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written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 9, 2023

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Honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

Unite to fight racism, fascism and war

By Melinda Butterfield

As 2023 begins, it's undeniable that a dangerous, virulent fascist movement is spreading through U.S. society.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously said in 1967, "The bombs dropped on Vietnam explode at home." Malcolm X expressed something similar when he said, "Chickens come home to roost."

Feeding the U.S. war machine bootstraps by increasing repression, decreasing rights, and robbing people of desperately needed resources here at home. Promoting fascism abroad facilitates its growth here.

It's seen in the spread of hate-ridden protests against drag story hours, sometimes attended by armed neo-Nazis, who threaten children, parents, and LGBTQ+ communities, and in the bomb threats targeting medical facilities that provide gender-affirming care to trans children and abortion services to people who can become pregnant.

It takes the form of mass shootings, like the massacre of 10 Black people at Tops grocery in Buffalo, New York, five queer people at Club Q in Colorado Springs, and 19 students and two teachers at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas. We recognize it in the targeting of electrical grids from North Carolina to Washington state to sow fear.

At the local level, the fascist influence is evident in the rash of attempts by astrofutred "parents' groups" to ban books that expose the racist history of the U.S. or validate the lives and experiences of LGBTQ+ people.

At the state level, we see it in the efforts by officials in Texas, Ohio, Florida, and elsewhere to eradicate trans health care, criminalize parents who support trans children, and create a lynch-mob atmosphere against women and others who choose to get an abortion.

At the national level, there is the far-right-controlled U.S. Supreme Court, which gutted voting rights, struck down the constitutional right to abortion, and seems poised to do the same to same-sex marriage.

Looming over it all is the shadow of Jan. 6, 2021, when an organized fascist mob attempted a coup d'état at the



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Capitol in Washington, D.C., to keep Donald Trump in power – aided and abetted by a faction of the Pentagon.

Fascist tendencies have existed in the U.S. since it began its rise as an imperialist power in the late 19th century – from the Ku Klux Klan to the John Birch Society to today's Proud Boys and Oath Keepers. Sometimes the ruling class of bosses, bankers, and landlords keep them on a tight leash.

But when times are tough, when they fear the masses of poor and working people could unite and fight back against their unjust capitalist system, the fascists are let off their leash to spread division and, if necessary, physically exterminate those the rich and powerful fear most.

U.S. spread fascism in Ukraine

As top dog of the world imperialist powers – including Britain, Japan, and the European Union – the U.S. has long upheld fascists in its efforts to wring the maximum profits out of the world's people.

Washington has abetted fascist dictatorships or those with strong fascist aspects, from the Shah of Iran to Suharto in Indonesia, from Pinochet in Chile to Áñez in Bolivia.

During the Cold War against the USSR, the U.S. encouraged the growth of violent fascist movements like the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and its post-World War II successors. The U.S. and Canada harbored its leaders, gave them money and weapons, and encouraged their hate propaganda against multinational Soviet socialism.

The many neo-Nazi movements in Ukraine today, like Right Sector and Azov Brigade, are descendants of this lineage.

But that's not all. The destruction of the USSR and European socialist camp 30 years ago brought economic devastation and plummeting life expectancies. Washington stepped into the ideological vacuum to spread division and prevent a revolutionary

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the passing of Wadiya Jamal.
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Fighting inflation trickery: Capitalists cut jobs rather than bring down prices

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 9, 2023

The year 2022 will be remembered as a year of inflation shock.

Energy (oil, gas, electricity) prices are up a painful 17.6%.

Food-at-home prices have increased by 10.9%. Eggs are now 25.6% more expensive than they were in 2021. Milk prices are up 15.1%. Meat is up 8.9%.

Transportation services are up 15.2%.

The price of shelter (rent, mortgages) is up 6.9%, with rent increases more than doubling.

Saying that it is fighting inflation, the U.S. Federal Reserve has been raising interest rates. On Dec. 14, [CNBC reported](#) that the benchmark interest rate has been raised to its highest level in 15 years. "During a news conference, Chairman Jerome Powell said it was important to keep up the fight against inflation."

But this hasn't been done to reverse inflation; it will not bring down prices. Instead, the Federal Reserve's tight money policy (raising interest rates) stops businesses from expanding so that production is cut and workers are laid off.

The current inflation isn't just in prices. It's inflation of production — overproduction. And the Fed's tight money is in response to a capitalist crisis of overproduction.

Today's overproduction boom is not an ordinary cyclical capitalist boom but results from the shortages of commodities caused by the COVID shutdowns.

Responding to the COVID pandemic, the government ordered the shutdown of much of the economy in March 2020. Production stopped, and business inventories shrank drastically.

Business inventories are unsold commodities, which means there's no profit until they are sold.

During the COVID shutdown, the government borrowed and spent a vast amount of money to support spending to the extent possible under lockdown conditions. At the same time, the Federal Reserve greatly expanded the quantity of U.S. dollars to prevent a collapse of the credit system because of the business shutdowns.

The combination of a shrinking supply of commodities and an explosion in the quantity of central bank-created money is inflationary, explains Marxist economist [Sam Williams](#). The inflation takes effect as the economy reopens and capitalist industry and retail merchants rebuild their inventories.

Whenever many capitalists simultaneously build up inventories, an accelerator of increased business investment is triggered. As the accelerator takes effect, what was an inventory shortage becomes overproduction.

Cutting jobs

The only capitalist solution to overproduction is to cut back production to allow glutted markets to clear. Underproduction primarily means cutting jobs. Unemployment is what the Fed's tight money policy will create.

Since March, most real job growth has been stagnant. Full-time jobs are disappearing while part-time jobs are surging; the number of workers with multiple

jobs has soared.

Put simply, the number of workers employed remained the same in 2022, but workers are losing their full-time jobs and switching to much lower-paying, benefits-free part-time jobs, forcing many to take on more than one job.

While the Federal Reserve has the capitalist solution, it's not the workers' solution.

As long as there is capitalism, the answer to inflation and job cuts is to fight for union jobs and liveable wages.



Zelensky complicit in corporate takeover of Ukraine: 'It's an investment'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 9, 2023

"Your money is not charity, it's an investment." That's what Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelensky said in his address to the U.S. Congress while visiting Washington on Dec. 21.

He came asking for more billions to add to the more than \$68 billion in war funding in 2022 alone. Two days later, [Congress approved \\$45 billion](#) in additional aid to Ukraine, bringing the total for 2022 to \$113 billion.

Washington's spigot has been pumping U.S. dollars into Ukraine since before 2004 to fund imperialist regime change. This plan accelerated, with increasing violence and tens of billions in U.S. dollars, culminating with the coup in 2014.

The coup was orchestrated by Washington and used to select the future leadership of Ukraine; from that moment on, destroying a once-sovereign country and replacing it with consecutive regimes of anti-Russian, pro-U.S. governments that were more than willing to honor the wishes of their U.S. masters: provoking war with Russia.

Zelensky's statement about "an investment" must be seen in the context of the foreign investments that got a green light to sideline and impoverish the Ukrainian population after the coup in 2014. Some of those foreign investors were active shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union as well.

BlackRock steps in

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

BlackRock Financial Markets Advisory and the Ukrainian Ministry of Economy signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) in November. According to President Zelensky's official website: "In accordance with the preliminary agreements struck earlier this year between the Head of State and Larry Fink, the BlackRock team has

been working for several months on a project to advise the Ukrainian government on how to structure the country's reconstruction funds.

"Volodymyr Zelensky and Larry Fink agreed to focus in the near term on coordinating the efforts of all potential investors and participants in the reconstruction of our country, channeling investment into the most relevant and impactful sectors of the Ukrainian economy."

The stage was set for BlackRock by the IMF back in 2013 with a deal to "integrate" Ukraine into the European Union, to facilitate greater control and ownership over Ukraine's resources. In fact, this desire led to the ousting of former President Viktor Yanukovych during the 2014 coup.

In December 2014, the Oakland Institute issued a report titled "[The Corporate Takeover of Ukrainian Agriculture](#)," showing how Yanukovych's rejection of this proposal led to the coup which ousted him:

"A major factor in the crisis," the report states, "that led to deadly protests and eventually President Yanukovych's removal from office, was his rejection of an EU Association agreement that would have further opened trade and integrated Ukraine with the EU. The agreement was tied to a \$17 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. Instead of the EU and IMF deal, Yanukovych chose a Russian aid package worth \$15 billion plus a 33% discount on Russian natural gas ... This deal has since gone off the table with the pro-EU interim government accepting the new multimillion dollar IMF package in May 2014."

The report exposed the austerity clauses in the rejected EU trade deal, facilitating not only control over Ukraine's resources, but also opening Ukraine up to the cultivation of genetically modified crops.

The report continues: "In '[Walking on the West Side: The World Bank and the IMF in](#)

[the Ukraine Conflict](#),' a report released in July 2014, the Oakland Institute exposed how international financial institutions swooped in on the heels of the political upheaval in Ukraine to deregulate and throw open the nation's vast agricultural sector to foreign corporations.

"This fact sheet provides details on the transnational agribusinesses that are increasingly investing in Ukraine, including Monsanto, Cargill, and DuPont, and how corporations are taking over all aspects of Ukraine's agricultural system. This includes circumventing land moratoriums, investing in seed and input production facilities, and acquiring commodity production, processing, and transportation facilities."

Selling off land to agribusiness

After the 2014 coup, cabinet positions were literally assigned by the U.S. State Department. Any legislation protecting the sovereignty of Ukraine economically from foreign takeover was set for destruction, replaced by proposed laws that would allow greater foreign ownership of land.

However, even before the moratorium on land sales could be changed, various loopholes were exploited by foreign agricultural entities. Since the sales prohibition only applied to the land, investors could build foreign-owned factories on leased land and hold it until the moratorium expired.

For example, in March 2014 - just weeks after President Yanukovych was deposed - agribusiness giant Monsanto invested \$140 million in building a new seed plant. DuPont, in September 2014, completed the extension of its seed facility.

Ukraine is a big prize for the imperialists. It was once known as the "breadbasket of Europe," with over 74 million acres of uncharacteristically fertile earth known as "black soil."

So in March 2020, as a condition for a \$5 billion IMF loan supported by Zelensky, Washington, the EU, and Western corporations, an economically desperate Ukraine enacted law 552-IX, which amended the country's laws on conditions of turnover of agricultural land.

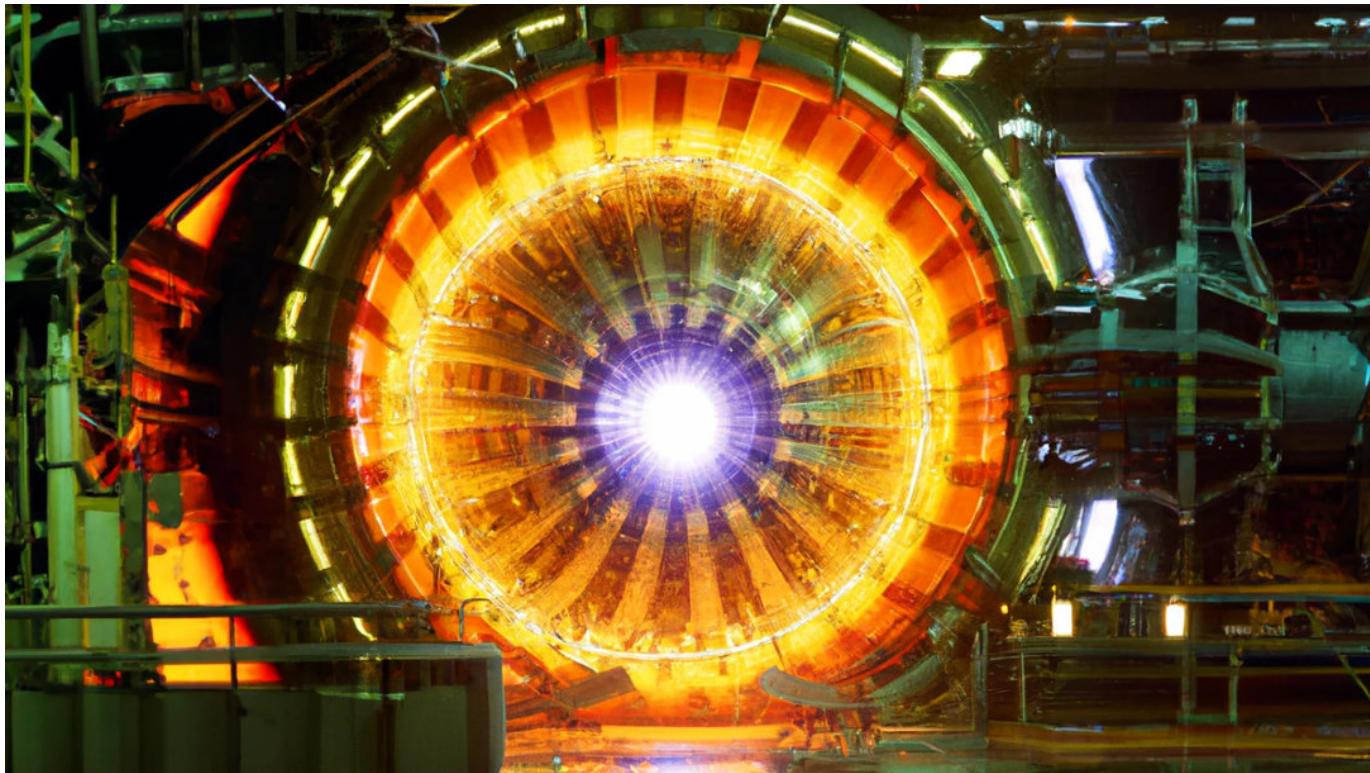
BlackRock is the world's largest asset manager and a company that has big interests in Raytheon, Lockheed, Dupont, and Haliburton, companies responsible for destroying Indigenous lands, climate change, supplying weapons of mass destruction for U.S. endless wars, and helping to push World War III.

Now BlackRock is in a close partnership with Kiev, managing billions of dollars in investments to tear away any last shred of Ukraine's economic sovereignty, while it pretends to be acting in defense of the Ukrainian people's interests.



Nuclear fusion hype: A boost for U.S. armaments, not clean energy

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Jennifer Granholm, the U.S. Secretary of Energy, led a press event on Dec. 13 to announce a major scientific breakthrough at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

There, researchers had aimed an array of the world's most powerful lasers (192 in all) at a tiny pellet for a fraction of a second. This pellet became much hotter than the center of our sun and fused two hydrogen nuclei, beginning a controlled chain reaction.

The process produced about 120% more energy than the energy used to power the lasers. The White House, press departments from important universities, and major media reported it as a giant step toward a solution to the global crisis of climate change.

But the mission of the Lawrence Livermore Lab is and always has been at the

service of the Pentagon. The most significant part of its usable budget is for testing, maintaining, and improving U.S. nuclear missiles. The coverage of the “fusion breakthrough” was the ultimate exercise in greenwashing the continuing menace of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile. It was a bait-and-switch con that concealed military research by dressing it up as clean energy research.

The New York Times quoted the White House Science Adviser, who referred to the event as “a scientific milestone achieved, and a road ahead to the possibilities for clean energy.” The San Francisco Chronicle’s headline was “Bay Area national lab to announce major breakthrough in quest for carbon-free energy.” The science writer for Forbes Magazine wrote, “This would be a key turning point in the decades-long quest to produce energy … without the carbon emissions from fossil fuels or radioactive waste.” Others followed suit.

The Department of Energy is a favored hiding place for Pentagon spending. The National Nuclear Security Administration, the biggest of five DOE sub-components with a \$24 billion budget, ran the fusion experiment. The Livermore lab was opened in 1952 at the urging of Ernest Lawrence and Edward Teller, the real-life Dr. Strangelove, the “father of the hydrogen bomb.”

Livermore Lab was founded during the failed U.S. attempt to destroy North Korea, while U.S. General Douglas MacArthur pushed for a nuclear attack on China.

All of this should be known to those writers who falsified what the December fusion experiment was about. The false coverage was no mistake. The articles were all written by people who know their history and science.

Even if they knew nothing about the lab’s relationship to the Pentagon, all they had to do was watch the Energy Department’s two-hour press event to understand the character of the experiment.

During the first section, beginning with Granholm's opening remarks and then a series of officials, all of their titles spoke to the military character; the Undersecretary for Nuclear Security, the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, and others all gave presentations.

About maintaining the nuclear arsenal

Clean energy was barely mentioned. However, maintaining the U.S. nuclear arsenal was bandied about quite a bit.

Next came a panel of scientists moderated by the Lab's Program Director for Weapons Physics and Design. Of the six panelists who spoke, only one - Tammy Ma of the Lawrence Livermore Institutional Initiative in Inertial Fusion Energy - mentioned clean energy. Ma spoke passionately about the possibilities of limitless energy with no radioactive waste and no fossil fuel.

If Tammy Ma's passion is real, then her expertise would be better used elsewhere. Lawrence Livermore is not the only place where work is being conducted. A project called International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) began as a cooperative enterprise between the U.S., Japan, and the Soviet Union in 1985.

Currently, 35 countries, including the U.S., China, and Russia, are participating. But over the years, the U.S. role in ITER has been checkered with threats to withdraw and weak funding. Research into fusion energy shouldn't be abandoned, but the urgency of the climate change crisis demands that all scientific and engineering efforts must be made outside the influence of U.S. militarism. The Pentagon - a menace to the entire world and a major contributor to global warming - should be abolished.

Many scientists exposed the true character of the experiment in the days that followed the initial press coverage. But that was all confined to bulletins, and

scientific journals generally read only by their communities. Most still believe that although the scientific achievement in December is incredibly significant, clean energy from nuclear fusion still faces too many hurdles to consider it the silver bullet.

International cooperation is the best hope for humanity's challenge of putting greenhouse gases and the resulting global climate change crisis in check. But the U.S. ruling class is competitive with its allies and hostile and antagonistic to the rest of the world. Billions of people rely on the world's scientists and engineers to figure out a solution. The technology of those advanced lasers at Lawrence Livermore, those brilliant minds that made this milestone possible, and those billions of dollars used must be at the disposal of the entire world's fusion scientists and engineers in an honest endeavor to heal the earth's atmosphere.



Cases reopened: Maryland's former

chief medical examiner covered up police killings

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A little over two years ago, David Fowler stepped onto the witness stand during the prosecution of George Floyd's murderers, including Derek Chauvin. The defense called Fowler as an expert witness. His purpose at this trial was simple: to undermine the prosecution's expert testimony and forensic evidence. As part of his testimony, Fowler asserted that Chauvin's knee on the neck of George Floyd was not a significant factor in Floyd's death.

The prosecution of Floyd's murderers was the most closely followed and widely

broadcast since O.J. Simpson's trial in 1997. The spotlight certainly shone brightly on Fowler as he attempted to discredit mountains of evidence pointing toward an obvious conclusion, that Derek Chauvin was and is a racist murderer.

Not only did the trial result in the conviction of Chauvin, but it also sparked a [new interest](#) in Fowler's 19-year tenure as Maryland's Chief Medical Examiner. For this reason, Struggle - La Lucha and Peoples Power Assembly [demanded](#) that the Maryland government reopen the cases where David Fowler, or his subordinates, conducted the autopsy.

PPA and Struggle-La Lucha were and are concerned with the Black men who died in police custody in Maryland. Fowler's time as the Maryland Chief Medical Examiner did not go without controversy, even before he rose to national prominence in 2020.

Fowler's administration received heavy public criticism for the conclusions rendered in the autopsies of [Anton Black](#), [Marlyn Barnes](#), and [Tyrone West](#), all young Black men who died under suspicious circumstances while in the custody of Maryland law enforcement. Fowler and his fellow medical examiners entirely absolved police and correctional officers of any responsibility for the deaths of West, Black, and Barnes, regardless of the plentiful evidence suggesting otherwise. Both families accused Fowler's office of rubber-stamping police theories and covering up racist policing practices.

Fowler's cases reopened

In December of 2021, it was widely reported that the Maryland attorney general's office was reexamining the findings of David Fowler in the cases of over 1,300 individuals who died while in the custody of Maryland police or corrections.

Since that time, the investigation has escalated. Just [over a week ago](#), the Maryland AG announced that 100 autopsies conducted by Fowler's administration would be

thoroughly audited to determine their veracity and thoroughness.

It is important to understand that Fowler is not the only person implicated in this saga. The recent spotlight on his tenure as Maryland's Chief Medical Examiner demonstrates a deeper racism at the core of the U.S. court system. Dozens of medical examiners, all physicians, served under Fowler while he ran the department. Fowler was one official. To make his racist collaboration with law enforcement sustainable, he would have needed subordinates who agreed with his vision. Otherwise, the Maryland AG's office would not have raised eyebrows on over 100 autopsies, an incredibly huge number of cases to reopen, and still probably not enough.

The depth of corruption and racism within the U.S. "criminal justice" system cannot be understated. This system must be dismantled and replaced with true community control of the police and courts.

Justice for Tyrone West, Anton Black, and Marlyn Barnes! Reopen all the cases! No more racist medical examiners!



Peru: Nationwide Strike Against Boluarte Reaches Third Day

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January 9, 2023

- **The strongest protests are taking place in the southern part of the country.**
- **Journalists report traffic blockades on the Interoceanic Highway and the Pan-American Highway.**

On Friday, Peruvians stage the third consecutive day of protests to demand the resignation of President Dina Boluarte, the closure of Congress, the call for a constituent process, and the release of former President Pedro Castillo.

The land Transport Superintendence confirmed the blockade of roads in 46 sites scattered in eight regions of the country. Among them is the blockade of traffic between Puno and Arequipa, two important commercial cities.

Currently, the strongest protests are taking place in the southern part of the

country. Local media report traffic blockades on the Interoceanic Highway and the Pan-American Highway, as well as protests in Andahuaylas, Aymaraes, and Abancay.

In this last region, 70 percent of the population has complied with the national strike, leaving a large number of vehicles stranded on the roads. In the city of Chalhuanca, the police tried to unblock a highway, which led to clashes with the indigenous communities.

#ATENCIÓN | *Policías golpean, reducen a fotoperiodistas y obstaculizan que otros periodistas capten imágenes de las agresiones.* [@PoliciaPeru](#) [@MininterPeru](#) [@Defensoria_Peru](#) [@ANP_periodistas](#) [@cnddhh](#) pic.twitter.com/7LzSmhRhYP

— Wayka (@WaykaPeru) [January 5, 2023](#)

The tweet reads, “Attention: Police beat and immobilize photojournalists. They also hinder other journalists from capturing images of the attacks.”

On Thursday, protests were reported in the departments of Apurimac, Arequipa, Ayacucho, Puno, Cuzco, and Tacna. Motorcycle taxi drivers and food market workers then announced that they were joining the national strike.

Despite persistent rain, the citizens held a sit-in in front of the Ayacucho Cathedral, from where they demanded justice for the almost 30 deaths caused by the repression in December.

In Arequipa, a mobilization of thousands of people demanded the departure of Dina Boluarte and the closure of Congress.

#Peru | *Social organizations, trade unions, and indigenous movements called for a national strike in several regions in rejection of Dina Boluarte's government and in*

support of former president Pedro Castillo. pic.twitter.com/Ih1PG3QyTl

— teleSUR English (@telesurenglish) [December 15, 2022](https://twitter.com/telesurenglish/status/1540811000000000000)

Source: [teleSUR](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2023/page/80/)



Capitalism's war on railroad workers continues under president whose support for unions rings hollow

written by Struggle - La Lucha
January 9, 2023

GUESS WHICH ONE GETS \$1 TRILLION FROM CONGRESS!

**21ST CENTURY
PROGRAM TO REBUILD
AMERICA'S
INFRASTRUCTURE**



**PROBLEM-PLAGUED
JET FIGHTER DESIGNED TO
DESTROY INFRASTRUCTURE**

(ON THOSE INFREQUENT INSTANCES WHEN IT ISN'T GROUNDED BY TECHNICAL GLITCHES)



The U.S. Congress imposed a labor agreement on 115,000 railroad workers on December 1, disregarding the vote from four unions to reject it. That is how little real democracy there is in the United States.

The millionaires' club on Capitol Hill could not even support giving sick days to railroaders chained to round-the-clock work schedules.

Why should a capitalist government running a world empire with hundreds of military bases and a dozen spy agencies intervene in this labor dispute? It involved less than one-thousandth of the workforce.

Aren't railroads part of the "old economy," like the factory workers labeled "metal

bashers" by *The Economist* magazine? Haven't railroaders become obsolete in the so-called information age?

People cannot eat algorithms. The Internet cannot move chemicals, cars or containers off-loaded from ships.

While computerization has destroyed the jobs of thousands of railroad clerks, it has not replaced the need for rail transport. It is the visibility of railroads that has declined.

Outside Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and a few other places in the United States, passenger trains have virtually disappeared. The loss of millions of manufacturing jobs has also meant the loss of railroad jobs.

Yet deindustrialization, by increasing imports, also demands moving millions of shipping containers from the ports. The delays in the supply chain occurred not only on the docks but also in the railroad yards.

The seven "Class 1" railroads [account for 94% of the industry's revenues](#).

They are making more profits than ever, helped along by decades of deregulatory policies that began 40 years ago. The Union Pacific and Berkshire Hathaway's BNSF — which monopolize rail traffic west of Chicago — [raked in more than \\$12 billion in combined profits last year](#).

It is the number of rail workers that has fallen like a rock. There were [two million](#) workers on the railroads in 1920, accounting for more than 6% of the non-farm workforce.

The Great Depression helped [reduce railroad employment](#) to 1.5 million workers in 1947. Over the last 75 years, employment [plunged 90%](#) to just 147,800 railroaders on the job in November 2022.

That is a smaller number of railroad workers than there were in 1870, one year after the first transcontinental railroad was opened. This shrunken number of railroaders moves a million freight carloads a month and nearly a million containers.

Racism hurts all poor and working people

The elimination of more than 1.3 million railroad jobs since World War II ravaged communities coast-to-coast. This mass elimination was all the more painful because Black workers and women were finally being hired in many railroad crafts.

Charles Hamilton Houston, Dean of the Howard University Law School and mentor to future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, fought against the industry's Jim Crow hiring practices.

According to historian William H. Harris, "from 1928 to 1949, not a single Black person found employment on a class 1 railroad as fireman, brakeman, trainman, or yardman." (*The Harder We Run: Black Workers since the Civil War*)

The loss of railroad jobs was deeply felt in Hamlet, North Carolina. The city was an important junction on the old Seaboard railroad, now part of the CSX system. CSX has a yard in Hamlet, while two Amtrak trains a day stop there.

Because of railroad job cuts, many workers had to seek employment at the non-union, low-wage Imperial Foods plant instead. Twenty-five workers were killed there on September 3, 1991, when a fire broke out.

The plant's owner, Emmett J. Roe, locked the doors because he thought workers—many of whom were Black—would steal chickens.

White and Black workers died together because of Roe's racism. Forty-nine children were orphaned.

Getting rich while workers die

Railroads were the largest U.S. industry of the 19th century and dominated the stock exchanges.

The Vanderbilts, who controlled the New York Central system, became, for a time, the country's richest family. The Western Hemisphere's greatest slumlords—the Astors—had millions invested in the Central.

Wall Street's biggest banker, J.P. Morgan, manipulated railroad systems before and after launching U.S. Steel with a stock swindle.

Andrew Carnegie had been a division superintendent for the Pennsylvania Railroad before he became a steel boss. Carnegie's first plant—now the last remaining steel mill in Pittsburgh—was named for Pennsylvania Railroad President Edgar Thompson. Most of Carnegie's customers were railroads buying steel rails or steel bridges.

The Bush family also climbed capitalism's bloody ladder via railroads. Samuel Prescott Bush was superintendent of motive power for Milwaukee Road.

He became manager of Buckeye Steel Castings, which made railroad wheels in Columbus, Ohio. The outfit was run by Frank Rockefeller, a brother of the world's first billionaire, John D. Rockefeller.

Samuel Prescott Bush's son Prescott Bush became a U.S. senator from Connecticut. More importantly, he was a partner in the Brown Brothers Harriman private bank that manages some of the biggest fortunes. The Harriman family controlled the Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, and Illinois Central railroads with more than 30,000 miles of track.

Besides laundering money for Nazi cartels, Prescott Bush was the father and

grandfather of war criminals: President George Herbert Walker Bush and President George Walker Bush.

While these families were accumulating their riches, one in nine trainmen was injured in 1909. One in 205 was killed.

The response of the old Interstate Commerce Commission—abolished in 1996 in the name of deregulation—was to stop collecting these embarrassing statistics. (*Economic History of the United States* by Ernest Bogart)

Putting workers on a ‘rifle diet’

Workers revolted against these conditions in 1877. Railroad companies cut wages while doubling train size. Today’s Precision Scheduled Railroading has [lengthened many trains](#) to two miles or more while getting rid of 62,000 railroaders in seven years.

Pennsylvania Railroad President Thomas Scott declared the strikers should be put on a “rifle diet.” Dozens of workers were killed in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Reading, Pennsylvania.

Black educator Peter Clark, who had been an associate of Frederick Douglass, addressed strikers in Cincinnati. (*1877: Year of Violence* by Robert V. Bruce)

In that same year, railroad boss Scott helped forge the rotten deal that betrayed Black people by overthrowing the Reconstruction governments in the South.

Eugene Debs led the biggest railroad strike in 1894. The former locomotive fireman and future socialist presidential candidate led the American Railway Union.

In solidarity with striking workers at the Pullman Company, ARU members cut Pullman sleeping cars off from trains. The boycott tied up trains across the country.

President Grover Cleveland sent in U.S. troops to break the strike. General Nelson Miles shot down workers in Blue Island, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago.

The military officer's hat had earlier helped capture Geronimo and would later invade Puerto Rico in 1898.

The ARU was an industrial union that united workers in different crafts. But it did not represent all railroad workers.

By a vote of 112 to 100, ARU delegates refused to allow Black workers to join. To his credit, Debs urged accepting Black workers.

Debs should have resigned instead of leading a Jim Crow outfit. The worst scabbing comes from racism within the labor movement.

Black workers were kept out of railroad unions. They had to form their own labor organizations, as described in *Brotherhoods of Color* by Eric Arnesen.

The ARU did not even consider organizing Pullman porters. But in 1937, the Pullman Company signed a union contract with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, led by A. Philip Randolph.

The BSCP, with its 18,000 members, helped lead the Black freedom struggle. Randolph organized the March on Washington Movement that forced President Franklin Roosevelt to set up the Fair Employment Practice Committee in 1941.

It was Pullman porter E.D. Nixon who, while going between Montgomery, Alabama, and Chicago three times a week, helped to organize the Montgomery bus boycott. Dr. King praised his work in *Stride Toward Freedom*.

A. Philip Randolph helped initiate the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where Dr. King gave his "I Have a Dream" speech.

One of the ten demands of the march was a \$2 per hour minimum wage. That is worth [\\$19.39](#) in November 2022. The labor movement needs to demand a minimum wage of at least \$20 per hour.

Jilting railroads

So why did the U.S. capitalist class turn its back on railroads? In 1955 only four corporations—AT&T, General Motors, U.S. Steel and Standard Oil of New Jersey—had more assets than the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Richard King Mellon—whose family controlled Alcoa Aluminum, Gulf Oil (and, hence, Kuwait), as well as what became the Bank of New York Mellon—was the most influential PRR director.

Right behind the Pennsy was the New York Central, which collected rent from Park Avenue skyscrapers. Texas oilmen Clint Murchison, Jr., and Sid Richardson backed Robert Young's takeover of the Central in the 1950s.

The Pennsylvania and New York Central railroads merged on February 1, 1968, to form the world's largest transportation company. When Penn Central declared [insolvency on June 21, 1970](#), it was the largest bankruptcy until Enron and almost took Goldman Sachs with it.

Railroads lost their monopoly of land transportation to trucks. But that is not the entire story.

The collapse of anthracite coal mining doomed New England railroads. A railroad can't lose money carrying coal.

Railroads had been such a bonanza that competing capitalists built lines that duplicated each other. Seven railroad companies connected Chicago and Council Bluffs, Iowa. All of them sought to bring freight cars off the Union Pacific to the

Windy City.

The old Nickel Plate (now part of Norfolk Southern) was built between Chicago and Buffalo to exhort the Vanderbilts into buying it.

Railroads' Achilles heel was what Karl Marx called the tendency of the rate of profit to decline. Surplus value—from which profit is derived—can only be made from exploiting living labor.

The tremendous amount of dead labor invested in railroad tracks, bridges, yards, signal systems, and locomotives became an albatross for capitalism. The capitalist state took over railroads throughout Western Europe.

The profitable railroads in the U.S. west and south needed Penn Central in order to exchange freight with it. The Sunday *New York Times Magazine* revealed that legislation creating Conrail — which took over Penn Central — was drafted by the Union Pacific's general counsel's office.

The U.S. government injected billions into Conrail, which was sold in a fire sale to CSX and Norfolk Southern. Conrail's "modernization" included abandoning thousands of miles of track and getting rid of 4,000 block operators in the signal towers.

Deregulation, which includes the 1980 Staggers Act, served as a welcome mat for super-billionaire Warren Buffett to take over the BNSF railroad.

A brutal rationalization [reduced Class 1 railroad mileage](#) to fewer than 92,000 miles by 2020.

Thousands of miles are operated by "short lines," which are often non-union.

Take over the railroads!

No one should have expected “Amtrak Joe” in the White House to help railroad workers. Biden was a loyal servant of the DuPont dynasty for 36 years as a U.S. senator from Delaware.

He collaborated with the super-racist Strom Thurmond to fight school integration. Biden pushed through legislation that helped increase the prison population to more than two million poor people.

Railroad management continues to push for one-person crews. The runaway train that exploded in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, in 2013, killing 47 people, had just one crew member.

Yet the mere threat of a strike forced both the Union Pacific and CSX railroads to slightly modify their severe attendance policies.

As Frederick Douglass declared, “If there is no struggle there is no progress.”

One sign of a new spirit among railroad workers is the election of Eddie Hall as president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, part of the Teamsters. Hall opposed the agreement that was forced on railroaders.

Any action by railroad workers will be welcomed by the multinational working class. It will inspire millions as the Black Lives Matter movement has.

The railroad monopolies do not only owe sick days and respect. They owe reparations.

Nine thousand miles of track in the South were laid by enslaved Africans before the Civil War. Thousands of additional miles were built by Black prisoners afterward. The steel-driving man, John Henry, was worked to death by the Chesapeake and Ohio, now part of CSX.

General George Custer had it coming, and he died for the Northern Pacific — now owned by Warren Buffett's BNSF — that was invading Lakota Sioux land.

Railroads are a vital public utility like electricity, gas, and water. All these utilities need to be taken over by the people.

Source: [CovertAction Magazine](#)



Honor Dr. King: Protest to End Food Apartheid in Baltimore, Jan. 16

written by Struggle - La Lucha
January 9, 2023



MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2023 AT 2 PM - 3 PM

Honor Dr. King Protest to End Food Apartheid in Baltimore
Gay and Fayette Streets, Baltimore

WE ARE COMING TOGETHER TO FIGHT FOOD DESERTS

Residents in four major communities in Baltimore have been actively countering food deserts. Each community has suffered major supermarket closings and or curtailing community efforts to feed people directly through gardens or other means. Of course, the problem of affordable, healthy food is not confined to these four areas — and we welcome every community.

These include: Pigtown/Washington Village; Sandtown-Matthew Henson - West Harlem Park - Bridgeview GreenLawn - Midtown Edmondson; Cherry Hill; and Oliver - Broadway/East - Johnson Square

The following demands are for discussion and are evolving based on community input. Let us know — Sign up and attend the Dr. King Jr. Rally on Monday, January 16, gathering 2 pm across from City Hall at Gay & Fayette Sts.

- Create Opportunity Zones for these 4 areas — if Under Armour can receive “opportunity zone” status and downtown businesses can receive financial benefits, why not Baltimore’s neighborhoods.
- Federal, State and City subsidized Markets.
- Community control of vacant lots for people’s gardens.
- Rollback food prices — lower requirements to extend food stamp programs especially for seniors & low wage workers.
- Provide special transportation for seniors, youth, disabled & poor residents or arrange delivery of food.
- Train and hire residents from each affected area for union jobs.
- Protect and guarantee union rights for all workers in subsidized supermarkets.
- Form Community Action Committees in each area.
- Create a Citywide Commission made up of representatives from affected communities to determine action.
- Mayor & City Council call for national aid - Feed the people, not the Pentagon.

Initiated by: Peoples Power Assembly; Matthew Henson Neighborhood Association; Unemployed Workers Union



Buffalo's real bomb cyclone: Racism, capitalism and poverty

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 9, 2023

Capitalist government failure requires working-class organization and action

As of Jan. 5, at least 60 people nationally and 39 people in Erie County, New York, have been reported dead from Winter Storm Elliott.

The majority of deaths – 31 – are from Buffalo, the third poorest city in the United States. Most of those who died were people of color.

Forecasts of a “bomb cyclone” were made far in advance of the storm, as early as Dec. 19. By Dec. 21, meteorologists reported “a once-in-a-generation storm” would arrive.

Despite these warnings, there was no plan to save lives, either on the local, regional or national level.

Individuals and families were left to fend for themselves. There were not adequate provisions for emergency shelter, delivery of food and supplies to people living in food deserts, or support for those freezing from lack of electricity and fuel.

Lack of travel ban forced workers to report to jobs

A travel ban was not issued until 9:30 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 23, after most workers had already left for their shifts. Many workers, especially low-wage workers, live paycheck to paycheck. Without the needed travel ban, they faced firing or write-ups if they didn't report to work.

Meager wages also meant that there was little possibility of stocking up on food or preparing.

People quickly became stranded in their vehicles, leading to at least four deaths. Seventeen people were found dead in snow drifts, succumbing to hurricane-force winds and brutal cold.

Nine people died in homes without heat after electricity and power had failed. Snow drifts of up to 12 feet trapped residents inside drafty and aging homes.

Buffalo's aging infrastructure could not bear the stress.

Topping the miserable deaths, residents of Buffalo's primarily Black Eastside neighborhood complained bitterly of the lack of snow removal and resources in their neighborhood compared to Kenmore, a wealthy, predominantly white area.

White supremacy and war

Last year, on a speaking tour after his fact-finding trip in Donbass, John Parker of

the Socialist Unity Party visited the site of the [racist massacre at Tops Supermarket](#) in Buffalo.

In the aftermath of Winter Storm Elliott, Parker told Struggle-La Lucha: “The racist and anti-working class disaster in Buffalo could have been prevented. Over \$100 billion to date has been poured into the U.S. proxy war against Russia and Donbass.

“In a matter of hours, Washington can ship arms to Ukraine, but not equipment and resources to deliver food, provide shelter and emergency health care to the people of Buffalo, especially to the Black community, to workers and the poor.”

Parker added: “Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown’s victim-blaming remarks calling ‘looters the lowest of low’ are not surprising. In the midst of the crisis, he diverted police from emergency assistance to protect businesses.”

In the most recent mayoral race, Brown ran as a write-in candidate, with the full support of the Democratic and Republican party machines and the Police Benevolent Association after India Walton, a young Black woman from Buffalo’s Eastside, a supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement and self-proclaimed “democratic socialist,” won the Democratic Party primary.

Cuba’s ‘Tarea Vida’ an example of what’s needed

Cuba, a small island which has suffered deeply from a criminal, six-decade-long U.S. blockade, is also disproportionately affected by climate change. Up to 10% of Cuba could be submerged by the end of this century, wiping out coastal towns, polluting water supplies and forcing 1 million people to relocate.

The major object of Cuba’s Tarea Vida (Life Task) initiative is to protect lives and the resources people depend on.

Tarea Vida is divided into two parts: one to address the immediate climate crisis,

and another longer-term plan. Dr. Helen Yaffe's recent documentary, “



Cuba's Life Task: Combating Climate Change,” outlines this.

Much can be learned from Cuba's planning.

Workers and oppressed communities urgently need to organize and act. Our lives depend on it.

This includes demanding that warehouses, schools and workplaces be fortified in tornado zones, and that adequate evacuation, food, housing and health care be organized in the Gulf of Mexico and coastal areas from Florida to Maine.

Unions and workers' organizations must take up these demands now and deepen mutual aid work to save lives. During Winter Storm Elliott, the [Buffalo Mutual Aid Group](#) was one of the organizations that did its best to get out information, distribute food and provide a forum to communicate.

What happened in Buffalo is not an isolated incident, nor is it an “act of god or nature.” Disasters like this will continue and become more frequent, affecting millions across the U.S. Nor is it confined to this country.

In fact, the climate crisis, directly rooted in the profits-before-people system of capitalism, is being felt globally - from devastating floods in Pakistan to deadly heat waves and droughts worldwide.

To save the planet and the people, we must destroy capitalism!



Reflections on the passing of Wadiya Jamal

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 9, 2023

When I read the email message from Black Alliance for Peace on Dec. 27 stating Mumia Abu-Jamal's wife, Wadiya Jamal, had transitioned, I was deeply saddened.

I recovered from my state of shock, reading the many replies expressing love, light, and well-wishes to the family and friends of Wadiya and Mumia. I realized that I had to be strong, stay focused and continue the fight to bring Mumia home.

I grappled with how I was going to spread this news, and just talk to people about this tragedy without breaking the spirit of our fight to release Mumia and all political prisoners. It was a couple of days later when I checked Prison Radio, thinking that Mumia may have written something about Wadiya that I could share. I listened to the commentary below:

"Wadiya Jamal, my beloved.

“She was a spring baby, born in the first week of April 1953. A West Philly girl whose beauty made her shine in a crowd. She loved fiercely like a lion. This love blessed the lives of five beautiful children, and it blessed me.

“As mother and grandmother, she really shone like a sun over her planet, and when anyone was lost, her mighty love was cracked by such loss—her mother and father, her brother Jimmy, and perhaps deepest, the loss of the family’s baby, Samiya, was the deepest crack, the deepest past.

“After that, every December was a trial through darkness. We were all waiting for the first light of spring, for this dark fog to break. But it was not to be. Just after the holidays, her heart, her mighty heart, gave up. She loved like no one else ever.

“I love you, I will always love you. All the children and grandchildren love you and will always love you. Your smile was the only sunshine we ever needed, and we need it now. We love you, Wa-Wa. We miss you.

“With love, not fear, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.”

How inspiring, how thoughtful. Hearing Mumia’s words turned on a light inside of me. How fortunate it is for me to be a part of this fight to release Mumia. I truly believe this fight is for his release, because Mumia is free. He is the freest person I know, and I know him only through his writings.

I have learned so much from this brother and there is always more to learn. I remembered reading and listening to his commentaries in “Father Hunger” and “Mother Loss” from “All Things Censored.” I recall the initial sadness, and as I continued reading, I felt some comfort when I thought of my own mother and father in a different way. His commentaries were filled with compassion and love.

Mumia’s commentaries on his sister Lydia Barashango in 2011, and his daughter Samiya Abullah in 2015 (“Samiya makes her Transition” and “The Visit”) had a

similar effect on me. Now his wife of over 40 years has made her transition and Mumia is writing words of wisdom, teaching us in his words how we should live our lives and be remembered and loved.

We should live, love and be the best that we can be.

Mumia will be released. We the people will release him.

With love, not fear!

Send Mumia bereavement or condolence cards for the loss of his beloved wife, Wadiya Jamal, to:

Mumia Abu-Jamal
AM 8335
Smart Communications/PADOC
SCI Mahanoy
PO Box 33028
St Petersburg, FL 33733

