

Struggle □ La Lucha PDF - February 20, 2023

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 19, 2023
[Get PDF here](#)

Labor seizes the time to **FREE MUMIA**

By Lallan Schoenstein

As leaders in the vanguard of social activism in the labor movement, Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) locals in San Francisco and Oakland, California, shut down their ports on Feb. 16 to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Their actions initiated a campaign of solidarity for Mumia that spans the globe.

Most notably:

- South Africa's National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA) demonstrated at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria and the U.S. Consulate in Durban. See page 4.
- In Tokyo, Japanese railroad workers, members of the Doro-Chiba labor union, held a protest for Mumia in front of the U.S. Embassy.
- In Berlin, the IG Metall (Metal Workers Industrial Union) Working Group on Internationalism (Arbeitskreis Internationalismus) sent a message of solidarity with the ILWU port shutdown: "Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man, falsely put into jail since 1982 for a crime he did not commit. Like Leonard Peltier, who is imprisoned for 46 years, he is a victim of a system of racism and exploitation. Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier should be free! We send you our warmest greetings and wish you success with your port shutdown solidarity action."

Judge to rule on Mumia's case

Currently, Mumia Abu-Jamal's defense lawyers are reviewing evidence that had been hidden in the District Attorney's closet for 36 years, evidence that attorneys say shows that the police and prosecution intentionally manufactured Mumia's guilt and suppressed the truth of his innocence.

His lawyers expect to find further evidence that police coerced and bribed witnesses and that extreme racism and judicial bias have permeated all the proceedings against Mumia. The discovery of this new undisclosed evidence provides the basis for a retrial.

Judge Lucretia Clemons has ordered the Philadelphia District Attorney to turn over additional files — up to 200 boxes — to Mumia's defense team. At this time, actions are planned to support Mumia, ensure that the evidence is heard, and win Mumia Abu-Jamal's freedom. Judge Clemons is expected to issue her ruling on Mumia's case sometime between Feb. 16 and March 16.

At home and across the country, the ILWU action is building a growing movement for Mumia's freedom.

- Keith Brown, president of the Oakland Education Association, wrote on behalf of the teachers' union:

"The teachers of Oakland have a long history of support for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Now is the time to bring Mumia home. On behalf of the 3,000 educators of the Oakland Education Association, I urge the immediate release of Mumia Abu-Jamal."

"It is our collective responsibility to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and end the mass incarceration of Black Americans. Mumia's case exemplifies the worst of mass incarceration in the United States."

"This moment calls for the display of healing



the wrongs of discrimination, racial bias, and unfairness. Justice and 'doing the right thing' means granting Mumia Abu-Jamal the opportunity to have a fair hearing. This includes work that we, as the Oakland Education Association, have been doing to create a culture of inclusion and anti-racist practices with our educators."

- In Portland, Oregon, Local 28 of IATSE, the theater, TV, and movie workers union, passed a resolution for Mumia's freedom. The wording of Local 28's resolution is the same as one passed by the Portland painters union in October.

It demands immediate freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and calls for a policy of working-class struggle through agitation, publicity, protest, and continued coordinated workers' action on a national and international scale to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, and calls on workers of all countries to use their power to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

- On Feb. 13, radio stations WBAI in New York and WPEW in Washington, D.C., aired a teach-in: "Mumia's Freedom is Labor's Cause."

The teach-in featured labor leaders:

Brenda Stokely, fm. pres. AFSCME DC 1707, Local 205, Co-convenor of the Million Worker March; Jack Heyman, retired exec. brd. ILWU Local 10; David Newton, Local 10 ILWU and nephew of Huey Newton, founder Black Panther Party; Chris Silvera, Sec.-treas., Teamsters Local 808; Charles Jenkins, TWU Local 100, Pres. NY Chapter Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

- On Feb. 18 in Boston, a Free Mumia rally was planned.

- Compelling support was voiced by Angela Davis in a letter to Irvin Jim, General Secretary of NUMSA, South Africa:

"As I write you today on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal, I remember the powerful letter you wrote in 2016 to Governor Wolf of Pennsylvania, when you emphasized similarities between the South African apartheid government's treatment of its political prisoners and the conditions of prisoners in Pennsylvania."

"Today, we need to take advantage of the fact that we have the best chance in a very long time to actually achieve his (Mumia's) freedom."

Pam Africa speaking in Philadelphia in December

State of Biden: "I am a capitalist"

Marshall 'Eddie' Conway, ipresente!

Train wrecks, earthquakes & profits

Inflation, layoffs & trillion\$ war budget

Tyre Nichols: No matter color of the lash, the whip of racism remains intact

Trans genocide: time to fight back!



NOLA v. anti-LGBTQ+ bigot Landry

90 years since Hitler took power

Far right trap for anti-war movement

Sam Marcy

Earthquake: Drop U.S. sanctions

The 'spy balloon' incident?

U.S. troops out of the Philippines!

Nord Stream pipeline

- Labor seizes the time to FREE MUMIA
- State of the Union: Biden's honest moment 'I am a capitalist'
- Inflation, layoffs, & the \$1 trillion war budget
- Train wrecks, earthquakes and profits
- Marshall 'Eddie' Conway, ipresente!
- No matter the color of the lash, the whip of racism remains intact
- South Africa's National Union of Metalworkers will join call for Mumia's freedom
- Stop trans genocide: Now is the time to fight back!
- New Orleanians come out against anti-LGBTQ+ bigot Jeff Landry
- Ninety years since Hitler took power
- The far right sets a trap for the anti-war movement
- Socialist Unity Party honors Sam Marcy
- Turkey-Syria earthquake catastrophe needs global cooperation, not U.S. sanctions
- What's the significance of the 'spy balloon' incident?
- U.S. troops out of the Philippines!
- How the U.S. Navy blew up the Nord Stream pipeline
- Gobierno de PR defiende intereses privados a costa del interés público



Labor seizes the time to ‘Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!’

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 19, 2023



As leaders in the vanguard of social activism in the labor movement, Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) locals in San Francisco and Oakland, California, shut down their ports on February 16 to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Their actions initiated a campaign of solidarity for Mumia that spans the globe.

Most notably:

- **South Africa's National Union of Metalworkers** demonstrated at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria and the U.S. Consulate in Durban.
- In Tokyo, **Japanese railroad workers**, members of the Doro-Chiba labor union, held a protest for Mumia in front of the U.S. Embassy.
- **In Berlin, the IG Metall** (Metal Workers Industrial Union) Working Group on Internationalism (Arbeitskreis Internationalismus) sent a message of solidarity with the ILWU port shutdown: "Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man, falsely put into jail since 1982 for a crime he did not commit. Like Leonard Peltier, who is imprisoned for 46 years, he is a victim of a system of racism and exploitation. Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier should be free! We send you our warmest greetings and wish you success with your port shutdown solidarity action."

Judge to rule on Mumia's case

Currently, Mumia Abu-Jamal's defense lawyers are reviewing evidence that had been hidden in the District Attorney's closet for 36 years, evidence that attorneys say shows that the police and prosecution intentionally manufactured Mumia's guilt and suppressed the truth of his innocence.

His lawyers expect to find further evidence that police coerced and bribed witnesses and that extreme racism and judicial bias have permeated all the proceedings against Mumia. The discovery of this new undisclosed evidence provides the basis for a retrial.

Judge Lucretia Clemons has ordered the Philadelphia District Attorney to turn over additional files — up to 200 boxes — to Mumia's defense team. At this time, actions are planned to support Mumia, ensure that the evidence is heard, and win Mumia Abu-Jamal's freedom. Judge Clemons is expected to issue her ruling on Mumia's case

sometime between Feb. 16 and March 16.

At home and across the country, the ILWU action is building a growing movement for Mumia's freedom.

Keith Brown, president of the Oakland Education Association, wrote on behalf of the teachers' union:

"The teachers of Oakland have a long history of support for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Now is the time to bring Mumia home. On behalf of the 3,000 educators of the Oakland Education Association, I urge the immediate release of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

"It is our collective responsibility to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and end the mass incarceration of Black Americans. Mumia's case exemplifies the worst of mass incarceration in the United States.

"This moment calls for the display of healing the wrongs of discrimination, racial bias, and unfairness. Justice and doing the right thing means granting Mumia Abu-Jamal the opportunity to have a fair hearing. This includes work that we, as the Oakland Education Association, have been doing to create a culture of inclusion and anti-racist practices with our educators."

In Portland, Oregon, Local 28 of IATSE, the theater, TV, and movie workers union, passed a resolution for Mumia's freedom. The wording of Local 28's resolution is the same as one passed by the Portland painters union in October.

It demands immediate freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and calls for a policy of working-class struggle through agitation, publicity, protest, and continued coordinated workers' action on a national and international scale to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, and calls on workers of all countries to use their power to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

On Feb 13, radio stations WBAI in New York and WPFW in Washington, D.C., aired a teach-in: “Mumia’s Freedom is Labor’s Cause.”

The teach-in featured labor leaders:

- Brenda Stokely, former pres. AFSCME DC 1707, Local 205, co-convenor of the Million Worker March;
- Jack Heyman, retired Exec. Board Member of Local 10 International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU); David Newton, member Local 10 ILWU and nephew of Huey Newton, founder Black Panther Party;
- Chris Silvera, Sec.-Treas., Teamsters Local 808;
- Charles Jenkins, member TWU Local 100, Pres. NY Chapter Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

On Feb. 18 in Boston, a Free Mumia rally was planned.

Compelling support was voiced by Angela Davis in a letter to Irvin Jim, General Secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa:

“As I write you today on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal, I remember the powerful letter you wrote in 2016 to Governor Wolf of Pennsylvania, when you emphasized similarities between the South African apartheid government’s treatment of its political prisoners and the conditions of prisoners in Pennsylvania.

“Today, we need to take advantage of the fact that we have the best chance in a very long time to actually achieve his (Mumia’s) freedom.”



We firmly believe that the time has come. Mumia Abu-Jamal must be set free: Irvin Jim writes to U.S. judge

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 19, 2023



(From February 16 to March 16, trade unions and people's movements across the

world are organizing a campaign to demand the release of U.S. political prisoner, militant, and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been in prison for over 41 years. The global action comes at a time when his defense is mounting a fresh attempt to ensure his release, as the evidence against him has been time and again exposed as flawed. As part of this action, Irvin Jim, General Secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, has written a letter to Judge Lucretia Clemons of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County. NUMSA has been a key pillar of the international campaign to free Mumia for years.)

TO: Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County
1220 Criminal Justice Center
1301 Filbert Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Honorable Judge Lucretia Clemons
RE: The Release of Mumia Abu-Jamal

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) has a history of struggle in our country, where we had to face and fight historical injustice, which was committed by the Apartheid regime for decades where Black people, Africans in particular, were discriminated against, and where the system of racism which we regard as a crime against humanity, was put in the statute books in order to oppress and exploit on the basis of color. This oppression affected all aspects of life for Blacks and Africans. They were victims of the Colour Bar Act, and they were victims of inferior education (Bantu education). As Black people, we were condemned for the rest of our lives to super oppression and exploitation as a result of the Union of South Africa of 1910, between the English and Afrikaner capital, where black people were not allowed to be part of the ownership and control of the South African economy. It is this brutal oppression that kept Nelson Mandela in prison for 27 years, and it is this brutal oppression that killed Steve Biko for fighting for equality

between Black and white people, for fighting for genuine democracy, and for the liberation of the Black child. It took decades to fight against this unjust, racist system, and many sung and unsung heroes, old and young, died in the trenches fighting for freedom. They were very resolute that freedom is love, freedom is peace, and they were committed that whilst many were to die, they were determined to fight for the freedom of future generations to come.

We are writing to you out of our honest and humble reflection and the firm belief we hold that without international solidarity, without the people of the world separated by rivers and forests standing in solidarity with the people of South Africa and our struggle for freedom, we would not have been liberated. Without the anti-Apartheid movement in the U.S., which was triggered by the racist laws of the Nationalist Party regime, which took power in 1948, our country and our people would not have been liberated. Without the solidarity, which we received from many formations and the solidarity we received across the world and within our own African continent in the frontline states, the South African people would not have realized democracy and freedom. Our activism in the labor movement, which is to advance the struggle for liberation, taught us revolutionary quality values, that we have a duty and responsibility to defend democracy and freedom in our land, and anywhere else above all for humanity and peace and freedom in the world. We must *“always be capable of feeling deeply any injustice committed against anyone, anywhere in the world. This is the most beautiful quality in a revolutionary.”*

We want to sincerely be upfront that whilst we are believers of separation of powers in any democratic dispensation, the sustained injustice that has consistently visited Mumia Abu-Jamal who has been kept in jail in what we believe and regard as unjustifiable reasons, compelled us as the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa for years now, to be part of the international justice campaign in support of freedom of political prisoners in the world who have been victims of various political systems at whose center stands injustice. We firmly believe that the time has come

that justice must prevail and Mumia Abu-Jamal must be set free. We humbly submit to you that you happen to be in a historical moment and our clarion call to the U.S. and its institution of justice, and the judiciary which must further the aims of justice and humanity, is that we are of the view that as an honorable judge, you must be on the right side of history, as this very history has afforded you the opportunity to correct this injustice [faced by] Mumia Abu-Jamal. We firmly believe it is about time to **set him free** and he has served his sentence and justice must prevail.

We are making this point out of our long-term belief that when it comes to any imprisonment of any human being, the following principles must apply, namely:

“No-one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial; No-one shall be condemned by the order of any Government official; the courts shall be representative of all the people; Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance”.

We are making this solidarity appeal to you Honorable Judge because what sustains us and what sustains humanity in these painful historical moments is to have hope, faith and belief that another world is possible. And given the many years that Mumia has served, he has been punished and served his sentence, and we are of the view that you would be considering this case under conditions where today, things surrounding his case should have a less dramatic tone as time heals. Your role, honorable Judge as a member of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s Commission of Racial Healing has been widely reported on, and this is why we believe that your conscience can be swayed to respond with compassion.

It is against such a backdrop that we are of the view that continuing to keep Mumia Abu-Jamal imprisoned shall serve absolutely no purpose, except to advance inhuman retribution and on behalf of 350 000 Metalworkers who believe in freedom, democracy and justice, we join other people of the world who are making the clarion call in appealing and demanding justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal. We call on you as an

honorable judge, to intervene by advancing humanity and justice and set Mumia Abu-Jamal free.

It is our take that Mumia Abu-Jamal is a political prisoner whose basic human right to justice has been violated by the American judicial system. Mumia is an African-American journalist and former member of the Black Panther Party. He has been languishing in prison for the last 42 years for the crime of allegedly killing a white police officer, Daniel Faulkner in 1981. He was initially sentenced to death, but that was later commuted to life. He has spent the bulk of his sentence in solitary confinement, locked in a cell for 23 hours a day.

His trial has been rife with police, prosecutorial and judicial misconduct. The worst example of this for us which constitutes an injustice in the hands of the judiciary, which, in our view should consistently further the aims of justice regardless of any person's color or creed, was when a former court stenographer, Terri-Maurer Carter said in a sworn affidavit that she witnessed Judge Albert Sabo, the Judge who was presiding over Mumia's case, say that he "would help them fry the nigger." At the same time, newly discovered evidence documented that key witnesses received promises of money for their testimony, and evidence emerged that these witnesses would receive favorable treatment in pending criminal cases. It is a disgrace that the U.S. judicial system has not corrected this appalling miscarriage of justice!

Mumia Abu-Jamal's situation has long struck a chord in light of the history of our own freedom struggles in South Africa. We have been defending him for many years and now the possibility of a way forward finally appears to be at hand. We understand the continued dehumanization of Mumia Abu-Jamal and other political prisoners within the context of the long struggle for Black liberation in America, a struggle that goes back to the days of slavery. It is a damning indictment of U.S. freedom and all people of the world who are fighting for justice that today members of the Black Panther Party are still in jail for life, for fighting for the rights of Black

people. We must never forget that the U.S. became a global superpower through the genocide of Indigenous people and the labor of enslaved African people.

The struggle of the civil rights movement in the 1960s captured the imagination of the world. Figures like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X became global icons. They fought and died for human justice. One would have thought that today, the brutal system of oppression would have withered away, and that the struggle for justice and humanity would prevail and win the day.

To our disappointment as peace-loving people of the global South and the rest of the world, we continue to witness the fact that in the U.S., a Black man is always already guilty in the eyes of the police. So many innocent people have been murdered by the police – people like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. And more recently, the murder of Tyre Nichols by Memphis police. Despite the huge mobilizations against racism and racist police violence, since 2014, these attacks have worsened and the killings continue, day after day.

In 2016, as part of this international solidarity campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, I penned, on behalf of NUMSA, a letter of our sincere solidarity to him, and addressed it to the former Pennsylvania Governor, Tom Wolf, requesting that the state make the expensive life-saving medication Harvoni available to Mumia to treat his deadly hepatitis C disease. I explained that here in South Africa, during the apartheid years when our freedom fighters became seriously ill, the government did not give them the necessary medical attention.

Britain, and Doro-Chiba, the Japanese Rail Union, also pleaded with the governor to provide that medication. Had the state of Pennsylvania continued to disregard his fatal disease, it surely would have been following the pattern of inhumane treatment by the racist Apartheid regime. Thank goodness Governor Wolf changed course and Mr. Abu-Jamal was given proper medical treatment. We believe that it was international solidarity, notably from the labor movement that saved his life.

Again, to go back further, to April 1999, when Mr. Abu-Jamal was still on death row, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), whose jurisdiction covers all U.S. West Coast ports, protested to demand his release. It shut down the ports and led a march of 20,000 protesters in San Francisco calling for his freedom, coordinating this with teachers in Brazil who went on strike for this same cause. While that massive protest didn't free him, we have no doubt that it played a role in the court's 2001 decision to overturn his death sentence.

In 1984, two years after Mr. Abu-Jamal's incarceration began, the ILWU organized a strike against a ship from Apartheid South Africa to protest against that racially repressive regime. Upon his release from Robben Island Prison, Nelson Mandela did a world tour to thank all those who actively opposed apartheid. At the Oakland Coliseum, he began his speech by acknowledging that it was the ILWU's action which spurred forward the anti-Apartheid movement in California.

On behalf of hundreds of thousands of Metalworkers in South Africa, who know both the bitter taste of injustice and the undying hope for freedom, we call on you Judge Lucretia Clemons to do the right thing and free comrade Mumia Abu-Jamal. The whole world is waiting with a mixture of joy and sorrow firmly believing for a just ruling that will do justice and free Mumia Abu-Jamal. Mumia's freedom has been defended and pursued by both Archbishop Tutu and President Nelson Mandela. It is in your hands today to open the way for truth and freedom for America's most well-known political prisoner. We eagerly await your response in the hope that you will be persuaded and do what is just in the interest of humanity, and undo this grave injustice that has visited Abu-Jamal for more than four decades.

Our commitment to humanity and justice compels us to call on you to consider that in the recent past Abu-Jamal, whose prison conditions have taken a toll on his overall well-being, also taking consideration the fact that he has lost his life partner and wife Wadiya Jamal passed on in December of 2022 while furthering the aims of his

release. In the course of history, our international solidarity campaign to release Abu-Jamal which makes a humble clarion call to you Honorable Judge to ensure that justice prevails, is that we have resolved to continue to be strengthened by our belief that it is humanity that believes in justice that has always changed the course of history. That humanity that advances the struggle for justice changes the world not in conditions of its own choosing. But it is the forces of justice and humanity that make the world a better place against the forces that are fueled by greed.

We hope our campaign and our genuine appeal to you Honorable Judge will not only stimulate debate and discussion in the halls of justice in order to ensure that justice is served in this case, we also think that it will position Abu-Jamal under these difficult conditions to continue to live in the purest of hope and to never lose faith in humanity. To continue to believe that victory is certain and that in life there is always tomorrow and that with every sunset there is certainty of a sunrise.

Yours faithfully,

Irvin Jim

NUMSA General Secretary



State came not to help, but to terrorize. Interview from Antakya, Turkey

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 19, 2023



Interview with Halil Yakut from Halkin Gücü TV in Turkey, who has been a volunteer in Antakya since the day after the earthquake.

(interview date: 12 February 2023)

- You came to the earthquake region Antakya from the beginning. Can you introduce yourself? How is the situation?

- I am Halil Yakut. We are here with friends from the Resistance Council. The Medics For The People are with us. We came here the following day after the earthquake. So we saw the general situation here.



When we arrived the day after the earthquake, there was no one here. In other words, there was no one doing search and rescue operations on behalf of the state. And the people were actually in a miserable condition. They had just experienced the earthquake and were soaked by the rain. They were wet from the mud, and there was no place for them to go. Most of the buildings collapsed.

So, I'm originally from here, I'm from Antakya. Eighty percent of the buildings in the city we call Antakya were demolished, razed to the ground. Antakya was razed to the ground. And the people were on the streets. They had nowhere to stay. They had nothing to keep warm. They had nothing to eat. And let's leave that out: there were people under the rubble, and there was no search and rescue.

There were voices and screams. We were faced with such a situation. We are just ordinary people. I mean, we don't have the capabilities of the state. We don't have helicopters or planes, but we were able to come here the day after the earthquake. However, we could not see the state's search and rescue teams here. We could not see any rescue operation. That was the situation when we arrived here.

- While the state is absent, many volunteers like you came to help. How was the reaction of the people? How did they welcome you?

- So there are two points. First, people are very angry that the state is not coming, is

not there, and is not initiating search and rescue. People are very angry. Some people here think that the state didn't come because they are Arab Alevis, because they are marginalized. Some people think that the state has not come because they are more leftist. They say the state abandoned us. They say the state has forgotten us. They say they have wiped us off the map. There are even rumors. There are rumors that they want to settle the Syrians here. People think that the state has abandoned this place. They are very angry about this.



Besides this anger, many people still have not recovered from the shock of the earthquake. The psychology of the people is very bad. I came here and found my family, who moved into a one-story house after the earthquake. They are inside, but

next to the house, there is a building that is tilted to the side. So the building could fall on the house.

There are always aftershocks. Even when we arrived. There are aftershocks of magnitude 3, 4, 5. And in these aftershocks, damaged buildings collapse. And my family, for example, was in such a psychological state not daring to leave the house. They don't know where to go. Because there is nothing left. They found shelter with an acquaintance. And they will leave the city. But to whom will they turn? Where will they go? What will they eat? What will they drink? Where will they live? That is why people are experiencing shock. People's psychology has been turned upside down.

However, in response to the attitude of the state, we saw people from Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Kayseri, many parts of Turkey and even from other countries. We saw Britons, Slovaks, and Danes here. But mostly, volunteers from all over the country came here. There were non-governmental organizations like us, like the people's councils, like the people's medics. There were democratic mass organizations coming, volunteers. And they extended the hand of solidarity to the people. That is the reason why we said this. Our people have a great sense of solidarity.

There is a great sense of taking ownership. Volunteers came here in droves. But, of course, they don't have the resources of the state. I mean, for example, when buildings like this have been demolished, you can't do anything to the building without construction equipment. You can't get to it. Without a crane, without an excavator, you can't reach the people.

Because the volunteers have limited resources, they can't reach them. Since they are volunteers from different democratic mass organizations, they also cannot make a full coordination. Which building was entered, which collapse site, where there

was intervention, where there was rescue. It is disorganized.

But this is also because the state hinders the volunteers who come here. I mean, we experienced it ourselves, friends, acquaintances of ours who came here yesterday to participate in search and rescue operations. And five times on the way, we have the seventh day today, they were stopped by the police, stopped by the military, taken to the ground, beaten and photographed as thieves. All the while they have come here to help and we know this.

Murat Kurum, the Minister of Environment and Urbanisation, has made a statement and said that no coordination other than AFAD will be allowed, that is, other than the state's search and rescue personnel. But as we know, AFAD is not there. In other words, if the state does not allow any search and rescue coordination other than AFAD, it means that it does not allow any search and rescue work in Antakya. So what kind of mentality is that, people don't understand anyway.

Volunteers are obstructed and we see this. Trucks and lorries are stopped at the entrance of the city and AFAD impounds them, government search and rescue personnel impound them and say we will do the distribution. And we don't know what happens to them, that is not explained to the public. I mean, after that day, after something like that, the state didn't come here for three days. Until the third day after the earthquake, there was no search and rescue effort from the state, except for volunteers. Only volunteers came. People came from all over the country, we didn't see the state.

The state then came here on the third day, just with a handful of search and rescue workers. In fact, very few. Imagine, there is the rubble, we hear a noise. We hear a cry for help. We go and call search and rescue because we can't get through without a crane, we need an excavator, and they have those. They come, just scream for a minute and nothing comes back. So, this person may have passed out down there, dehydrated, but we heard something. But they just go away again. Tens of thousands

of people died from such a lack of coordination, such a lack of program.



When we talk about such a lack of coordination, we can say they were killed. Because I could come here, but the state could come on the third day. So it is a matter of will, if I can come as a normal person. There is work, but it is very insufficient.

I mean, let's put it this way: after the fourth day, we can say that the work of the state has started a little bit here in real terms, but there are very few of them. In other words, it is not sufficient in any way, and you have to think of it this way:

Today is the seventh day. There was an earthquake, seven days have passed since then, and imagine a person lying under the rubble for seven days. There is a person, a man, in the house next to the house where my family lived in the Armutlu Elektrik neighborhood, and that person's wife, sister-in-law, and child are still under the rubble, and still not a single piece of construction equipment or rescue team has come to that building, even though we called them.

We called them many times, eight times, maybe ten times, we called the teams, but they only came once, they looked at it, they said they would make records, but they didn't come. And this man set up a tent in front of his house, sat down there, and now he is waiting to be able to recover the bodies. Because in our culture, dead bodies are sacred, dead bodies are precious.

Our people do not leave their corpses behind. They wait there, and the search and rescue teams, even on the seventh day, have not been able to get into the building and reach those trapped inside. And the search and rescue teams also do not know which building was entered and which was not, where there was work and where was not. In other words, we can say that the state is not doing any work here, is not taking into account people's lives.

We have seen that here too, volunteers came, yes, we have created living spaces here. For example, we brought containers here, our friends from Muğla brought working equipment here to participate in search and rescue operations. We have brought food here, Okmeydanı People's Assembly has sent rations, food and clothes here. Grup Yorum, which makes protest music in our country, has sent us relief supplies. They collected the relief supplies in the poor neighborhoods of Istanbul, in Okmeydanı, Gazi Mahalle, Armutlu, Çayan.

And I also saw a woman who came here alone from Izmir. Alone! She saw the news about the earthquake, there was no one with her, she does not belong to any institution or organization, and comes here to help. I saw a man who came from

Samsun; he also doesn't belong to any institution, organization or mass democratic organization and he just came here to help.



People saw the news, jumped up and came here. We actually have such a precious people. We have a people with such a sense of solidarity, a spirit of solidarity, a culture of ownership, but we also see: volunteers running from here to there, people trying to help each other somehow, trying to organize solidarity, but Fahrettin Altun, the head of communications of the State Presidency, imposed a broadcast ban on the second day of the earthquake.

So we see that the state decides to restrict social media. All these volunteers are sharing their information on social media, who is under what rubble, where there is need, where relief supplies are being distributed, and the state makes a decision to restrict social media. So we think about what that means.

So then people went to the governor's office in Adıyaman out of anger. We learned that they stormed the governor's office and the governor of Adıyaman responded to the people's reactions and anger with laughter. Nurettin Canıklı went to the earthquake area, an earthquake victim revolts and scolds the state for not being there, and Nurettin Canıklı leaves clutching his mobile phone and does not even look at the earthquake victims.

Justice Minister Bekir Bozdağ and AKP deputy Oya Eronat traveled to Diyarbakır and were booed by the people in Diyarbakır. People say why did you come, you shameless people. And MP Oya Eronat called them "provocateurs."

I mean, these people lost their lives, they lost the bodies of their loved ones. Today, after the seventh day, they are even ready to receive their bodies, they are even ready to receive the dead. But this is the attitude of the state.

- It is really important and big hope that there us such a big solidarity coming from the people. But, do I understand correctly? It is the seventh day after the earthquake, and still no construction machines in the neighborhood you are?

- Here in Antakya there is a government office where all the records of the buildings and structures are kept. I can't remember the name of the office at the moment. All the records about the buildings, development plans, what materials were used, who issued the building permit, so the state office is where there are records about the permit. It's a one-story building. And after the earthquake, there is not even a crack there. In other words, the building is not damaged, but the state

has decided to demolish the building. Can you imagine that?

People are trying to save their lives, they are trying to reach the people who are fighting for their lives under the rubble. The state does not go to these places, does not send rescue teams, can not reach them. But for a one-story building with these records and no damage, a demolition order is issued. So what happened?

The lawyers of the Progressive Lawyers Association CHD stopped this from happening. They stood in front of the excavators and bulldozers and prevented the building from being demolished. I still don't know if it was demolished or not, but the Governor's Office made the decision to demolish that building. When I see that, I think they are trying to hide their guilt. Because there are buildings here that are still standing, there are buildings that are still intact. Few, yes, but they are there.

So why did the collapsed buildings collapse, why did they not hold up? This shows us that it is not just an earthquake, not just a natural disaster, not fate, not something natural, but a massacre, a crime. The state is trying to cover up this crime, if you look at the results today.

Now the state came here, on the evening of the fourth day, but it did not come here with search and rescue teams. The state did not come here with relief goods or supplies. The state came here with its police and soldiers.

Now we are on the seventh day, on every street in Antakya, on every street in Samandağ there are soldiers, policemen and armored vehicles. In other words, the state that did not come to the earthquake area for search and rescue purposes in the first three, four days, which are the most critical days where lives can be saved, is now coming here with its police, soldiers and heavy weapons.

Why? I heard this today, listen; so I heard this from a journalist, Umut Tastan, he's a reporter of the Artı TV, a local TV station here, he was doing coverage there.

After soldiers saw three Syrians, they were children, they were just walking and there wasn't anything special. But that's when they attacked them directly, started beating them and saying, "What are you doing here?" No looting, no thefts. I'm telling you this because there's a lot of news like this. They attacked them directly and beat them.

Mr. Umut wanted to record this. A special unit held Mr. Umut. They used force to prevent him from filming, and they took the children away. Then they went to three Syrian children who were sitting in the area and watching what was happening, and the same soldiers and policemen said, "What the hell are you looking at?" and they beat these Syrians and took them away too.

And the doctor of the field hospital said to Mr. Umut: "Mr. Umut, there are now more people coming to our hospital for beatings than earthquake victims. And it is soldiers and policemen who are doing this" - he added. This is exactly what is happening now on the seventh day.

So there is very little hope, and seven days have already passed. Today, workers from Kayseri rescued a thirteen-year-old boy. We made a video with them, they were crying with joy. We also experience things like that here. But now an agenda has been developed where the presence of the state, under the pretext of looting, means constantly harassing people.

To be honest, I'm here in Antakya and I don't know how this agenda came about, but there is constant torture on the streets. We see videos of people being beaten up by soldiers and policemen. We see heavily armed soldiers and policemen. We see armored vehicles all around us. But we still don't see a real search and rescue team from the state.

AFAD is here now, yes, search and rescue teams have arrived, but they are very few and they are not even distributing 1% as much aid packages or meeting people's

needs as the volunteers who are coming from all over Turkey are doing. On the contrary, they confiscate the aid sent by the volunteers and we don't know their fate at the moment. This is the current situation.

Source: [Anti-Imperialist Front](#)



We have the best chance in a very long time to actually achieve Mumia's freedom: Angela Davis writes to Irvin Jim

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 19, 2023



(From February 16 to March 16, trade unions and people's movements across the world are organizing a campaign to demand the release of US political prisoner, militant and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been in prison for over 41 years. The global action comes at a time when his defense is mounting a fresh attempt to ensure his release as the evidence against him has been time and again exposed as flawed. Ahead of this action, noted political activist and academic Angela Davis, who was a political prisoner herself, wrote a letter to Irvin Jim, General Secretary of National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, about the bonds of solidarity that hold together this global campaign. We bring you excerpts from the letter)

Dear Comrade Jim,

As I write you today on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal, I remember the powerful letter you wrote in 2016 to Governor Wolf of Pennsylvania, when you emphasized similarities between the South African apartheid government's treatment of its

political prisoners and the conditions of prisoners in Pennsylvania. You wrote, “The refusal of healthcare reminds us of the conditions we were put in under Apartheid prisons where sick detainees were allowed to die in very deplorable lonely conditions in solitary as part of the punishment for their role in the struggle.”

Your compelling statement was instrumental in the prison authority’s decision to finally give Mumia life-saving medication. This action quite literally saved his life. Today we need to take advantage of the fact that we have the best chance in a very long time to actually achieve his freedom. On December 16th of last year, a new judge ruled that the prosecution must turn over its entire file – up to 200 boxes of materials – to the defense. Previously, new exculpatory evidence was discovered among materials in six boxes of files, never seen by the defense and mysteriously “found” on premises occupied by the District Attorney. This discovery of exculpatory evidence decades after the initial arrest provides further confirmation of our contention that Mumia is innocent of the charges for which he is being held. One piece of evidence is a hand-written note by the star witness for the prosecution demanding money in exchange for his (obviously perjured) testimony.

As was the case under apartheid, there is no justice for those willing to call for an end to racism and capitalism-what we now refer to as racial capitalism. There is no justice for those who militantly defend the working class. The judge in Mumia’s case is expected to issue her ruling sometime between February 16 and March 16. That is why we are asking trade unions around the world to organize protests in front of U.S. Embassies demanding Mumia’s freedom. ILWU Local 10 will be shutting down the Ports of Oakland and San Francisco that day to demand Mumia’s immediate release. Teachers in the San Francisco Bay Area are organizing teaching days on his case during that time. This will occur half-way through our observation of Black History Month in the US,

As I write this letter, we are celebrating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King on the

national holiday marking his birthday and I am remembering that a few months before he was assassinated, Dr. King addressed the membership of ILWU Local 10 and was given an honorary membership in the union.

I am proud to say that over a half-century later, in the aftermath of the George Floyd police murder and the massive protest by longshore workers, I too, was made an honorary member by the union.

In accepting that great honor, I also thanked the ILWU Local 10 for organizing one of the first rallies in 1972, to “Free Angela Davis.” As a consequence of the many protests organized around the world we were able to prevail over the forces of racial capitalism. Huey Newton, the leader of the Black Panther Party was also eventually freed thanks to similar mobilizations.

Both the ILWU Local 10 and NUMSA have stood together many times in defense of justice—whether in South Africa, the US, or elsewhere in the world.

Yours in solidarity

Angela Davis



Neruda was assassinated with a biological weapon, nephew denounces

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 19, 2023

Rodolfo Reyes, a lawyer, and nephew of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, charged on Tuesday that the reports from two laboratories in Canada and Denmark confirm the assassination of the Nobel Prizewinner for Literature with a biological weapon.

In an exclusive interview with Prensa Latina, Reyes affirmed that the expert opinion delivered to the Supreme Court ratifies the presence in the remains of the writer and politician of a large amount of the *Clostridium botulinum* bacterium, which is incompatible with the life of any human being.

The bacterium, whose name is Alaska E43 and is toxic, was injected into Neruda's body and caused his death, Reyes stressed.

Neruda died at the Santa Maria clinic in this capital, 12 days after Augusto Pinochet's military coup against the Popular Unity Government of President Salvador Allende and one day before a scheduled trip to Mexico.

"The cause of his assassination is out in the open. After Allende's death and the assassination of Victor Jara, the other national icon that was alive was Pablo Neruda," Reyes stated.

He recalled that the poet had been a candidate for the presidency, a senator, an ambassador, a consul, a member of the Communist Party, so he was a well-known politician as well as a writer.

President Luis Echeverría had offered Neruda a plane to travel to Mexico, but it was not convenient for the dictatorship for him to leave Chile alive because he had unified many people against Augusto Pinochet, Reyes said.

Asked by Prensa Latina about the coincidence of these revelations on the 50th anniversary of the coup d'état, Reyes noted that this investigation, which began 14 years ago, will show that Neruda did not die of cancer, nor because of his age, but due to a direct intervention of Pinochet's agents.

"They took his life," he said.

"For me, as a nephew, it is an agreement to be able to rightly say that Neruda was assassinated, but, on the other hand, I feel very sorry that this great man has suffered the pain caused by poisoning," he concluded.

Source: [Prensa Latina](#)



Hundreds of thousands take to the streets of Madrid in defense of public health care

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 19, 2023

A group of pensioners chanted, “Cutting back on health care is a criminal act,” during the demonstration in Madrid in defense of public health care. These six words sum up the feelings of hundreds of thousands of people – a quarter of a million, according to the Government Delegation, and more than a million, according to the organizing organizations, who have verified the occupation of 350,000 square meters – who supported the demonstration.

350,000 square meters – who have supported the call from the four columns – leaving from 12:00 from Legazpi (South), Hospital de la Princesa (East), Plaza España (West), and Nuevos Ministerios (North) – that have converged in the Plaza de Cibeles with the intention of surpassing the overflow that already occurred on 13 November in the first major demonstration against the health policy of the president

of the Community of Madrid, Isabel Díaz Ayuso. “We are patients, we are not clients” is another of the key phrases, with a crystal-clear message, which was chanted at the march, called by more than 70 groups under the slogan “Madrid stands up and demands public health and solutions to the Primary Care Plan.”

Three months after, Ayuso received a second important warning from the citizens of Madrid, who wanted to support the Primary Care health professionals who have been on an indefinite strike for nine weeks to desaturate schedules that reach 70 patients a day. A historic strike, accompanied by a medical lockout in the offices of the Regional Ministry, and tinged by a constant distancing between the proposals of the strike committee and the postulates of Ayuso’s government, for whom increasing funding in a way that meets the demands of the professionals is not among her plans.

Antonia, a resident of Coslada, says she has taken part in the demonstration “for health and for everything, because Ayuso is leaving Madrid”. She highlights as reasons for protesting “the waiting lists, and the fact that they don’t attend as they should,” but also points to a wolf whose ears are becoming more and more visible: “Privatisation is there, that’s what they want.”

Another protester, Vanessa, says that she had been scheduled to have hip surgery since before the pandemic and that it finally took place in October 2022. “The essential thing is that everyone has the right to universal, quality public health care, because that’s why we pay for it,” she says.

Paco, an auxiliary nurse, was on the front line during the pandemic, and he has also been on the front line today. His diagnosis, shared by the thousands of people who have demonstrated, is that “there is a lack of doctors, nurses, there is not enough primary care.”

Sonia Carmona is a family doctor at a health center in Parla and admits that in her

surgery, she does not work but rather dispatches. “We feel very bad about this way of working, why less than to demand that we have the necessary minutes to be able to attend to patients with dignity, as they deserve.” She explains that the Community of Madrid refuses to invest in what is necessary to improve the conditions in which primary care professionals work.

In some parts of the city, such as Plaza de Legazpi, from where the southern column started, or Neptuno, there were tense scenes because the police had not closed the traffic at 12:15, and the demonstrators had to do it themselves.

In the Plaza de Cibeles, the final point of the demonstration, a communiqué was read out requesting a 25% investment in primary care. Mar Noguerol, a family doctor in charge of reading the manifesto, asked her “why they don’t want strong primary care, what their model is.” In the text, the organizing organizations denounced the fact that the health policy of the Community of Madrid is “aimed at guaranteeing the profits of companies and health lobbies, instead of being focused on caring for all people and guaranteeing our right to health” and pointed out that in the three months between the two demonstrations “the deterioration has grown exponentially”. Noguerol quoted Don Quixote to assure that “for primary care and public health care we can and must risk our lives”, before saying goodbye and thanking all those who came to Madrid to attend.

In the run-up to the demonstration, the maneuvers of the Madrid authorities to minimize its impact were striking. The City Council, arguing that it was Sunday, prevented photojournalists from accrediting themselves and gaining access with their equipment to the terrace of the Palacio de Cibeles, from where panoramic views of the city center can be taken. And on Saturday in Carabanchel, four municipal police officers fined several people handing out leaflets with information about the demonstration, in violation of article 1. 3 of the Regulatory Ordinance on Outdoor Advertising in Madrid, which states that outdoor advertising activities

carried out by “non-profit organisations, political parties and other neighbourhood and associative organisations to inform, disseminate and promote their own acts of a social, political, cultural, citizen participation, promotion of civic values and humanitarian behaviour, social awareness and sensitisation and the like” are exempt from this regulation.

After almost 30 years of government by the Partido Popular, the figures for Madrid’s healthcare system are not very encouraging. On the one hand, Madrid is the region that invests the least in health per capita. According to a report by the Federation of Associations for the Defence of Public Health (FADSP), which analyses the health budgets for 2023, Madrid is bottom of the list with 1,446.13 euros per inhabitant, despite being the region with the highest GDP, far from the 2,133.13 euros of Asturias or the 2,130 euros of the Basque Country.

On the other hand, it continues to be the region that allocates the least money to primary care. Thus, in the budgets for 2023, extended in the absence of political agreement, this region continues to allocate 10.7% of total health spending to this level of care, far from La Rioja, which allocates 18.33% or Cantabria, with 17.94%, and also far from the state average of 15%. And light years away from the recommendations of the World Health Organisation, which advises allocating 25% to this level of care.

Source: [Redacción Madrid](#)



Train wrecks, earthquakes and profits

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 19, 2023

[su_row][su_column size="1/2" center="no" class=""]

[/su_column][su_column size="1/2" center="no" class=""]

[/su_column][[/su_row]

What's the connection between the earthquake in Syria and Turkey with the train wreck in East Palestine, Ohio?

More than 41,000 people, including thousands of children, have been killed by the Feb. 6 earthquake. No one has died so far in the Feb. 3 train wreck or from the dangerous chemicals that were released because of it.

Earthquakes are terrible natural events caused by the shifting and collision of plates

inside the earth. Reinforced buildings designed to withstand shocks can greatly reduce fatalities.

Real estate sharks seeking more profits aren't interested in constructing safer buildings. Thousands of people were killed because of contractors trying to cut costs

There was nothing natural about the wreck of the Norfolk Southern freight train that derailed. The 150-car train was 9,300 feet long and weighed 18,000 tons.

Railroad tycoons like long trains, which are part of their Precision Scheduled Railroading model. PSR has helped destroy [62,000 railroad jobs](#) since 2015 while [increasing average train length](#) by 25%.

It's simple logic that the longer a train is, the more likely there will be an equipment defect. Excluding the locomotives, a 150-car freight train has 600 axles.

An overheated roller bearing on a wheel axle apparently failed, causing 38 cars to derail with catastrophic results. Another 12 cars were damaged.

Twenty cars carried hazardous materials. Residents of East Palestine were told to temporarily evacuate and drink bottled water.

A huge mushroom cloud rose above the town. Dead fish have been found in streams within 7.5 miles of the catastrophe. Toxic residue was found in the Ohio River.

While Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine was holding a news conference on the train wreck, his state troopers arrested Evan Lambert, a Black TV reporter for News Nation. Lambert's resisting arrest and trespassing charges were later dismissed.

Five tank cars were deliberately exploded on Feb. 6. "We basically nuked a town with chemicals so we could get a railroad open," [said Sil Caggiano](#), a hazardous

materials specialist.

Cancer time bomb

Among [the dangerous cancer-causing chemicals](#) that continue to be released into the air, soil and water are vinyl chloride gas, butyl acrylate, ethylhexyl acrylate and ethylene glycol monobutyl ethers. Also released was phosgene gas that was used in World War I to kill and blind soldiers.

Railroad workers cleared the important transportation artery by Feb. 4. That's what Norfolk Southern CEO Alan Shaw and the outfit's big stockholders care about: keep the trains rolling and the profits coming in.

Among the [10 biggest Norfolk Southern stockholders](#), holding a total of more than 24 million shares, are JP Morgan Investment Advisors, BlackRock and Wells Fargo.

Shaw made \$4.5 million last year but doesn't want to give any sick days to railroad workers. Shaw's lobbyists got Trump to throw out a safety rule adopted under the Obama administration. It mandated a new electronic braking system for trains carrying hazardous goods like the train that derailed.

Big-hearted [Norfolk Southern](#), which hauled in \$4.8 billion in profit last year, is offering \$1,000 "inconvenience checks" to East Palestine residents. Warren, Ohio, [Attorney David Engler](#) is advising clients not to take the chump change since it could be used as an excuse by NS management to deny further compensation.

Economic sanctions and deindustrialization

In the Turkey-Syria quake, construction shortcuts helped kill children and their parents. So did the U.S. capitalist government.

The Pentagon has been at war with the elected Syrian government since 2011. U.S.

forces seized Syrian oil and wheat fields.

U.S. sanctions, some of which have been lifted, prevented aid from going to Syria. U.S. sanctions against socialist Cuba haven't stopped Cuban doctors and other healthcare workers from helping Syrians.

One of the biggest U.S. Air Force bases is in Incirlik, Turkey, near the earthquake zone. Nuclear weapons continue to be stored there.

East Palestine, Ohio, almost touches the Pennsylvania border. Western Pennsylvania and Northeastern Ohio were once one of the biggest concentrations of steel mills and heavy industry in the world.

Hundreds of thousands of union jobs were destroyed in a region that includes Pittsburgh and Cleveland. Deliberate deindustrialization is also an economic sanction.

East Palestine is named after the country of Palestine. David Ben Gurion was the first prime minister of the apartheid regime that occupies Palestine.

He said of the Palestinians driven out during the Nakba or catastrophe that "the old will die and the young will forget." Palestinians have never forgotten their homeland and are continuing to fight for their freedom against a racist colonial government.

If East Palestine becomes a cancer cluster 10 or 20 years from now, railroad owners also hope that "the old will die and the young will forget." Many of those possible cancer victims will be youthful.

The U.S. government has shoveled over \$140 billion into Israel while it has lavished money on railroads for 160 years. General Custer had it coming, and he died for the Northern Pacific Railway that was invading Lakota Sioux land. The Northern Pacific is now part of billionaire Warren Buffet's BNSF railway.

From Palestine to East Palestine, it's poor and working people who suffer from capitalist disasters.

The writer is a retired Amtrak worker.



Balloon shootout: Pretext for war with China

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 19, 2023

A stealth F22 fighter, costing some \$350 million, managed to shoot down its first aircraft on February 4, a large Chinese balloon off the South Carolina coast. The People's Republic of China (PRC) stated that it was a weather research device and apologized that it inadvertently passed over U.S. territory because of unexpected wind currents.

But the Biden administration, the Congress, and the Pentagon launched a full-scale tirade, accusing China of using balloons to spy on nuclear missile silos, intercept messages, and, most importantly, "violating U.S. sovereignty." The corporate media

has whipped up a frenzied campaign of mass hysteria.

Of course, every country, particularly the U.S., proclaims the right to conduct reconnaissance of other countries' weapons systems that target them. China has more than 500 satellites circling the planet, which obviously makes balloon surveillance superfluous. But no country conducts more aggressive spying on countries than U.S. imperialism, which it combines with its regime change strategy to overturn governments that it is unable to bend to its will.

One could easily go onto the internet to find the location of the Montana missile base. And no balloon could possibly find the location of any of the nuclear missile-carrying submarines the U.S. has stationed around the world underwater. But global warming is a threat to every nation and its people, large and small. Scientific study of weather conditions in the upper atmosphere is vital to our understanding of the causes and pace of this danger.

The Pentagon and the White House declared that this was a “spy” balloon by noting that it had solar panels and several antennae. Would not a weather balloon carry that same equipment? It should be [noted](#) that the government has not released details of the remains of the destroyed balloon. And with the shooting down of two more “mysterious” devices over Alaska and Canada on February 10 and 11, the debris has not yet been found, and the “threat” posed remains a mystery:

As with the object that Mr. Biden ordered shot down near Alaska on Friday, officials said they had yet to determine just what had been blasted out of the sky over the Yukon, which borders Alaska.

On February 12, an F16 fighter jet shot down a fourth unknown “cylindrical object” over Lake Huron.

Congress: Balloon means inflate the war budget to threaten China

With the right-wing takeover of the House of Representatives, imposing budget cutbacks and austerity on the workers and oppressed communities is their top priority. But they are using this balloon incident to make it clear that there will be no reduction in military spending. On the contrary, they now call for massive increases for the war industry, already fattened by the proxy war in Ukraine directed against Russia. As a February 12 [article](#) from The Hill reported:

“The entire civilized world should recognize that communist China is probably the greatest threat we’ve ever faced, more severe than Soviet Russia was because of its economic integration into the West,” said Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) after receiving a briefing from senior administration officials on the spy balloon. “We should take every step we can to try to reduce our dependency on China [and] try to build stronger military deterrence against them.

“I do not think that we should be talking about cutting the defense budget at all right now. If anything, substantial defense increases,” he said.

So, it is clear that it will be social programs like education, health care, mass transit, housing, even Social Security and Medicare that will be put on the chopping block to feed the war machine.

Biden and Pentagon ramp up military threat against China

Since taking office two years ago, Biden has escalated the trade war against the People’s Republic of China, increasing the rate of inflation imposed on working families. With this new contrived “spy balloon crisis”, Biden has imposed new sanctions on several Chinese companies.

When the balloon’s presence was first announced, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled a high-level meeting with Chinese officials that was designed to “reduce tensions” and open “lines of communications.” Instead, the White House

chose this moment to send Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin to cement a new agreement with the Marcos regime in the Philippines, allowing the Pentagon to use that country's military bases, particularly those close to the island of Taiwan. As a January 31 Rappler newsletter [article](#) explained:

Austin's visit also seeks to tackle ways to "modernize" the two countries' 76-year-old alliance to address new and emerging threats, including China's continued assertion of its expansive claims in the South China Sea.

Similar new military agreements have already been secured with Japan, which for 50 years occupied Taiwan and, in WW2, killed more than 14 million people, mostly civilians. Pentagon generals have let loose a barrage of threatening rhetoric. Air Force General Minihan told his troops to expect war with the PRC to break out in 2025 and that "unrepentant lethality matters most - aim for the head."

Not to be outdone, an Army major general [told](#) a reporter from Military Times on February 9 that:

U.S. treaty allies such as the Philippines, Japan, and Australia, among others, "have shown that they will band together, that they will not stand for aggression from these nations that have decided they want to change the world order out here," Maj. Gen. Joseph Ryan said.

On February 16, Malaysia Now [reported](#) that the U.S., Britain, and Australia are holding intense three-week-long "Red Flag" fighter aircraft drills in the Nevada desert directed against China:

The U.S., Britain and Australia carried out joint air drills on Wednesday over the Nevada desert and beyond as part of an effort to simulate high-end combat operations against Chinese fighter aircraft and air defenses.

U.S. Air Force Colonel Jared J Hutchinson, commander of the 414th Combat

Training Squadron that runs Red Flag, said the annual drills were not tied to any recent events. On Saturday, a U.S. fighter jet shot down a suspected Chinese spy balloon off the coast of South Carolina, hiking tensions.

“[China is] just the pacing challenge that we train so that we’re ready... We think that if we’re ready for China, we’re ready for anybody,” Hutchinson said, citing U.S. policy.

The Detroit News [reported](#) on February 12 that the U.S. Navy and Marines are engaging in war drills in the South China Sea:

Beijing - The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps are holding joint exercises in the South China Sea at a time of heightened tensions with Beijing over the shooting down of a suspected Chinese spy balloon.

The 7th Fleet based in Japan said Sunday that the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier strike group and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit have been conducting “integrated expeditionary strike force operations” in the South China Sea. It said exercises involving ships, ground forces and aircraft took place Saturday but gave no details on when they began or whether they had ended.

The U.S. military exercises were planned in advance. They come as already tense relations between Washington and Beijing have been exacerbated by a diplomatic row sparked by the balloon, which was shot down last weekend in U.S. airspace off the coast of South Carolina.

In the midst of all of this, it must be remembered that Biden was a [supporter](#) of the Bush doctrine of “preemptive strike” and the Iraq war. And the “balloon attacks” narrative should remind all of the Gulf of Tonkin phantom attack, which was used by the Johnson Administration to send in massive numbers of U.S. troops into Vietnam and escalate the war.

U.S. wants war now to head off peace agreement between Taiwan and the PRC

On February 10, the South China Morning Post [reported](#) that:

Taiwan's main opposition party, the Kuomintang [KMT], should work with Beijing to defend their decades-old political consensus stating that there is only one China, a top mainland leader in charge of cross-strait policy has said.

The comments from Wang Huning, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee - Beijing's top decision-making panel - and deputy head of the Central Leading Group for Taiwan Affairs, came as he met Andrew Hsia Li-yan, a KMT vice-chairman currently leading a delegation to the mainland.

"On the basis of reinforcing the political foundation of the '1992 consensus' and opposing 'Taiwan independence', the Chinese Communist Party and Kuomintang should deepen political trust, maintain interaction in a constructive manner and strengthen cooperation and exchanges," Wang told Hsia at Friday's meeting, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

Wang was referring to a broad understanding reached between Communist Party and KMT negotiators in 1992, which stated there is only one China - in defining cross-strait relations. But this consensus was rejected by Tsai Ing-wen, leader of Taiwan's independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party, when she won the 2016 presidential race. Ties across the Taiwan Strait have deteriorated since then, with Tsai now in the final year of her second and last term.

The article goes on to note the improved chances of the anti-independence KMT party winning the 2024 Taiwan presidential election:

The visit by the KMT delegation, which will also include trips to Shanghai,

Chongqing and Chengdu, comes after the KMT scored a notable victory in Taiwan's local elections last November. The win has boosted hope among KMT supporters that the party would stand a better chance of regaining power in next year's presidential election. Cross-strait relations had warmed considerably during the eight-year term of Tsai's predecessor, the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou.

Peace negotiations and a conflict resolution would be great news to the mainland and Taiwan Chinese residents, but it would put a dagger in the heart of U.S. imperialism's war plans. That is what makes the current period so dangerous.

The U.S. war strategy against the PRC has depended on provoking China to launch a quite justified but costly war to recover its Taiwan province. If the anti-independence KMT party takes power in Taiwan and reopens negotiations with the PRC, then the U.S. "defend independent Taiwan" strategy goes up in smoke.

That is why the Biden administration is trying to find any pretest, even as absurd as a weather balloon, to spark a war with China before the current pro-independence regime in Taiwan is kicked out next year.

The progressive and anti-war movements must be made aware of this danger. The think tank Center for Strategic Studies issued a [report](#) on a study of a war scenario:

In most scenarios, the United States/Taiwan/Japan defeated a conventional amphibious invasion by China and maintained an autonomous Taiwan. However, this defense came at high cost. The United States and its allies lost dozens of ships, hundreds of aircraft, and tens of thousands of servicemembers. Taiwan saw its economy devastated.

Further, the high losses damaged the U.S. global position for many years.

Only a strong mass movement, such as the one that sprang up before the U.S. war

against Iraq in 2003, can have any hope to help prevent this war from happening.

U.S. imperialism, with the economic and political crises at home and abroad, is in a far weaker position now than it was in 2003. A united, militant movement in the streets can stop this war in its tracks!

Source: [Fighting Words](#)



New Orleanians come out against anti-LGBTQ+ bigot Jeff Landry

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 19, 2023

Feb. 12 — Two actions were held in New Orleans against the latest attacks on LGBTQ+ people and other oppressed workers. These attacks locally are being spearheaded by Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry — who is running for governor — but the attacks are nationally coordinated and have been blessed by Trump.

Landry met with other Republican attorneys general in the “Forbes Travel Guide verified luxury” Roosevelt Hotel. Down on the street, the Louisiana Abortion Rights Actions Committee (LARAC) held a news conference to expose oil profiteer Landry, who has used his office to block Medicaid expansion, limit abortion rights, and much more. His gubernatorial campaign comes from the playbook of David Duke, who was rejected by Louisiana voters in 1992. Currently, Landry is stoking hatred against queer and trans people [with attempted library book bans](#).

Those who spoke and gathered at the LARAC press conference represent the diversity of South Louisiana: Black, white, immigrant, non-immigrant — all coming from the multinational working class. By contrast, when Landry recently appeared in the Legislature with the astroturf “concerned parents” group the St. Tammany Parish Library Accountability Project — which is allied with Republican Party organizations — everyone who stood at the podium with him was white.

LARAC is building toward a March 5 [International Working Women’s Day Emergency March](#).

Members of the trans rights organization Real Name Campaign NOLA participated in the news conference and then led the crowd in a militant march. Their flyer read, “Stop Landry’s Book Ban!”

With chants like “2,4,6,8, stop the book bans in our state,” they took over part of busy Canal Street. This is significant given that crowds were gearing up for a Mardi Gras parade on the street (Mardi Gras and other tourism are a backbone of the city’s economy). They ended their march at the main library branch in the Central Business District.

