% of people in the U.S. say their sympathies mostly lie with Israel. However, the same poll found that 38% of people in the U.S. believe that Israel's military has gone too far with its attacks on Gaza. This marked a 12% jump from a similar poll held in October.

To be clear, bourgeois political polls are not the end-all and be-all. These polls are flawed and are often constructed with political agendas. However, there are still insights that can be gleaned from them. These polls would appear to support the idea that while there is still widespread support among the U.S. population for fascist Israel, it is eroding as the genocide against Palestine escalates.

And one doesn't even have to read a mainstream poll to sense this. One only has to look as far as the massive demonstrations across the United States and their consequences to see that solidarity with Palestine is growing beyond just the Arab community and the organized left.

Many different communities within the working class have joined the movement for Palestine. This includes students. This includes many in the [Black community](#). This even includes several prominent [Jewish protests](#) and sit-ins that targeted corporate politicians who support the Zionist entity and its genocide of Palestine. The development of an anti-Zionist protest wing of the Jewish community is certainly a new one.

Young people are another section of the working class that has joined this movement in thought and action. A recent Harvard-Harris poll found that [51%](#) of people between the ages of 18 and 24 support Palestine and view Israel as the oppressor. The phenomena have manifested materially in the struggle as one of the leading

organizations of the current movement is literally named the [Palestinian Youth Movement](#).

All of this would seem to indicate that Zionism still has a support base in the U.S., but it is eroding due to the large cross-sectional movement for the liberation of Palestine. Western media and politicians have enforced Zionism ideologically by drawing an equivalence between the Jewish community and Israel. [Israel=Judaism](#). So if the Zionist apartheid state is one and the same as the Jewish community, to attack that state is to attack the Jewish community. This rationale is the one the U.S. military complex has used for 75 years to justify vast military aid to Israel. This rationale is how Zionism has enjoyed such popular support.

Many of the institutions and people who support Zionism [could give a damn](#) about the Jewish community. They are simply supporters of imperialism who benefit financially from the pillaging of Gaza.

However, there is a section of people, many of them Jewish, who genuinely believe that they are standing in solidarity with the Jewish community in their support of the Zionist entity. In that same thread, there is a widely propagandized and instilled belief that it is impossible to be in solidarity with both the Jewish community and the Arab world.

When in reality, one cannot be in solidarity with either community without being in solidarity with both. To support the struggle of Palestine **is** to support the struggle against anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism. The only real way to support Jewish liberation is to stand in opposition to Zionism and the perversion of Jewish values and people to justify a genocidal land grab.

On a personal note, during my recent visit to Cairo, I was amazed at the level of explicit and overt solidarity with the Jewish community expressed by the Egyptian and other Arab people I met through the Global Conscience Convoy. Everyone I met

wanted to make it so clear that they had nothing but love and adoration for the Jewish community, particularly those who have taken mass stands against Zionism in recent weeks and months. Nonetheless, these were all people attempting to organize an explicitly anti-Zionist aid convoy to the Rafah border Crossing.

This is not to say that there is no anti-Semitism in the Arab community. There surely is, but the U.S. media also surely exaggerates it. This is also not to say that we should all take time to individually convert every person who is misplaced in their support of Israel.

This is all to say that we, as a movement against the genocide of Palestine and all imperialism, have to continue to challenge the false narrative circulated in the political and media mainstream that to support the Zionist entity is to support Judaism.

Whether through protest, sit-ins, education, writing, whatever. We must all have the courage to risk facing false allegations of anti-Semitism in an attempt to squash dissent against Zionism. Because ultimately, the only way to defend the Jewish community is to stand against the false ideology of Zionism and the atrocities committed in our name.



'We focus on the liberation movement of Donbass and Ukrainian exiles'

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As we approach the two-year anniversary of the open military conflict between the U.S./NATO/Ukraine and Russia, it's clear that the war is at an impasse. Ukraine's much-hyped offensive has foundered. The regime's internal contradictions are multiplying as it becomes apparent that no victory is in the making despite the influx of billions of dollars of Western weapons and trainers, while Washington is rapidly shifting weapons, money, and attention toward Israel. A substantial part of the U.S. ruling class, frustrated by the lack of progress, is also eager to refocus on preparing for war against China.

This week, Ukrainian President Zelensky came home empty-handed from the latest of his many funding tours with only the consolation prize of an EU promise to consider membership. Last year, Ukraine received the largest amount of military aid in history; now Congress is attempting to put major strings on Biden's efforts to continue exorbitant levels of funding, even though, as the [Washington Post admitted](#) at the end of November, almost 90% of so-called aid money for Ukraine stays in the U.S. It's not because Republicans are against war, but because they see bigger fish elsewhere. Imperialism's priorities, frustrated, are shifting elsewhere.

This is reflected increasingly in the capitalist media, such as the Dec. 15 [New York Times "exposé"](#) about the extreme tactics the Ukrainian military uses to force people into military service. This isn't new - Ukraine has been using the same tactics not only since last year but since the beginning of the war on Donbass almost a decade ago. In 2015 and 2016, there were women's demonstrations that blocked highways across Western and Central Ukraine to protest the kidnapping of sons and husbands. But now it's suddenly become acceptable for Western media to make some digs at their erstwhile ally.

But it's important for us to recognize that Russia has not been able to make significant progress either. The capitalist oligarchy represented by the Putin administration is unable and unwilling to elevate working-class forces and an anti-fascist perspective that would make it possible to transform the military conflict into a people's war.

To the extent there is momentum, it continues to center on the forces of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, who are motivated by the defense of their homes and communities from the Ukrainian neo-Nazi battalions that target civilians daily. Attacks on Donbass civilians have continued unabated after nine-and-a-half years.

Capitalist Russia's contradictions

We have long argued that for Russia to maintain its independence and overcome the threat of dismemberment by the U.S. and NATO, ultimately, the workers and oppressed must surge to the fore and overcome the domination of the reactionary capitalist oligarchy born of the anti-Soviet capitalist counter-revolution.

Starting in 2014, the Donbass liberation struggle fueled an upsurge in internationalist and anti-fascist sentiments in Russia and the other former Soviet Republics. Ultimately, it was this pressure from below that prevented the Russian government from settling for a rotten compromise with the West, as it repeatedly attempted to do, and helped to force Moscow to intervene militarily in February 2022 to prevent a genocidal massacre in Donbass.

But thus far, these mass sentiments have been unable to transcend the control of the Russian oligarchs. Instead, the response of the government is to pile on more internal divisions in response to Western sanctions and pressure – a losing strategy.

The left, though not outright banned like it is in Ukraine, has been unable to hold street protests in Russia since the start of the pandemic. Earlier this year, trans lives were essentially outlawed, including all forms of medical transition. Earlier this month, the Supreme Court declared the LGBTQ+ movement a terrorist movement, giving it the same designation as neo-Nazi groups like Ukraine's Azov Battalion. And there are rumblings that a ban on abortion rights could be next.

The contradictions of the Russian state stand out in ever bolder relief. To survive and maintain independence, Moscow has been put into a position of conflict with world imperialism and alliance with the socialist countries, the Axis of Resistance, and other generally popular forces. But internally, and in the face it presents to the West, the Russian government has doubled down on aligning itself with the views and priorities of Trump and the U.S. far right. We can anticipate this will continue and intensify during the coming U.S. election year.

These contradictions make it extremely difficult to make a winning argument in support of the Special Military Operation in Ukraine to anyone in the U.S. who does not already share our views on imperialism and the global class struggle. This reality doesn't absolve us of making the arguments, of patiently explaining. But it should also inform our approach - the one our tendency alone in the U.S. has championed for the last decade - to focus on the liberation struggle of the Donbass people and Ukrainian anti-fascists.

Palestine parallels

Parallels of Donbass with Palestine's struggle are inescapable. It took years for the broad progressive movement in the U.S. to even recognize the existence of the Palestinians and even longer to embrace the legitimacy of their right to live and defend their homeland from Zionist occupation and expulsion. It took decades for the Palestine solidarity movement to reach the level we see today.

In the last few months, we've witnessed the impressive growth of a militant Queers for Palestine wing of the solidarity movement - embracing the call of LGBTQ+ Palestinians that "for queer liberation, we need Palestinian liberation." This powerful solidarity exists despite the presence of forces that are anti-LGBTQ+ (or perceived as such) in the Palestinian struggle and shows it is possible for the solidarity movement here to transcend the liberal arguments against liberation movements. Young activists especially seem to grasp the idea that we have always championed - that to build solidarity between movements, you start by offering solidarity.

The struggle in Donbass and Ukraine seems far away, but it really isn't. So much of the fascist, white supremacist violence we see aimed at communities of color, immigrants, and queer people in this country can be traced back to the U.S. promotion of fascist forces abroad, often with direct or indirect ties to the neo-Nazi hub that Ukraine has become since 2014, including training with NATO-supplied

weapons, social media influence, rhetoric, and symbolism.

The war against Donbass is still raging; the protections the population has won by Russian intervention are imperfect and tenuous. However, U.S. military priorities may shift in the coming year. We must continue to champion, educate, and protest in support of the Donbass people's cause and the anti-fascist liberation of Ukraine.



The fight for trans lives and building an anti-fascist front

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Excerpts from a presentation at the Socialist Unity Party national plenum on Dec. 16, 2023.

It's no exaggeration to say that the Oct. 7 [National March to Protect Trans Youth](#) was a milestone event for our party. It was the first national initiative by the Socialist Unity Party since our founding almost five years ago and was a modest but

significant success. Many of the comrades at this meeting were able to be in Orlando and played an invaluable role in the event. The whole party contributed to its success throughout several months of organizing.

In the tradition of Sam Marcy and the other founders of our tendency, we raised an idea that met an urgent, unmet political need – to challenge the unbridled attacks on trans youth on the front lines in Ron DeSantis’s Florida. Working on a shoestring, we were able to build a genuine coalition that placed revolutionary activists and ideas at the center.

We were able to overcome not only numerous logistical, security, and financial obstacles but the political resistance of mainstream LGBTQ+ groups and other left tendencies. Our action influenced the discussion within the mainstream of the movement aligned with Democrats, who had to react to what we were doing and saying. Most importantly, perhaps, we made important new allies and brought others closer to us.

The Oct. 7 mobilization broke new ground for us as an intervention in the modern trans liberation movement, of whom our late comrade Leslie Feinberg was one of the founding inspirations. We are now a factor in the fight for trans lives as we move into 2024, and it’s a responsibility we must take seriously.

The far-right war on trans people and the broader LGBTQ+ community will continue in the new year, with the acquiescence of liberal and centrist politicians. Missouri, Kentucky, and numerous other states are preparing rafts of new anti-trans and anti-queer state legislation modeled on Florida that will be unleashed right after New Year’s Day.

Not only Trump and DeSantis but all of the Republican presidential candidates have placed trans genocide at the center of their campaigns. There has not been, nor do we expect there to be, any meaningful resistance to these attacks from Genocide Joe

Biden or the national Democratic Party machine.

Uniting many struggles

As our Oct. 7 mobilization made explicit, the attacks on trans lives are tied directly to the attacks on reproductive rights, on Black and Brown and Indigenous communities, on immigrants and refugees, on access to health care, education, and housing, and so much more.

Trans people are among the last hired and first fired, often lack any family support, and tend to be relegated to service and freelance jobs - so every economic attack on the working class hits us hard. Like many other oppressed groups in the U.S. today, trans people are often pushed into sex work as the only option to survive and access the care they need. This is true even of many who are otherwise employed full-time.

We should take note of the importance of the powerful national union organizing campaign at Starbucks, where young queer and especially trans workers are in the forefront, including taking a groundbreaking position in support of Palestine. Their work puts the lie to those so-called leftists who claim that queers are not part of the working class.

Comrades, it's no secret to most of us that one of the hardest parts of any mobilization is the follow-up. The escalation in Gaza exploded on the same day as the march and has understandably dominated our attention and that of many of our allies ever since.

Without underselling the significance of Oct. 7, we should also recognize that it was just a small first step toward reviving a militant, independent queer movement at the national level and toward building an anti-fascist front. The need for such a front is likely to only become more urgent in the coming year.

Trans people, in particular, are facing the very real possibility that our health care

and access to public life will be banned or otherwise restricted in the coming years, with all the consequences that entails for us and for the communities that will be targeted after us.



Confronting Trumpism on the state level: Mobilize resistance to Gov. Landry's attacks in Louisiana

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Other reports have laid out many aspects of the current situation with world capitalism and imperialism - from economic crisis to a massive escalation of military conflict, actual and potential. Reports have shown how military conflicts grow out of the economy.

Tied up in all this are the contradictions within the ruling class. This is playing out in the U.S. with the struggles within Congress, as well as in the coming presidential elections. Biden and Trump are effectively the candidates on offer. Biden's popularity is plummeting with his unconditional support for Israel's intensified genocide of the Palestinian people. Trump is promising a full-scale assault on the institutions of bourgeois democracy, already fragile. He promises to deport more people than ever before, and so on.

At the same time, as other comrades have pointed out, there is a huge upsurge of resistance in the U.S. around Palestine (like in the rest of the world), with masses of people rejecting the aims of U.S. imperialism. And with elections like the one recently in Ohio, we can see the deep unpopularity of the far right's policies concerning abortion. We see a rejection of the anti-LGBTQ+ book bans and other fascist policies.

With all that going on, far-right, Trump-allied Attorney General Jeff Landry has been elected governor of Louisiana following a lackluster election cycle. The Democrats offered up almost no resistance, and record-low voter turnout ensured that the small ultra-right base came out and secured a victory for Landry.

[I've written several articles](#) for Struggle-La Lucha on this. At the March for Trans Youth in Orlando, Florida, multiple Louisiana activists spoke about the danger of Landry.

Landry's planning a massive increase in police repression, for example, bringing in state police to the majority-Black city of New Orleans. There is an overt Jim Crow aspect to his whole appeal. This would overturn the many gains that the people of New Orleans have made against police repression vis-a-vis the federal consent decree that has somewhat tempered police violence.

He's an oil-and-gas investment millionaire who led the anti-abortion charge and tried to kick thousands of people off Medicaid.

I don't want to repeat everything. Instead, I want to make a concrete proposal that the Socialist Unity Party commit to prioritizing the situation in Louisiana.

For one thing, I think it will be important to fight Landry's agenda, being proactive and getting ahead of him. How does the far-right of a certain type - the MAGA type, including Landry - fit into the big picture? In general, there is very little understanding and consensus about these things in the broad movement, leading to different tendencies, such as some attempting an alliance with the supposedly populist far right, on the one hand, and others to trail the Democrats. Both of these are dangerous paths.

As Landry and the Republican supermajority in the state unleash attacks on all sections of the working class and the oppressed, we will have opportunities to reach workers.

By putting these struggles in the national spotlight, we will not only expose Landry and hopefully make it harder for him to operate, but we can embolden workers and the political movement in other states, especially in the South.



The dawn of a working class upsurge

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Eighty-six-year-old Verna Mae Jackson was crushed to death on Dec. 6 while working at the FedEx world hub in the Memphis International airport.

Six months before, 16-year-old Michael Schuls was killed in a Florence, Wisconsin, sawmill near the border with Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

What were an 86-year-old Black woman and a 16-year-old teenager doing in these dangerous jobs? Both of these tragedies were preventable.

Seventy years in age and 800 miles separated these two murdered workers. Maybe FedEx will be fined for unsafe conditions.

Florence Hardwoods was fined \$190,000. It was found that the sawmill employed nine children, some as young as 14.

Yet, under Wisconsin law, it's perfectly legal for teenagers to work in sawmills. Child labor is making a big comeback.

At the same time, the share of folks older than 60 in the workforce has doubled since 2000. By exploiting both the young and old, capitalism is extending the time that it extracts profits from us.

Karl Marx called this stealing "absolute surplus value."

These two murders on the job are another sign of how much the working class has been pushed back in the last 50 years.

Look at the federal minimum wage. Because of the tremendous struggles of the 1960s, it was raised to \$1.60 in February 1968.

To equal the purchasing power of that you would need at least \$14.04 today. But the federal minimum wage has been frozen at \$7.25.

That's nearly a 50% drop in real terms, although many states, because of struggle, have raised their own minimum wage. These include California, Maryland, and New York.

In 1975, Wall Street demanded and got 50,000 New York City municipal workers fired. In the late 1970s, tens of thousands of Chrysler workers were laid off, most of whom were Black.

Reagan crushed the PATCO air traffic controllers' strike in 1981 while AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland did nothing.

He was busy helping to overthrow socialist Poland. Kirkland also served on Reagan's

Social Security Commission, which raised the retirement age.

Targeting Black workers

Big capital was determined to lessen its dependence on Black labor in basic industry. The Black-majority cities of Detroit and Flint, Michigan, and Gary, Indiana, were wrecked as hundreds of thousands of jobs were lost in auto and steel.

Fifty years ago, General Motors was the biggest employer of Black workers who were members of the UAW. Today, it's non-union, poverty-wage Walmart.

Look at Baltimore. When I moved here in 1978, 20,000 or so workers were employed at Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point mill, the largest in the world. Thousands more worked in shipyards, the Koppers factory, and at the GM plant.

All these unionized strongholds of our class were wiped out. Close to seven million manufacturing jobs, most of which were unionized, were destroyed coast-to-coast.

Seven million homes were foreclosed, and millions more evicted.

The biggest defeat was the overthrow of the Soviet Union. That was more dangerous than Hitler coming to power by crushing the German working class.

Yet the capitalist class can't make a penny in profits without us. Thousands of Amazon workers now are employed at Sparrows Point.

Organizing drives at Amazon will make Jeff Bezos pay union wages and benefits. He might even have to trade in his \$500 million yacht.

After decades of being beaten up, the U.S. multinational working class is fighting back! Capitalists are taking note.

A recent Wall Street headline read, "For Labor Unions, 2023 Was the Year of the

Strike — and Big Victories.” The Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations has counted 354 strikes this year.

Back in 1933, one of the first working-class victories was winning unions in Hollywood. Movie making is big business.

Eighty years later, both the Writers Guild and the Screen Actors Guild went on strike for months in 2023, bringing the Hollywood moguls to their knees. Workers used their courage and intelligence to beat back artificial intelligence.

The Teamsters eliminated the hated two-tier pay scheme for drivers at UPS without going on strike. Wages for part-time workers were raised to \$21 per hour.

That wasn’t enough for many part-timers, who justifiably wanted \$25 in these inflationary times. I don’t think that Teamsters president Sean McBride settled for less because of pressure from the White House.

I think he was trying to show Amazon workers that by joining the Teamsters they can get more money, too, without a lengthy strike. We’ll see how that works out.

Solidarity with Palestine!

The Starbucks workers seem to be unbeatable. They continue to struggle in hundreds of stores across the country. They’ve got billionaire Howard Schultz on the run!

Nurses and other health care workers conducted 27 strikes across the United States. Picket lines were set up in New York and throughout California. There were also strikes in Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Oregon, St. Louis, and the state of Washington.

Workers at Rutgers and Temple universities went on strike as well as against

colleges in Illinois.

The biggest star was the UAW strikes against the Big Three automakers that lasted more than six weeks. The union struck all three at once for the first time, although only striking a few selected chokepoints.

The hated pay tiers that were imposed in 2008 were smashed. The lowest-paid workers got the biggest wage increases. That's what our late Comrade Vince Copeland advocated for decades.

Nonunion outfits like Toyota were so scared that they increased their wages, too. That won't keep out the UAW. More than a thousand workers at Volkswagen have signed union cards.

Just as notable is UAW president Sean Fain's demand for a ceasefire in Gaza. So had Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, who did so earlier.

Long gone are the days of George Meany supporting every filthy imperialist war. "Solidarity Forever" means solidarity with Palestine!

No railroad workers have any illusions about "Amtrak Joe," who has now become "Genocide Joe" Biden. Despite being forbidden to strike by Congress, most railroaders were able to claw sick days out of the rail tycoons.

We are at the very beginning of a working-class upsurge. The actions that have been taken at Amazon warehouses are like those of the autoworkers in 1933 and 34.

The United Farmworkers Union is springing back to organize some of the poorest workers.

Who would have thought that small groups of Starbucks employees would stage

work stoppages at hundreds of coffee shops? That takes enthusiasm and discipline.

We look forward to union drives at Walmart. The Teamsters will come to Memphis, where FedEx has 30,000 employees, and Verna Mae Jackson was killed.

The labor movement will come to some of the smallest towns just like the Black Lives Matter! movement did.

We're mad as hell and we won't take it anymore!



Protests at Biden gala in L.A. amid Gaza genocide

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 21, 2023

Dec. 14 — Genocide Joe Biden flew into Los Angeles under heavy guard on Dec. 8. Well over a thousand protestors let him know that he wasn't welcome in L.A. or anyplace else. The demonstration was organized by the Palestinian Youth

Movement, which has a strong following at nearby UCLA, and was supported by numerous other anti-war and progressive organizations.

Biden and his entourage had come to cash in at six fundraising stops over the weekend. His reelection campaign crew hoped that bolstering their war chest would make up for his ever-sinking poll numbers.

Indeed, donors from the glitzy side of town threw in \$15 million during the weekend - more than any amount raised by a candidate from an L.A. visit. Jeffrey Katzenberg, the multi-millionaire co-founder of Hollywood Pictures, DreamWorks Pictures, and DreamWorks Animation, pulled together the star-studded event. Katzenberg is a co-chair of Biden's reelection campaign, a position awarded to him for his long history of channeling millions of Hollywood dollars to the Democratic Party.

But the warmonger-in-chief needs far more than money to overcome growing anger over his escalating support for Zionist genocide in Gaza. The protest was a great reflection of the growing worldwide movement.

Hundreds had gathered in a park near the posh, Beverly Hills-adjacent Holmby Hills site of his event by 3:30. Later, the growing crowd marched right to the gate of the mansion where Genocide Joe spoke, with their sound system booming the chants, hoping the murderer-in-chief could hear the message, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!"

Speakers denounced the horrible ethnic cleansing of Gaza and the widespread murder of Gazans being carried out with total support from the administration. Palestinian flags and Keffiyehs - the traditional scarf that has come to symbolize the Palestinian liberation struggle - were everywhere.

The Los Angeles police, numbered in the hundreds, were clad in riot gear. They declared an "unlawful assembly" and issued a dispersal order. When the protest

finally concluded, many marched south and blocked traffic on Wilshire Boulevard, one of the busiest traffic corridors in the U.S.

Later, Chief Michael Moore accused the crowd of violence, and L.A. County District Attorney George Gascón told the media he had activated the Hate Crime Unit to investigate claims that protesters threw debris at police and spraypainted pro-Palestinian slogans on Starbucks stores and other locations as they left the protest.

Los Angeles is a city adorned by beautiful murals that express the struggle of the largely immigrant population. Even if the claims of vandalism were true, no graffiti artists would disagree with pro-Palestine messages being added to the anti-racist and anti-imperialist character of the collection.

The most recent count of the Biden/Netanyahu horror puts the death toll in Gaza at 17,000. Two-thirds are women and children. Just as they have done since the beginning of the war, the occupation forces are currently carpet-bombing the very place they told people would be a safe area. The bombing has targeted nearly all hospitals and schools throughout Gaza. The entire population is without adequate food and water; there is nowhere left to flee, and humanitarian assistance is being blocked.

John Parker of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in L.A., and a candidate for U.S. Congress on the Peace and Freedom Party slate, was part of the Convoy of Conscience, organized by Egyptian journalists trying to enter Gaza with aid but who were blocked from entering and detained by the Egyptian authorities.

Reports of Israel using white phosphorus in Gaza have surfaced in the major media this week. When questioned about it while aboard Air Force One, White House spokesperson John Kirby — without denying it has been provided by the U.S. — said, “White phosphorus has a legitimate military utility for illumination and producing smoke to conceal movements. ... Obviously any time that we provide items like white

phosphorous to another military, it is with the full expectation that it will be used in keeping with those legitimate purposes ... and in keeping with the law of armed conflict."

Former State Dept. official Josh Paul, who had resigned over the increased shipments of U.S. weapons when Israel began its assault in October, reported to Democracy Now, on Dec. 13 that only hours after the U.S. vetoed a ceasefire resolution at the United Nations, Biden bypassed congress to send 14,000 more artillery shells to the racist Zionist army at a cost of \$106 million.

With all the threats by LAPD and the District Attorney, there were no arrests in L.A. on Dec. 9. It's likely the cops had a more-or-less "hands-off" orientation from on high. Of course, there is plenty of repression and slander of ceasefire protesters across the country and internationally. But clearly, the emergence of this powerful wave of protest has the administration and the whole capitalist state grappling over the question of how to tamp down the protests. Ceasefire now! Down with the Zionist state and U.S. imperialism.



Say NO to anti-Muslim bigotry!

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 21, 2023

Islamophobia is racist poison



The wealthy and powerful want us to hate two billion Muslim people, a quarter of the human race. While Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has killed over 20,000 Palestinians in Gaza with U.S.-made bombs, a green light is given to racism against Muslims everywhere.

Super bigot Florida Gov. [Ron DeSantis](#), in the Dec. 6 Republican presidential

candidates' debate, mocked the robes worn by many Muslim men as "man dresses." This is the traditional clothing in many parts of North Africa and West Asia, most suitable for the climate. Most Christian depictions of Jesus show him wearing a robe. Catholic priests also wear robes.

DeSantis — who wants to kick Black history out of Florida schools — deliberately said "man dress" to appeal to homophobic and transphobic bigotry along with attacking Muslims. DeSantis was a Navy lawyer at the Guantánamo concentration camp, where Muslim inmates were tortured.

Another Republican candidate, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, is no better. He rose to prominence as the U.S. attorney who framed the [Fort Dix 5](#): Mohamad Ibrahim Shnewer, brothers Dritan Duka, Shain Duka and Eljvir Duka, and Serdar Tatar.

The five Muslims were entrapped by the FBI and framed on fantastic charges of planning to murder soldiers at the Fort Dix army base in New Jersey. They've been jailed since 2007.

Framing the five was key to Christie becoming New Jersey's governor, where he attacked teachers and their unions.

The Fort Dix frame-up was carried out in the wake of the anti-Muslim witch-hunt that followed the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Hundreds were arrested and/or deported, including the operators of the newsstand at a Newark, New Jersey, railroad station.

Racism flows from the top

Anti-Muslim hate comes from the top of capitalist society. Former U.S. State Department official [Stuart Seldowitz](#) was arrested in November for harassing Mohamed Hussein, a Muslim food vendor on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Seldowitz called Hussein a terrorist.

Seldowitz screamed, “If we killed 4,000 Palestinian kids, it wasn’t enough.” This pig had actually been deputy director of the State Department’s Office of Israel and Palestinian Affairs. How many other U.S. “diplomats” are like Seldowitz?

Comedian [Bill Maher](#) is notorious for his bigotry against Muslim people. On his HBO show in 2010, Maher said he was afraid that so many babies with the name Muhammad were being born in Western countries.

Maher continues to have his TV show, while Mehdi Hasan, a Muslim, had his MSNBC show canceled. Hasan had been “vocal for human rights in Gaza,” as one report of the cancellation put it.

Within his first week as president in January 2017, Donald Trump placed travel bans on residents from seven Muslim-majority countries. This bigotry went hand-in-hand with Trump calling Haiti a “s—hole country.”

At the time, [thousands of people flooded airports](#) across the United States to protest Trump’s executive order against Muslims and refugees.

Joe Biden’s sending thousands of bombs and shells to the Israeli apartheid regime worth billions of dollars is worse. The blood of 10,000 murdered children in Gaza is on Genocide Joe’s hands.



Biden claimed he saw pictures of Israeli children who were beheaded by Palestinian freedom fighters. The White House had to walk back this

big lie. There were no pictures because there were no beheaded children.

The massive propaganda campaign claiming the Palestinian resistance soldiers committed mass rapes is also a filthy lie.

The fighters were on a disciplined, tight schedule, trying to safely capture as many people as possible so they could be exchanged for thousands of Palestinian political prisoners. It was the [Zionist state's military that killed many of the Israeli soldiers](#) and settlers by indiscriminate shooting,

The accusations of mass rapes are being used to justify the massive bombing that has killed thousands in Gaza. That's how the Ku Klux Klan defended lynchings.

9-11-01 and 'Christ killing'

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres pointed out that hundreds of thousands of people in Gaza are "simply starving." Civilians in Gaza "are being told to move like human pinballs - ricocheting between ever-smaller slivers of the south, without any of the basics for survival," he said.

The United States was the only country to vote against, and thereby veto, a United Nations Security Council resolution demanding a ceasefire in Gaza. A few days later, 153 countries representing over 90% of the world's population voted for a ceasefire in the UN's General Assembly on Dec. 12.

The Israeli military is parading nearly naked Palestinian men to humiliate them. It's reminiscent of how, in 1970, former Philadelphia Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo had his cops strip naked Black Panther Party members.

Bigotry against Muslims and the Islamic religion is considered acceptable within broad sections of U.S. politics, certainly among Trump supporters. Leading the way are many Protestant evangelical preachers.

Racism and religious bigotry have long been part of these ministers' toolkits. The largest protestant denomination — the Southern Baptist Convention — was founded in 1845 to defend slavery.

During the 1960 presidential race, the [Rev. W. A. Criswell](#) of the First Baptist Church in Dallas — the largest in the SBC — condemned John F. Kennedy for being a Catholic. Criswell, who defended racial segregation, later became SBC president.

Now, these preachers are telling us to hate Muslims. In the 1930s, bigots fought to keep Jewish refugees out of the United States.

Time magazine referred to French premier Léon Blum as "Jew Blum." Capitalists blamed Jewish people for the Bolshevik Revolution, which inspired workers and oppressed people around the world.

The Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon are being used as a "Christ killing" charge against all Muslims. This was the old lie that Jewish people were responsible for the death of Jesus Christ, a Jewish rebel crucified by the Roman Empire.

Anti-Muslim bigotry went hand-in-hand with hatred against Jewish people. Both Jews and Muslims were expelled from Spain in 1492. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish people were given refuge in Muslim lands.

People flocked to Mohamed Hussein's food cart after the former State Department diplomat attacked him. It didn't hurt that Hallal food is clean and tasty. The poison of Islamophobia has to be exposed and fought.



'Free, free Palestine!': Thousands march in New Orleans, shut down tourism district

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 21, 2023

New Orleans, Dec. 10 - A coalition of some 20 organizations brought out some 3,500 protesters for Palestine, shutting down street after street in the Central Business District.

This was a busy Sunday evening because the New Orleans Saints were playing against the Carolina Panthers at home. The city's ruling class never welcomes disruptions to the hotels and restaurants, so these demonstrations hit them where it hurts.

Imagine if the movement does this during the city's biggest cash cow: Mardi Gras. It comes early this year, Feb. 13, just saying.

This was likely the biggest New Orleans demonstration for Palestine so far and possibly the biggest protest for anything in the city since the 2020 national upsurge for George Floyd.

After brief remarks and a poem by a local Palestinian activist, the marchers set off from 333 Canal Place in front of a major shopping mall and a casino at the heart of New Orleans tourism. This was a battle-tested crowd, made up of people who have been in the streets week after week. The protest leaders knew what they were doing, and the crowd moved with purpose, strategically shutting down various streets.

The energy was pitched throughout, with few lulls - one exception being the time reserved for Muslim evening prayer. The marchers stopped for around 20 minutes in the middle of one street, with non-Muslims waiting respectfully.

As at other Palestine events, Palestinian youth led the way.

At times, I was overwhelmed with great sadness as I looked at local Palestinian elders, children, and even babies held in the arms of their loving families. Beautiful people just like them are dying every day. But I saw so much joy on people's faces, too. It's the joy that comes from solidarity and resistance.

One notable change is the development of more organized contingents. In addition to known organizations that had endorsed the march, I noted different groups carrying banners, such as New Orleans Healthcare Workers for Ceasefire and Queers for Palestine. That was good to see. The working class has the power to thwart the imperialist war machine. And queer and trans people - who are victims of violence almost everywhere, including in Palestine, as U.S.-made bombs are falling on them - are and should be at the forefront of the anti-imperialist struggle.

Organizers of this march also made creative use of props to raise awareness about Israel's genocide. One truck was draped with mock body bags covered in blood. Another trailer - not so unlike a Mardi Gras float - was covered in beautiful art and messages like "liberation is the future," "land back," and "ceasefire now." Yet another truck displayed huge video screens, showing images of carnage and excerpts of Genocide Joe Biden's callous speeches.

Harvey, Louisiana, mosque Masjid Omar, was the lead organizing group of the march. Endorsing organizations included NOSHIP (New Orleans Stop Helping Israel's Ports), Jefferson Muslim Association, Jewish Voice for Peace, Workers Voice Socialist Movement, Freedom Road Socialist Organization New Orleans, and many more.

