

Inflation, layoffs, and the \$1 trillion war budget

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 11, 2023

TECH LAYOFFS GLOBALLY



(Source: Company announcements, media reports)

In January, tech companies [laid off 97,020](#) workers, more than double the layoffs in the first month of last year.

Amazon, Microsoft, and Google were responsible for most of the January cuts - 18,000, 10,000, and 12,000, respectively.

Not all of the layoffs are highly paid researchers, coders, etc. The many assistants, repair technicians, office cleaners, and others work hard but don't enjoy high wages

and perks.

Each of the giant corporations issued remarkably similar statements citing the reasons for the layoffs. One might suspect that there was consultation among themselves. Their justification for the layoffs is all over the map - explaining it away as a list of temporary problems.

They say they hired too many people during the pandemic because millions of people turned to the internet, and they incorrectly thought their spike in revenue would be the new normal. When the activity dropped off, so did advertising, which is a significant portion of their revenue. They also say inflation has slowed their growth and point to a likely recession, as well as higher interest rates.

They list the problems as if each one is unrelated to the others and imply that they are all happening at once in a perfect storm. Then, if you believe their narrative, they conclude that the seas will calm and everything will return to normal.

The technology sector of the U.S. economy has the most cash reserves of all the filthy-rich U.S. corporations. According to an analysis by Investor's Business Daily, 13 tech companies are hoarding more than \$1 trillion. Those recently announced layoffs are near the top of the list.

Karl Marx referred to investments in new technology as "commercialized innovation." He explained that companies don't innovate because innovation helps humanity. They do it to gain an edge over the competition. The incentive to innovate dwindles as competition gets eliminated and markets become monopolized by fewer companies. So instead of investing in new production methods, they hoard cash.

Big tech isn't laying off tens of thousands because they are unprofitable. It is only that their rate of growth is slowing down.

The corporate class and their functionaries blame inflation, not overproduction, for

their decline.

They blame wages and hope unemployment will cut wages. They claim wages are too high and cause inflation. Wages have never caused inflation and, in fact, cannot cause inflation. They know this.

As does Jerome Powell, the Federal Reserve Chairman. Powell is a former Carlyle Group senior executive with a personal investment portfolio worth \$55 million. Powell was appointed by Trump and asked to stay on by Biden. In a [Dec. 21, 2021, article in Business Insider](#), Powell admitted, “Wages are not a big part of the high inflation story that we’re seeing.”

But then, in a [May 26, 2022, article](#) by Ben Norton, Powell is quoted saying his campaign of raising interest rates would solve the issue “by moderating demand ... to get wages down and then get inflation down without having to slow the economy.” By anyone’s measure, real wages have not kept up with inflation, and that has been the case for decades. It’s no secret, and all official statistics bear witness. The “Fed” is purposely attacking wages to raise profits, not to reverse inflation.

The smoking gun in investigating this wave of inflation isn’t wages at all. It is years of a bloated military budget, its portion of the federal budget growing every single year. The manufacture of weapons of mass destruction adds nothing productive to the economy. This doesn’t get mentioned by Fortune magazine, Forbes, Business Insider, or even any of the slightly more “liberal” capitalist mouthpieces. Nearly \$1 trillion a year officially is spent on the U.S. “defense” budget. More is hidden in the U.S. Energy Department’s budget, and now an extra \$100 billion has been thrown in to weaponize Ukraine in the U.S. proxy war against Russia. These staggering expenditures are debt-financed. Arms manufacturers and banks grow richer, death and destruction threaten the world, and nothing of value is returned to society.

The working-class upsurge of the 1930s nearly forced the right to a job to become

the law of the land. FDR, out of fear of a revolution, proposed an “Economic Bill of Rights” in 1944 that referred to a job being the same as a property right. Right-wingers in Congress got it watered down, but even today, the historic example points to a way for working-class leaders to take the offensive. A united workers movement would fuel a demand that Jerome Powell be investigated for his duplicity, demand that the Pentagon be abolished and that the \$1 trillion war budget be used for jobs or income for everyone.



Turkey-Syria catastrophe needs global cooperation, not U.S. sanctions

earthquake

needs

global

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 11, 2023

February 9 — The death toll from the unprecedented scale of the 7.8-magnitude

quake that hit Turkey and Syria is now over 23,000. As of this writing, almost 70,000 people have been injured, and some 315,000 displaced. At least 24 million people and 4 million buildings were affected.

Human catastrophe looms for the survivors, who are now homeless and exposed to harsh winter conditions. The infrastructure that provides water and food is destroyed.

Biden and U.S. response lacking

President Joe Biden did not allude to this tragedy during his Feb. 7 “State of the Union”. On Feb. 6, Biden sent a perfunctory message to the Turkish government, offering unspecified support.

To date, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which helps fund the “regime change” National Endowment for Democracy (NED), has announced that they are sending two rescue teams. One team is from the Los Angeles County Firefighters, and the other is the Virginia Task Force-1.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that there will be no assistance for Syria. Period.

On the other hand, China has already announced \$5.9 million in aid to Turkey and \$4.4 million to Syria. China’s search and rescue teams, both governmental and private, are on the ground.

Immediately lift Sanctions

The National Union of Syrian Students in Damascus issued an appeal on Feb. 2 calling for an immediate end to the siege and unilateral coercive economic sanctions imposed on Syria and its people for the last 12 years. In addition, they demanded urgent aid to stem the suffering, including cash transfers for those affected.

John Parker, a national organizer for the Socialist Unity Party who recently traveled to Donbass on a fact-finding trip and visited Syria in 2013, angrily exclaimed, “U.S. and E.U. sanctions on Syria must be immediately lifted during this crisis!”

Parker continued, “How can there be any justification for the U.S. government to spend over \$100 billion dollars to fund a U.S.-NATO proxy war against Russia while the needs of millions of people go unmet and the anguish of children and their parents in Turkey and Syria ring in our ears.”

“It is now over a week since the deadly earthquake struck. When it came to sending tanks, bombs, drones and all sorts of other armaments to Kiev, it was practically overnight. How many lives have been lost under the rubble in Syria that could have been saved if the necessary equipment and people power were rushed to the scene.”

The massive earthquake impacted a large area of southern and central Turkey, including the provinces of Kahramanmaras, Hatay, Gaziantep, Adiyaman, Osmaniye, and Adana. In Syria, the provinces of Idlib and Aleppo, as well as the coastal regions of Latakia and Tartus were impacted. Northern Syria is also home to 62,000 Palestinian refugees who reside in Lattakia, Neirab, Ein-el Tal, and Hama camps.

While scientists have yet to figure out how to make exact predictions on when earthquakes will strike, seismologists can estimate where earthquakes may be likely to strike by calculating probabilities and forecasts. Probabilities can be calculated based on the average rate of past seismic activity in a region.

China is leading use of AI

Artificial Intelligence systems have been developed by researchers at the University of Science and Technology of China and the China Earthquake Administration to fast-track predictions. The AI is being tested in Yunnan and Sichuan, where China lost over 87,000 lives to earthquakes in 2008. The system is called EarthX.

Global cooperation and socialism are desperately needed to save lives; U.S. imperialism, war, and sanctions threaten humanity.



Stop trans genocide: Now is the time to fight back!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 11, 2023

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On Feb. 6, hundreds of trans people and supporters [flooded the Capitol](#) in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, ahead of right-wing Gov. Kevin Stitt's state of the state address and the opening of the state's legislative session, where several anti-trans bills are pending.

Chanting "Trans lives matter" and "This is our house," members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies gave a forceful response to the anti-trans panic that has escalated to unprecedented levels in the past year.

Since Jan. 1, nearly 300 anti-trans laws have been proposed in statehouses across the U.S. Several have already been adopted, including a total ban on gender-

affirming care for trans youth in Utah.

In early 2022, proposed laws mainly focused on banning trans youth from using school restrooms or playing sports. Now, just a year later, many states are advocating outright bans on gender-affirming health care for trans people - youth and adults alike - and so-called drag bans that would make it illegal for trans people to speak, perform or live publicly in any capacity.

Following the example of Texas, several states have called for measures to punish parents, doctors, and teachers who support trans youth and even to take kids away from supportive parents. Thousands of families of trans youth are pulling up stakes to flee to safer states. Many others don't have that option.

Civil rights attorney and trans activist [Chase Strangio summed it up](#) in a Twitter post Feb. 6: "The following states are closing to banning - and in some cases criminalizing and deeming child abuse — medical care for trans adolescents: MS, TN, SD, ND, WY, ID, WV, OK, MO, MT, ID. The following states have: AR, AL, UT, TX. Where's the outrage? Where's the media coverage?"

Nor is the danger confined to the legal arena. From California to New York, drag shows and other queer events have been besieged by right-wing protests, including openly white supremacist and fascist groups like the Proud Boys, sometimes armed.

In almost every case, these hate groups have been met by far larger crowds of community defenders. But the ultra-right has the manufactured outrage of politicians and corporate media at its beck and call.

The new 'build that wall'

In 2016, billionaire oligarch and demagogue Donald Trump campaigned for the presidency around the slogan "build that wall" - a call to not only ban refugees and migrants from entering the U.S. but to use them as a scapegoat for all the ills of

capitalism.

On Jan. 31, Trump released a video announcing what his 2024 campaign slogan will be: trans genocide.

[The Advocate reported](#) on Feb. 1: “Posted on his social media platform Truth Social, Trump called access to gender-affirming care ‘child abuse’ and ‘child sexual mutilation.’ The former president ... said he’d forbid government agencies from promoting ‘the concept of sex and gender transition at any age.’

“In the pledge, Trump said he’d cut off federal funding to doctors and health care groups providing gender-affirming care to minors. He also said that if teachers or school officials ‘suggest to a child that they could be trapped in the wrong body,’ then ‘they will be faced with severe consequences including potential civil rights violations.’

“Trump said that his administration would push for ‘positive education about the nuclear family...’

He added, “I will ask Congress to pass a bill establishing that the only genders recognized by the United States government are male and female, and they are assigned at birth.”

Trump’s main opponent for the Republican nomination in 2024 may be Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is equally bigoted against trans people. DeSantis enacted the so-called “Don’t Say Gay” law prohibiting discussion of LGBTQ+ issues in schools, banned Medicaid patients from accessing gender-affirming care, and has attacked teaching the truth of U.S. history regarding slavery, the genocide of Indigenous peoples, and more.

Florida teachers have been banned from letting students read books in their classrooms until they have been vetted to remove anything pertinent to Black

history, women's liberation, and LGBTQ+ lives.

Every week sees new cases of slander meant to manufacture outrage against trans people and medical providers, like the case of Christynne Lili Wrene Wood in Santee, a San Diego suburb. Wood, a retired African American city worker and trans woman, was thrust into the center of a national hate campaign and local lynch-mob atmosphere for using the women's changing room at the local YMCA. The campaign against her was fueled by the likes of Tucker Carlson on Fox News.

In a statement expressing solidarity with Ms. Wood, [San Diego LGBTQ+ organizations said](#): "It is also important to recognize the racial implications of this incident - a white woman claiming the mere sight of a Black woman's body as threatening is a dangerous perpetuation of racism. The reality of anti-Black racism in this country continues to be a pervasive and unavoidable aspect of our American culture, and contributes to the consistent danger that Black people - particularly Black transgender women - face every day."

Christian nationalist groups targeting Ms. Wood are mobilizing on Feb. 8 to have the Santee City Council shut down the YMCA for allowing trans people to use its facilities. Counter-protesters are mobilizing in support of trans lives.

Join actions in D.C. March 31-April 1

Actions like the one in Oklahoma City are needed - more of them, many more - in every state capitol coast-to-coast. And those actions must grow with solidarity from organized labor, communities fighting racist police brutality, and the censorship of Black history in schools, women's rights, and anti-war organizations.

An important call to action has been issued by the Trans Radical Activist Network for a national mobilization in Washington, D.C., on March 31 and April 1. TRAN has retitled the Trans Day of Visibility on March 31 as the Trans Day of Vengeance.

The actions in Washington can be an important first step in organizing a nationwide fightback movement. [Visit TRAN](#) or Struggle-La Lucha in the coming weeks for details about the events and how to get involved.

The attack on trans lives has escalated into a crisis, and no one can predict the outcome. There is no time to wait for elections that may or may not swing toward one party or another, especially when the Democratic Party's national leadership and President Biden have shown themselves incapable and unwilling to take the growing threat seriously.

Capitalist rule, the power of bosses over the workers and oppressed, is built on a foundation of divide and conquer - setting one group of workers against another. Fascism as a movement is divide-and-conquer in its most extreme form.

Today, trans people in the U.S. are on the front line. The history of fascist movements in the 20th century provides ample proof that when one group is targeted for extermination if the working class does not rise to the challenge, it only opens the door for the next wave of repression.

After trans people, other members of the LGBTQ+ community, the women's movement, Black and Brown communities already besieged by racist cops, and the labor movement will be among the next targets.

An injury to one is an injury to all. It's time for the working class to mobilize to stop the attacks on trans people.



Brooklyn, NYC: Justice for Tyre & Manny! Feb. 11

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February 11, 2023



Brooklyn, NYC: Justice for Tyre & Manny! Speakout Against All Police Murders

Saturday, February 11 - 2:00 p.m.

Herbert Von King Park (near the great lawn), 670 Lafayette Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11216

Hosted by New York Community Action Project

JUSTICE FOR TYRE, MANNY, AND ALL PEOPLE MURDERED BY THE COPS! Join NYCAP as we speak out against these horrific murders at the hands of the police. In 2022, over 1000 people were murdered by the police. Additionally, the NYPD continues to get a bigger and bigger budget while communities are left without resources!

#justicefortyrenichols

#justiceformanny



Thursday, February 16: Free Mumia Abu Jamal!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 11, 2023

This is the hour to fight for Mumia's freedom. On Thursday, Feb. 16th, longshore workers in ILWU Local 10 will **shut down the Ports of Oakland and San Francisco** to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Mumia was framed for killing a police officer. With Tyree Nichols' murder, we know who the real criminals are! Other actions are being organized for Feb. 16: Unions in South Africa will demonstrate in Pretoria at the U.S. Embassy, and in Durban at the U.S. Consulate. Railroad workers in Japan (in the Doro-Chiba union) will organize a demonstration for Mumia in front of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Bay Area teachers will also teach on Mumia's case on February 16th.

We call on all Bay Area justice supporters to hold the date of Feb. 16 to join the ILWU action for Mumia 's freedom. More info will be sent out shortly.

Why now? Judge Lucretia Clemons of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas has

ordered the Philadelphia District Attorney to turn over its files up to 200 boxes to Mumia's defense team. His lawyers expect to find further evidence that he was framed, that police coerced and bribed witnesses, and that extreme racism and judicial bias have permeated all the proceedings against him.

What you can do now: In addition to participating in the actions of Feb. 16, we can write letters to Judge Clemons to demand Mumia's immediate release. Here is her address:

Judge Lucretia Clemons, Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County
1220 Criminal Justice Center
1301 Filbert St.
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal www.laboractionmumia.org (415) 483-4428

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!

This is the hour to fight for Mumia's freedom.

On Thursday, Feb. 16th, longshore workers in ILWU Local 10 **will shut down the Ports of Oakland and San Francisco** to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was framed for killing a police officer and has been in prison in Pennsylvania for 41 years, 29 of those years on death row.

March at Noon, February 16

from ILWU Local 10 (400 N. Point St)
to Harry Bridges Plaza (opposite the Ferry Building)

Rally at Harry Bridges Plaza afterwards

*We call all Bay Area justice supporters
to join this ILWU action to free Mumia:*

We call on Bay Area teachers to teach about Mumia's case on February 16th.

We call on other unions in the US and around the world to take actions and rally at US embassies & consulates.

Unions in South Africa and Japan are organizing rallies on the same day in solidarity!



Why now? December 16, 2022, Judge Lucretia Clemons ordered Philadelphia D.A. to turn over its nearly 200 boxes of files on the case to Mumia's defense team for 60 days. His lawyers expect to find further evidence that he was framed, that police coerced and bribed witnesses, and that extreme racism & judicial bias have permeated all the proceedings against him.

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal



Boston Free Mumia rally - Feb. 18

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February 11, 2023



Saturday, February 18, 12 Noon

Park Street T Station, Boston MA

Mumia Abu Jamal is an internationally recognized political prisoner in the United States serving a life sentence for which he did not receive a fair trial. Many thousands of unionists, educators, politicians, and human rights advocates have called for his release. On **Thursday, February 16** longshore workers in ILWU Local 10 will be shutting down the ports of Oakland and San Francisco to demand freedom for Mumia Abu Jamal. Unions in South Africa will demonstrate in Pretoria at the U.S. Embassy, and in Durban at the U.S. Consulate. Railroad workers in Japan (in the Doro-Chiba union) will organize a demonstration for Mumia in front of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Bay Area teachers will also teach on Mumia's case on February 16th.

Why now? Judge Lucretia Clemons of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas has ordered the Philadelphia District Attorney to turn over its files — up to 200 boxes — to Mumia's defense team. His lawyers expect to find further evidence that he was framed, that police coerced and bribed witnesses, and that extreme racism and judicial bias have permeated all the proceedings against him.

Please join together with supporters of Mumia in Boston demanding: Free Mumia! Please bring signs, energy and enthusiasm.

What you can also do now: In addition to participating in the action of Feb. 18, we can write letters to Judge Clemons to demand Mumia's immediate release. Here is her address: Judge Lucretia Clemons, Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County 1220 Criminal Justice Center 1301 Filbert St. Philadelphia, PA 19107



Washington, D.C.: Trans Day of Vengeance, March 31-April 1

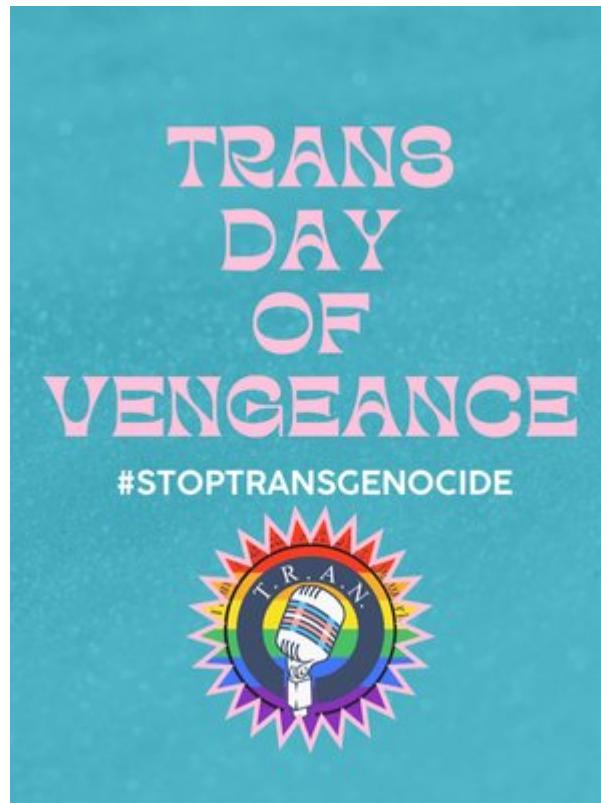
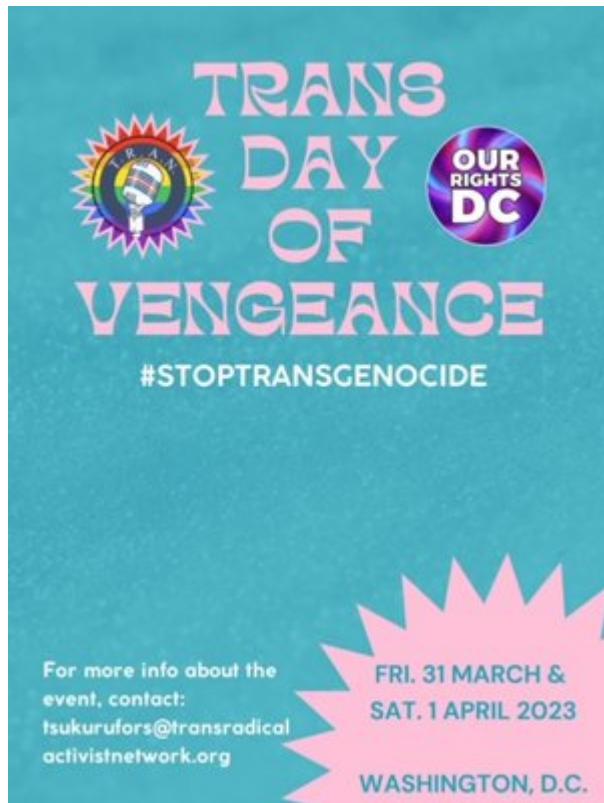
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February 11, 2023

IMPORTANT UPDATE: Organizers of the Washington D.C. march scheduled for April 1 have called off the action due to credible threats of fascist violence. The Trans Day of Vengeance protest became a flashpoint for far-right threats in recent days.

Our statement: "This action will not be taking place Saturday due to a credible threat to life and safety. The safety of our trans community is first priority. This threat is the direct result of the flood of raw hatred directed toward the trans community after the Tennessee shooting. Individuals who had nothing to with that heinous act have been subjected to highly serious threats and blamed only because of their gender identity. This is one of the steps in genocide, and we will continue our efforts to protect trans lives. While we wholeheartedly believe in the mission and message we put forth for trans day of vengeance, we must prioritize the safety of our community and the people that make it up. In an ideal world we would have continued on in defiance of the attempt to silence our right to free expression. -

However, we lack the resources to ensure the safety of the protest and cannot in - good conscience move forward with it. In our continued efforts to preserve trans - and non binary life we have notified the appropriate agencies.”



The Trans/Non-Binary/Gender Non-Conforming/Intersex communities are facing astronomical amounts of hate from the world. At least a 100 Gender Affirming care ban bills have been proposed. Utah SB16 has been passed and West Virginia's HB2007 is heading to the senate. Our community is frightened. Some have been experiencing mental health crisis' due to the political climate in our country. On 1/31/2023, Donald Trump announced he will punish healthcare providers and promised that "this madness will end."

So far in 2023, 6 lives have been lost, 2022 we lost over 60 people. Our community has a stigma attached and significantly impacts marginalized communities at a

higher intensity. There are members of our own communities that have turned against the true meaning of Pride. The trans/non-binary/gender non-conforming/intersex communities have always existed. "We're Here, We're Queer, and We aren't going anywhere" needs to be echoed loudly.

Like the Stonewall Riots the gays and lesbians were experiencing what the trans community is facing now. This cycle of hate needs to end in fact it must. Allies, siblings we need you now more than ever. "I was a radical revolutionist. I still am a revolutionist...I am glad I was in the Stonewall Riot. I remember when someone threw a Molotov cocktail, I thought, "My god, the revolution is here. The revolution is finally here?" -Sylvia Rivera

TRAN will be hosting an event in DC, time and location TBA on 3/31-4/1. The online event will be hosted on 4/1-4/2, time TBA. If anyone is interested in organizing in their state, please fill out the contact form. If anyone is new to organizing TRAN will be providing an organizing guide to assist, please be sure to express this on the contact form.

For the online event, on the contact form please express if you are interested in speaking, providing entertainment, or RSVP to the event. TRAN will send out a link to the meeting.

<https://www.transradicalactivistnetwork.org/transdayofvengeance>



New York City: International U.S.-Cuba Normalization Conference - March 11-12

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 11, 2023



**SAVE *the* DATE
SAT. & SUN.
MAR. 11TH-12TH**

In person at the Fordham University School of Law and live streamed on Zoom throughout the US, Canada and the world!

REGISTER to attend in-person or online:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc5nXJTCwMJ0cxaA7xZjE5ucngbsaVMb864Etyo2_ICN4-JJg/viewform

To endorse the Conference email: endorse@us-cubanormalizationconference.org

The International Cuba Conference will take place during the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (formerly International Women's Month) — CSW67 — activities. This UN-sponsored annual event will include a delegation of Cuban representatives and leaders, organized by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), who will be able to participate in the International Conference.

We call on the broad opposition to the US economic sanctions and political bellicosity against Cuba, deepened under the Trump and Biden Administrations, to endorse this Call in a spirit of unity and struggle around the following demands:

- Take Cuba off Washington's List of State-Sponsors of Terrorism!
- End the US Blockade of Cuba!
- End All US Anti-Cuba Economic and Travel Sanctions!

Our purpose will be to educate, organize, and mobilize against Washington's brutal and criminal economic and political war against Cuba: to boost local anti-blockade coalitions; to organize solidarity aid and travel to Cuba; to expand and increase participation in monthly Caravans against the blockade inspired by Puentes de Amor; and to organize for the passage of more Resolutions against the blockade adding to the growing list of legislative, labor, and other institutional bodies going on record against US anti-Cuba sanctions and for US-Cuba normalization.

This work, and future projected actions to fight the criminal US blockade, will be registered in the plenaries, workshops, and public activities for the Conference weekend!

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE:

More

info:

<https://www.us-cubanormalization.org/viva-cuba/inter-us-cubanormalization-conference/>

SATURDAY, MARCH 11

9am Eastern

In person registration. Film showings, exhibits and information tables.

12pm Eastern/9am Pacific

Opening Plenary - Fighting the US Anti-Cuba Blockade in 2023!

Live Cuban speakers from the Federation of Cuban Women and the Cuban Mission to the UN + leading academics and political figures

2pm Eastern/11am Pacific

Four concurrent workshops on Cuba's achievements, problems due to the blockade, and how to build solidarity among: young people, workers/labor, women, the African diaspora

4pm Eastern/1pm Pacific

Three concurrent workshops on solidarity actions: travel to Cuba, street/public protests, working with elected officials

7:30pm Eastern (Doors)

8-9:30pm Eastern (Program Begins)

Public Rally Against the U.S. Blockade on Cuba!

Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Education Center
3940 Broadway @ 165th Street, Manhattan, NYC

SUNDAY MARCH 12

11am Eastern/8am Pacific

Closing plenary - Developing plans of solidarity action for 2023

Let's educate, organize, and mobilize against Washington's brutal and criminal

economic and political war against Cuba!

<https://www.us-cubanormalization.org/viva-cuba/inter-us-cubanormalization-conference/>



No matter the color of the lash, the whip of racism remains intact

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 11, 2023

<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2023/page/70/>



It's Black History Month. Time to reflect on, hopefully, the progress made for people of African ethnicity, especially in the U.S.

However, a brief history of repression by police attempts to kill our hope. Since the Washington Post has been taking statistics on police killings in the U.S., every year is a record-breaking year. Police disproportionately target people of color, with Black people being the number one target proportionate to our population size in the U.S.

2022, another record year for police killings, witnessed Black people being three times more likely to be killed than white people, despite being 1.3 times less likely to

be armed. As of Jan. 25, with 2023 still in its infancy, [Statista.com](https://www.statista.com) reports that 79 people were shot to death by police.

The killings by cops have continued apace after Jan. 25 and include Anthony Lowe, the double amputee shot 11 times while fleeing police on Jan. 26, or the police shooting (just seven hours before writing this piece) of 56-year-old Marianne Griffiths on Feb. 5, suffering a mental health crisis while holding a BB gun.

So, for the sake of all those continuing to be killed by cops this year and the preceding years, we must never give in to hopelessness and allow the powers that be to discourage us from fighting back against this racist capitalist system, nor allow them to deny the role that racism plays in this system.

After the Tyre Nichols killing in January by mostly Black Memphis police officers, the argument has been resurrected that racism no longer plays a part in the system of policing in the U.S. This despite the overwhelming evidence of continued racist targeting of people of color.

Maybe we need to examine what racism is and where it comes from - and its reason for being.

The specter of our class still haunts them

There are two very frightening realities faced by the capitalist ruling class - their smaller numbers in relation to the majority and their inability to derive profit without exploiting human labor. Since they are the sole owners of the means of production (the factories, land, and machines) - with an essential armed force to protect that ownership - they have irreconcilable differences with the majority of people who, instead of owning those means, are exploited by them. We can't even decide how the profits created by our labor, which turns into the wealth of the nation, gets used. Only the capitalist class gets to decide that, with their bought-and-

paid-for politicians in Washington.

So, the problem for the ruling class is how to hide that reality from the human labor they depend on for profit. How do you keep the majority from understanding that their misery is based on their not owning the means of production and having no role in how the wealth produced from those means is spent? Should it go toward endless wars, World War III, more police, joyrides into space? Or for health care, jobs, and housing?

And, more importantly, how do you hide from this class of people that they reside in the same boat, sharing a reality of economic exploitation, increasing with every utility gas hike, deteriorating social services, or diminishing wages?

That is the role of racism, to keep those in the boat from recognizing each other's similarities. Like a magician's use of misdirection, they hide that truth by defining our differences for us, then giving more to those who meet the preferred parameters of the ruling class. They get more in terms of quality of life, allowing them the tools and opportunities to develop a fantasy of superiority.

However, from the capitalists' point of view, even with all those benefits, the preferred in our boat are still the human labor necessary to develop surplus value, produced from our hourly work for the capitalists. The "surplus" is the extra added value our labor gives to the products we produce, allowing those products to be sold at a profit. It is the foundation of the wealth of the capitalists. However, even our preferred occupants of that boat will continue to be exploited, having no say in how that surplus value is used. Eventually, when their privileges over others in that boat hit up against austerity - also losing their pensions, jobs, and quality of life to maintain the profits of the ruling class - even the "preferred" will be forced to protest. This is when, ironically, the wealth they produce is now used to pay for the police or military also taking aim at them.

Racism is, therefore, a tool to weaken our working class through division in general. It's specifically used as a whip that inflicts pain on the oppressed to maintain the system of capitalism and its neocolonial relationships. To attempt to feel less of that pain, some cowardly people of color who are also victims of racism will willingly lend themselves as the lash of that whip, hoping to divert their pain onto another's back.

They will lend themselves as mercenaries for the ruling class. Still, they must meet the higher standards of allegiance to their white masters by frequently having to prove a willingness to match the psychopathic violence of their white supremacist peers. They are traitors, for sure.

Sometimes they serve as presidents or legislators, serving their imperial masters at Lockheed, Raytheon, and the various financial and oil monopolies making up the ruling class. They willingly participate by commanding drone assassinations even on the continent of Africa. And many of them are found wearing a uniform they should never adorn – the Blue one.

But, no matter who has transformed into the lash of that whip, they are all under strict orders to aim their greatest violence toward the oppressed, wielded for a ruling class desperate to maintain and enforce the ideology of white supremacy.

The beginnings of the ideology of white supremacy

White supremacy is an ideology that had its primary beginnings in the 17th Century when it became clear that the numerous slave revolts consisting of a combination of enslaved Africans, Indigenous, and poor and indentured Europeans jeopardized not only the slave owners and the monarchy but the developing capitalist class.

To break up that unified struggle, slavery, where it had its greatest institutional development in the Americas, had to begin to be defined for an exclusive few using skin color and African and Indigenous ethnicity. However, the greatest emphasis – in

maintaining a continued supply of this unfree labor - was reserved for those from the African continent. This meant that Europeans would no longer be considered for slavery (as was the case in the 17th century and earlier). And even the indentured would be morphed into overseers or slave catchers of runaway slaves, eventually given the title of police shortly after Reconstruction, targeting Black people in the South, using so-called "legality." The Southern ruling class created laws designed to justify imprisonment to continue the slave labor to which they were economically addicted.

Racism also aims at the mental health of the oppressed. It's used to destroy its targets from the inside with self-loathing, self-doubt, and a general belief of inferiority. This also is sometimes a motivation for Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples to put on that blood-drenched uniform of Blue: to become something different. But, even if, by ignorance, people of color join U.S. police forces, they will quickly learn the genocidal role of their employer and either quit or remain with a clear understanding that they are an enemy of their own ethnicity and class.

Those murdering cops who killed Tyre Nichols, just like their peers who killed George Floyd, knew the role they were playing in protecting, not us but the racist, murderous system of capitalism. The only color that mattered in those incidents, and the multiple incidents this year set to create another record of police killings, was the color of their uniforms.

As the U.S. economy sinks further into a crisis of overproduction, inflation, and war economy - austerity will continue to increase and generalize the want that oppressed people in this country have always endured. This is when racism is of utmost importance, whether it's used here or in Ukraine (with different parameters - Russian ethnicity is part of the subhuman race defined by Nazi Germany and the current neo-Nazis leading a significant portion of the government and military in Ukraine).

Racism is an integral part also of fascism, and it will do us no good to deny its existence. It exists for Black and Brown people on a daily basis when we are treated horribly by those receiving more in society and when we apply for a job not meant for us or come home to communities occupied by the militarized state forces of the ruling class. How can we be told that our rage against prejudice, disrespect, and the targeting of our children by police is simply a reaction to a phantom? We cannot disconnect the gun from the bullet as if they exist independently. Capitalism and imperialism and colonialism and neocolonialism depend upon the bullet of racism - and they cannot exist for very long without each other.



The far right sets a trap for the anti-war movement

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The history of the working class and oppressed peoples is full of positive and negative lessons about the intertwined struggles against war and fascism.

Unfortunately, since the destruction of the USSR and the socialist camp 30 years ago, many of these lessons have been lost to new generations and forgotten by older ones.

At this critical juncture of an unfolding global war crisis unleashed by U.S. imperialism in Ukraine, the destruction of people's basic rights and livelihoods at home, and the growing climate catastrophe, it is crucial to the success of working-class movements to revive those lessons.

This is the context of an event called "Rage Against the War Machine" planned for Feb. 19 in Washington, D.C., and billed as an alliance of "left and right" against the U.S. proxy war in Ukraine.

While feinting to the left, with a slate of progressive-sounding demands and headlined by some left-ish journalists and social media personalities, the event is being driven by the far right, including allies of Donald Trump.

It features racist, anti-trans, and anti-worker speakers like "Tea Party" founder Ron Paul, a former member of Congress from Texas; anti-trans bigot Tulsi Gabbard, another former representative; former judge Andrew Napolitano, a past Fox News host who was considered by Trump for a Supreme Court seat; and representatives of the Libertarian Party and Lyndon Larouche's Schiller Institute.

The most prominent representative of the "left" on the bill is Jimmy Dore, a YouTube personality known for appearing with the likes of arch-bigots Tucker Carlson and Joe Rogan.

It's no surprise that the announced speakers are almost entirely white, with no recognized representatives of progressive Black, Latinx, Asian, or Native communities and organizations, nor the LGBTQ+ and feminist movements.

Preying on confusion

The ultra-right is preying on the weakness and confusion that has plagued the anti-war movement since the outbreak of open conflict between Russia and NATO's proxy regime in Ukraine last year. In this, the far right is attempting to lead anti-war forces into a trap that would override the life-and-death concerns of oppressed communities for the false hope of a "broad" alliance against the danger of World War III.

Its true purpose, however, is to strengthen the grip of the openly fascist, white supremacist movement in the U.S. based on anti-trans panic, hatred of migrants and refugees, censorship of Black and LGBTQ+ history, robbing women of their right to abortion, and so on.

Some of the anti-war left are desperate for an alliance with the far right, having no confidence in the multinational working class, the only force historically capable of stopping imperialist war and halting the advance of fascism. This is reflected in the details of the lineup and sponsors of the Feb. 19 event - including a libertarian wing of the Bernie Sanders electoral movement and so-called "patriotic socialists" like the Center for Political Innovation.

These "leftists" have been part of a trend that platforms fascists while denigrating and dismissing the most oppressed sections of the working class, who have the least to lose and the most to gain from a revival of revolutionary class struggle in the U.S.: Black and Brown people, migrants, Muslims, women, trans people, the LGBTQ+ community, the poor, the disabled, etc.

They argue that the struggles of these workers for their basic democratic rights somehow detract from the class struggle rather than enhance and strengthen it. Many of them also dismiss the organizing of service industry workers like those at Starbucks, who actually provide grassroots militant leadership to the labor movement.

Such a policy, put into practice through events like “Rage Against the War Machine” that attempt to play down class divisions and whitewash the far right’s war on the oppressed, can only serve the aims of the imperialist ruling class.

Is the far right really anti-war?

These leftists also ignore the real pro-war politics of the far right. While some of them, like Ron Paul, boast of their isolationism for political gain, their allegiance to unbridled capitalism, racism, and xenophobia speaks the truth about their actual stance.

While there are different schools of left-wing thought on fascism and the most effective ways to fight it, all serious opponents agree that war is as integral to fascism as it is to the imperialist ruling class.

Some on the right oppose the war in Ukraine simply because a Democratic administration is heading it, others because they are still lost in the fever dream of an imaginary “white nationalist alliance” with Russia.

It should be noted that Congressional Republicans, now dominated by the far right, have again and again voted overwhelmingly to give more money to the Pentagon and the military industry, as well as to strengthen the police waging a racist war on people in the U.S. Donald Trump boasts that his administration put \$2.5 trillion into the Pentagon and armaments.

While generally progressive-sounding, the demands of Rage Against the War Machine do not mention opposing war with China, Iran, or other countries targeted by U.S. imperialism. War against those countries was a high priority of Trump and his ruling class backers and the far right inside and outside the Republican Party.

Many are advocating for open military conflict with Mexico to stem the tide of refugees – workers attempting to flee the consequences of U.S.-sponsored wars and

economic devastation in South and Central America and the Caribbean.

Anti-war activists should take careful notice of the video speech given by Donald Trump on Jan. 31, in which he declared himself an “anti-war candidate” in 2024 while saying he would outlaw gender-affirming care and trans lives starting on his first day back in office. This is the destructive path Rage Against the War Machine is attempting to lead the anti-war movement down.

Divide and conquer

One of the grave mistakes that facilitated the rise of fascism in Germany in the early 1930s was the decision of the Communist Party leadership there to form an electoral bloc with the fascists in 1931 against bourgeois liberals and social democracy, giving rise to the much-maligned slogan “after Hitler, us.”

The move confused and demoralized millions of workers and the party’s members. And this alliance of convenience did nothing to prevent the Nazis from outlawing and smashing the Communist Party and the workers’ movement when it had cemented its position with the support of the big German capitalists two years later.

More recently, a similar alliance of convenience in Britain has had serious consequences for the working class after many leftists joined in the right-wing-driven Brexit movement. While the left had long opposed the European Union as an imperialist institution, those who supported Brexit found themselves tailing a white-nationalist movement which, since coming to power, has had devastating effects on the rights of workers, the national health system, the rights of trans people, etc.

There are no shortcuts to building a genuine anti-war movement. And there is no shortage of anti-war sentiment among workers in the U.S. The movement must do the work of linking the fight against imperialist war with the urgent needs of people here – against inflation, low wages, evictions, and police terror, and standing up for

the rights of people who are under attack. To be successful, it must be independent of both the Democrats and Republicans.

We urge those genuine anti-war forces who have been misled by the rhetoric of Rage Against the War Machine to consider the consequences of supporting this false “left-right” alliance and to join us in organizing for the march against U.S. endless wars on March 18 initiated by the ANSWER Coalition and endorsed by the Socialist Unity Party and many others.

Melinda Butterfield is a longtime anti-war activist who has organized against U.S. intervention in Ukraine and the war in Donbass since 2014. She is author of the forthcoming book “U.S. Proxy War in Ukraine and Donbass,” co-editor of Struggle-La Lucha and a trans woman.

