

Interview with historic activist Palestinian Leila Khaled: 'Surrender or fight'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 12, 2024



Leila Kahlid speaking at a recent international solidarity conference with Palestine in Venezuela.

[Leila Khaled](#) is a historic activist for the liberation of the Palestinian people. At 80 years old, she continues to be active in promoting international collaboration with political organizations, popular movements and governments to denounce Israeli violence and broaden the struggle for the formation of the Palestinian state.

Venezuela is one of the countries that echoes this struggle the most. The defense of the Palestinian people has been, since Hugo Chávez, one of the pillars of Venezuelan foreign policy. In the last week of November, Khaled was in Caracas to [participate in the International Conference of Solidarity with Palestine](#). She received **Brasil de Fato** at the hotel where she was staying in the Venezuelan capital. In a conversation that lasted almost 1 hour, she talked about the relationship between socialism and the Palestinian liberation process, the role of women in the armed struggle and the relationship between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and other countries.

According to Khaled, it is necessary to discuss a specific political formation in each state that is adapted to the reality of each country. That is why the Popular Front understands that Marxism-Leninism is an important tool, for being an instrument of action that can be incorporated by any country.

Khaled was born in Haifa, which was part of the British Mandate of Palestine, but had to leave her home after the foundation of Israel in 1948. She then grew up in the Tyre refugee camp in Lebanon. At the age of 15, the young Palestinian began her activism and eventually expanded her involvement in the struggle for the formation of a Palestinian state.

Joining the PFLP was instrumental in the political line Khaled would take to this day. As a communist activist, she began to draw inspiration from leaders such as Fidel Castro, Lenin, Ho Chi Minh and Kim Il Sung. She is responsible for founding one of the Popular Front cells in Kuwait and participated in military operations in the Middle East, including the hijacking of two planes, one from Trans World Airlines

and the other from the Israeli airline El Al.

Khaled sees two challenges in women's participation in the armed struggle for the liberation of Palestine: from society, because society is sexist and patriarchal, and also from the Israeli occupation. According to her, for women in this context there is no middle ground: "surrender or fight".

Brasil de Fato: Leila, what are the necessary adaptations of socialism in the Palestinian liberation struggles?

The Palestinian people are in different countries and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) is where the Palestinian people are. There are many people in occupied Palestine, Gaza, West Bank and others in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and other Arab countries. Our party is in these countries and we have a political program. And this is similar to other organizations. In some countries we don't say that we are PFLP because it is a banned organization in some territories. So we speak in committees for a democratic Palestine or we form a union of delegations.

The political program is what guides the policy of the Popular Front. But the labor policy is different as an objective situation in each country. Some countries do not accept a militant organization, which is why we change the names. But they are still militants of the Popular Front. Therefore, the mission of each group of activists in each place is that they design and carry out their own line of work that fits our political program.

And here comes the discussion around socialism. In our cultural and educational program we have theory. From the beginning we adopted Marxist-Leninist thought. But in the fifth congress of the Popular Front, in 1993, we put Marxism-Leninism not only as a political line, but as an instrument of work. As we are citizens of the Third World, to speak of socialism and Marxism-Leninism has to be adapted to each territory and objective condition.

The context of each country is different in relation to another country. That is why Lenin always said that theory is gray, but reality is green. We apply a socialism different from ours in each country. These are experiences that we adopt from other countries. We, as a political organization, build alliances according to the political position of any country. And the position of a given country on the Palestinian cause is what determines our position in relation to that country.

And how can we build a Palestinian society that is socialist in a context of increasing Israeli attacks and an increase in violence in over 12 months?

It is a challenge, we need to educate our activists, educate them about socialism at the same time that we are in a process of national liberation. We set ourselves the historic goal of returning to our land to build a new society. In a liberation process all taboos and paradigms are broken, from religious to political. That is why we are interested in confronting the war and genocide suffered by our people. We raise our slogan: we have the right to return and to be a people whose self-determination is respected.

Can the coordination of international organizations help to put an end to the conflict?

This is the first time in Israel's history since its founding that there has been a decision to hold Israelis accountable, as was the [International Criminal Court's decision that Netanyahu](#) is a war criminal as its Defense Minister.

But Israel considers itself above the law. They do not surrender internationally because they are protected by the colonial West and US imperialism. For the first time, Israel in the war against Gaza asks for protection from the United States, this frightened Israel. But because of this protection, they follow.

Could China's growing participation in the geopolitical chessboard change this?

Of course, today there is the Brics, which is an economic alliance that should be reflected in a political alliance to confront the imperialists. Not through arms, but through economics. I believe that this will change and the United States will no longer protect Israel, they are giant and powerful countries. In their history there are revolutions and we learn from these revolutions. In the Cold War between the USSR and the United States, the United States won and today the world is changing. And it must change in favor of the people. And this provides a positive environment for the people of the world. Specifically Latin America, because it is close to imperialism. This means that all together we can break this rule. This world will not continue to be ruled by the United States.

You have already mentioned several times the imperialist actions of the U.S. in different places, mainly stifling revolutionary struggles. What has been the role of the U.S. today in the Palestinian liberation movement and in Latin American revolutionary movements?

We always present our experience and the particular problems we face, but Latin America began to have revolutionary experiences a long time ago and Cuba is the great example. And this is reflected in a reaction from imperialism. Cuba has suffered sanctions since it decided to have its own revolutionary process and this has had an enormous effect on Latin American politics. [[Salvador](#)] [The Allende revolution in Chile](#) and [Venezuela was also influenced by Cuba](#). Cubans play an important role in Latin American politics.

In many other countries there were revolutions that failed and this is because the United States and the Zionist movement penetrate these societies and have the role of destroying them. So that these societies see the United States as the “liberator”.

How was your relationship with Venezuela over time and with Chavez?



Caracas. Photo: Bill Hackwell

Chavez supported the Palestinian cause from the beginning and announced it publicly at the UN in 2003. This created a relationship between Venezuelans and Palestinians that was marked and continues to be an important point of support. I saw him in 2005 in Brazil, when I went to the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. We also met in other cities. When I came to Venezuela for the first time, he was already undergoing treatment for cancer.

How do political struggles in other countries serve as a reference for the Palestinian liberation struggle?

We study the results of different processes. In any national liberation process in a

country, from the Bolshevik revolution, in China, in Vietnam, in Algeria, in South Africa, it is necessary to educate our activists through ideas. Our struggle is not of a few years, it is from one generation to the next. Because we face a common enemy: the Zionist movement, whose governments are Israel and US imperialism. This is the camp of the enemy. We understand in advance that we have to sacrifice ourselves and pass the flag of liberation from generation to generation until we liberate the Palestinian territory and return to Palestine, expelling the Zionists.

Personally and in general, we carry a scientific thinking and it is not an emotional thing based on this. I still carry this responsibility when I see friends in the world. Many revolutionary and progressive movements fought for our cause. From Europe to Tokyo and Latin America and this gives more hope that we will return to our homeland.

Carlos Ilich Ramirez was a Venezuelan activist who, from an early age, became involved in the struggle of the Palestinian people. Patricio Argüello, Nicaraguan, who became a martyr by hijacking a plane. We also have militants and comrades in Japan. They went to a military operation in occupied Palestine and were killed there. There are many internationalists who fought with us and this is not the only way to support them. We attended training courses in various countries of the world: China, USSR, socialist countries. And we also receive university education through university scholarships from these countries. So we are surrounded by friends in the world and we see these relationships now with what is happening in Gaza, with the whole world expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people, including the United States and Europe.

And at the same time it reveals the real reason for the conflict. It showed the terrorist face of Israel. This is what gives us strength and motivation to continue working.

How important is revolutionary and theoretical training for a militant and militancy

for a theoretician?

Knowledge has its effect on men and women. We live in the age of telecommunications, so communication is easier through technology. We communicate more easily and this helps us to see that victory is closer. Therefore, the more knowledge we have, the easier our liberation process will be.

Before we read books, today everything is on the internet, on Google. This makes it easier for activists to learn more through communication. We used to see each other at international forums and conferences. Today there are many applications that help not only with videoconferencing, but with training. Getting informed or accessing training is easier.

The Palestinian people suffered the Nakba in 1948 and left Palestine. The context of the Palestinian people forced Palestinians to confront Zionism through university education, and this made it easier for men and women to enter universities. We have only 8% illiterate people, because we help everyone to be educated and to be students. Compared to other Arab countries, Palestinians have the highest university education and this increases the number of intellectuals.

Therefore, many of our students and young people will study political science, philosophy and culture to help spread and publicize the culture of resistance.

What are the main challenges for you as a woman in the armed struggle? Is there a different context within this gender cut?

I grew up in a political family. I never had a problem of this with my family, but the family is always afraid and worried. But this was not an underlying problem for me. Other women had difficulty joining activism because of their families. And there came a time when many parents forced women to stay at home, not to leave the house.

With the evolution and development of militancy work, this helped women to get involved in militancy, especially from 1987 onwards. This was the first Intifada and this gave women the opportunity to enter into direct confrontation with Zionism. Therefore, the face of the first intifada was that women were on the front line defending their children. Many women have been arrested and continue to be arrested. The enemy did not imagine that Palestinian women would participate in the intifada. When women participate in this work of organizational and revolutionary activism, they are defending their family. Women in this context of Palestinian struggle suffer a double oppression: from society, because society is sexist and patriarchal, and also from the Israeli occupation. There are currently many Palestinian women in Israeli prisons.

For women, there are two paths in this scenario: surrender or fight. A woman will always choose to defend her family and take on this role. She will not raise a white flag. So I did not experience oppression or challenges on this issue, but it is something that is above the diaspora, all these problems we suffer from in another way.

How do the Palestinian popular movements discuss the particular issues of the life of each group?

We have popular unions, the Palestinian women's union and this group adopts the resistance program. Workers, farmers, doctors, journalists, each sector has a union. And this gives popular support and when Israel attacks the people join the revolution to defend it. Today we are witnessing a genocide against our people. And the world is studying this genocide.

Israeli attacks have a direct impact on land use. How is the land dispute in Palestine?

Our problem is that the settlers are occupying the land with the support of the Tel

Aviv group. There is a decision of the Hague Court that says the settlements are not legal and now they say there could be genocide, but unfortunately that is not said. We saw this problem in the 1990s, because the Intifada was resisting and the Palestinian leadership signed the Oslo Accords and this affected the Palestinian revolutionary movement.

You have already been in Brazil and had contact with leftist movements in the country, how do you see the political organization of the Brazilian popular movements that struggle to transform the relationship between State, population and land?

Brazil is huge and has had many dictatorships that changed the system of government. Therefore, geography plays an important role. In Brazil, the MST has an important role in liberating land and giving it to the people. In the previous administration, Lula helped to some extent in this process in one way or another. During Lula's government, the MST played a very important role and started to have a broader social base because these lands were appropriated from the feudalists.

And the MST managed to push for a law that determines that whoever does not make productive use of the land should not have possession of it. But the Brazilian oligarchies killed MST leaders and carried out acts of violence against militants. Many of the leaders of the Movement were assassinated by imperialism through terrorist and fascist groups in Brazil. But the MST continues today. Today the MST is a giant organization because it plays an important role for the people. Because when you give the poor something to live on and give them work, you expand the social base.

We studied the experience of the MST, but this cannot be applied to Palestine. Most of the Palestinian people are outside Palestine. In some countries it is called land reform, but what you did was not limited to the struggle for land reform, but people now have a better future and homes. And all this was done by workers and peasants,

men and women. We saw this with our own eyes.

Source: [Brazil de Fato](#), translation [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)



The Biden crime family

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 12, 2024

The widespread reaction online following the assassination of the health insurance CEO in Midtown Manhattan highlights the deep-seated anger and resentment toward the capitalist system of health care for profit.

The health care insurance oligarchs, notorious for profiting by systematically denying medical coverage, may be the most hated of the gang of capitalist oligarchs ruling this country.

The internet is full of stories about how his company denied necessary medical care, sometimes killing a family member. The shooter is being celebrated as a folk hero by many.

Genocide Joe Biden probably knows that he's about as popular as a health industry CEO, which might explain, in part, why he gave an unconditional and complete pardon to his son Hunter.

You might ask, how's that?

So, like Donald Trump, Hunter Biden is a felon, convicted of three tax felony charges for failure to pay \$1.4 million in taxes, and, as a drug addict, he was convicted of felony possession of a firearm. It is illegal for someone who uses or is addicted to controlled substances to own or possess a firearm. He was also guilty of failing to pay child support to Lunden Roberts in Arkansas, the mother of a grandchild that Grandpa Joe refused to recognize.

Joe Biden says of Hunter, isn't that the kind of stuff almost every rich kid does, but they don't get treated as criminals. The only reason Hunter was targeted is because he's the son of Joe.

Could be, but then why didn't Joe just pardon Hunter for the tax and gun stuff and maybe throw in some pardons for others to make it look good, especially since Genocide Joe and his press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, said numerous times that he'd never, ever, cross-my-fingers no pardon for Hunter?

The sweeping pardon covers not only Hunter's tax and gun convictions but also any other "offenses against the United States which he has committed or may have committed or taken part in during the period from January 1, 2014 through December 1, 2024."

You may have noticed that none of the news reports asked what other offenses Hunter committed going back to 2014 require a pardon.

Ukraine 2014

The Obama administration helped overthrow Ukraine's elected president in February 2014 (the [Maidan coup](#)) and installed a far-right regime loyal to Washington. At the time, Joe Biden was the [Obama administration's point man](#) on Ukraine. He visited the country more than half a dozen times from 2014 to 2016.

Beginning in 2014, Joe Biden's son Hunter served on the board of Ukraine's largest oil and gas company, [Burisma](#). Hunter says Burisma paid him \$65,000 monthly, about \$780,000 annually. (The average total pay for [S&P 500 directors](#) was \$321,220 in 2023.)



In an ABC News interview in October 2019, Hunter was asked if he thought he would have been on the Burisma board if his name wasn't Biden. "Probably not," he said.

Burisma was under investigation by a Ukrainian prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, for corruption. NPR reported in 2018:

"At an event at the Council on Foreign Relations in 2018, Biden said that on one of his many trips to Ukraine, he told the country's leaders that they had to get rid of the prosecutor if they wanted \$1 billion in U.S. aid."

On Aug. 11, 2023, [Attorney General Merrick Garland](#) appointed U.S. Attorney David Weiss as special counsel to lead an investigation into Hunter Biden.

It turns out that Joe Biden was involved in Hunter's dealings.

In mid-December 2023, [the House of Representatives voted](#) to initiate a formal investigation into Joe's involvement in Hunter's activities. There was mounting evidence that the president participated in or benefited from Hunter's alleged criminal conduct during his father's tenure as vice president under Barack Obama and during the period before Joe Biden was elected president in 2020.

Any reports on this investigation are usually dismissed as Republican Party politics, as a majority of Republicans controlled the House. Of course, it was politics, but that doesn't mean that there was nothing there. In fact, politics meant that, in the end, they dropped the investigation without a final finding. They'd done all they wanted to do.

The evidence included a substantial collection of email and text message archives, along with 36,000 pages of bank records and 2,000 pages highlighting the Treasury Department's "suspicious activity reports," which track unusual international bank transfers. Additionally, testimonies were provided by Hunter's business partners, federal agents, federal attorneys, and Mykola Zlochevsky, the CEO of Burisma Holdings, the largest oil and gas company in Ukraine.

The [Congressional investigators](#) found records showing that the Biden family, particularly Hunter and Joe's brother James, received over \$20 million in payments from Ukraine's Burisma during Joe's time as vice president. They also discovered a web of more than [20 shell companies](#) established by the Biden family to mask payments linked to Hunter's influence-peddling activities.

FBI investigators also found evidence of a [\\$10 million payment](#) that Joe and Hunter Biden reportedly received from Burisma.

In 2024, Russia's Investigative Committee, looking into the deadly Crocus City Hall

attack on March 22, 2024, which killed 145 and injured 551 concertgoers, accused Burisma of financing terrorist activities in Russia. The accusations also alleged that senior U.S. and NATO officials were involved.

Clearly, this is a crime family. Genocide Joe, who repeatedly denied any involvement in his son's affairs, was always involved. He lied. It turns out that the pardon he gave his son may be a pardon for himself.

And there's more to come. [Politico](#) says the White House is considering giving preemptive pardons to officials who haven't even been accused or convicted of wrongdoing yet. What have they been doing the past four years that requires such extraordinary measures of clemency?



Vistas de transición de la corrupción

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 12, 2024



Las pasadas elecciones para la gobernación en Puerto Rico fueron una colección de anuncios y propagandas asquerosamente mentirosas para que el partido en el gobierno, el Partido Nuevo Progresista, corrupto y criminal, pudiera seguir robándole al pueblo cuatro años más.

Y estas semanas, toca una segunda fase de propaganda.

Esta vez, a través de las susodichas “Vistas de transición” que se transmiten por la mayoría de los medios locales. Supuestamente, estas vistas facilitan el paso de una administración a otra, exponiendo los logros y las fallas del gobierno para que la nueva administración tome nota y pueda corregir los defectos. Perfecto, diríamos. Porque si cada cuatro años se dan estas vistas, tendríamos un gobierno eficaz que administre para el bien común del pueblo.

Pero todo lo contrario. Cada vez más, con cada nueva administración, se profundizan

los robos, y el maltrato del pueblo. Los llamados Comités de Transición, van exponiendo como baile macabro sobre escenarios nauseabundos, los grandes despojos que poco a poco van haciendo a la ciudadanía, a través de los portavoces de los diferentes departamentos gubernamentales de Salud, Vivienda, Economía, Seguridad y Educación, entre otros.

Pero también nos dan la oportunidad de saber los detalles que por años ocultaban.

Un ejemplo puntual, es en el tema de Educación. Una base tan fundamental para el desarrollo de un país, lo que estos pasados gobiernos, a pedido del imperialismo estadounidense, ha hecho, ha sido destruir el futuro de nuestra juventud, y por ende, de nuestro pueblo. Ha cerrado la mitad de las escuelas públicas, ha utilizado su presupuesto, que es el mayor de todas las agencias gubernamentales, para crear puestos que premien a personas incompetentes pero leales a su partido. Con ese botarate de dinero, han dejado al estudiantado y sus maestros y maestras, sin recursos y materiales educativos. Muchas veces, es el magisterio y los padres y madres quienes compran útiles de limpieza y pintura para mantener limpias sus escuelas.

Pero estas vistas de Transición servirán para armarnos de más razones con las que combatiremos esta nueva administración y al final poner fin al colonialismo que nos ahoga.

Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les habló Berta Joubert-Ceci.



U.S. War Drive Against China book launch

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 12, 2024



Nov. 23, Los Angeles — The Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice launched the

book "[The U.S. War Drive against China.](#)"

The book features articles from Struggle-La Lucha. The writers and a labor leader from Nigeria attended the meeting.

Writing contributors Sharon Black, Scott Scheffer, Apryle Everly, and John Parker discussed the implications of the U.S. war drive against China for the lives of working people around the world.

Scott Scheffer talked about the numerous contributions of China in fighting climate change.

Sharon Black exposed how the austerity and wars of the U.S. directly target the livelihoods of working people in the U.S. and abroad.

Writer and youth organizer Apryle Everly from Baltimore touched on the opportunities China provided in addition to the study abroad programs.

Featured guest Owei Lakemfa, a labor union national leader and coordinator of the International Decolonization conference in Nigeria spoke about the implications of the IMF and World Bank directly affecting the youth who were targeted for simply protesting against the IMF's austerity measures in Nigeria.

John Parker welcomed the well-attended meeting participants to the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice. Parker focused on the opportunities provided by China's Belt and Road projects, especially in Africa, which went contrary to the IMF and World Bank's negative effects on developing infrastructure on the continent.

Black, Everly, Scheffer, and Parker are all members of the Socialist Unity Party and contributors to the Struggle-La Lucha magazine.



Trans rights activists hold sit-in at Capitol to protest Johnson's bathroom ban

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 12, 2024

“Everyone deserves to use the restroom without fear of discrimination or violence,” an organizer of the protest said.

Dozens of transgender activists and their allies demonstrated at the U.S. Capitol on Thursday, staging a sit-in inside a public restroom in defiance of a new policy enacted by Republican Speaker of the House Mike Johnson.

[Johnson implemented the policy two weeks ago](#), preempting plans from Rep. Nancy Mace (R-South Carolina) to force a bill to the House floor to formally ban

transgender people from using restrooms that correspond with their gender inside the Capitol building. Mace's planned bill [was a direct attack on incoming Rep. Sarah McBride \(D-Delaware\)](#), who is set to be the first openly trans lawmaker to serve in Congress.

McBride opposed the measure and the moves by Johnson, but chose not to focus on the issue, stating that she viewed the transphobic actions as a distraction.

"I'm not here to fight about bathrooms," [she said in a statement](#).

McBride also derided Mace's attacks against her, [saying at the time that it was proof](#) that Republicans "have no real solutions to what Americans are facing."

"We should be focused on bringing down the cost of housing, health care, and child care, not manufacturing culture wars," she said.

The act of civil disobedience on Thursday was organized by the Gender Liberation Movement (GLM) and took place in a restroom near Johnson's office. Protesters, including transgender advocate Chelsea Manning, directed their action not only at Republicans, but [also Democrats](#), condemning the party for not doing enough to defend McBride's rights.

"Speaker Johnson, Nancy Mace, our genders are no debate!" one chant from the demonstrators stated.

"Democrats, grow a spine, trans lives are on the line!" another chant asserted.

[embedpress]https://x.com/AnnaLissRoy/status/1864748640436162561[/embedpress]

Mace responded to the action by posting a video of herself on social media in which she [used a slur against transgender people](#) to describe the protesters.

Multiple studies show that Mace, who claims that cisgender women's safety is at risk if transgender women are allowed to use the same restrooms, is wrong in her bigoted assessments — indeed, [a study from UCLA found that there is no evidence](#) of any adverse effects of trans-inclusive policies in public restrooms.

Around 15 individuals [were arrested for the protest](#). They were arrested not because they violated the restroom policy, but because of a Washington, D.C. ordinance against "crowding, obstructing or incommodeing," according to reporting from Axios.

GLM co-founder Raquel Willis [issued a statement regarding the demonstration](#), noting that transphobic fearmongering and attacks on trans people at the Capitol came following "nearly \$200 million of attack ads [that] were disseminated across the United States" during the 2024 campaign.

"Everyone deserves to use the restroom without fear of discrimination or violence. Trans folks are no different," [Willis said](#). "We deserve dignity and respect and we will fight until we get it."

Source: [Truthout](#)



From Jena 6 to Wisconsin State Capitol occupation: struggle transforms people

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 12, 2024

This December marks 18 years since the start of the case of the Jena 6 — Robert Bailey, Mychal Bell, Carwin Jones, Bryant Purvis, Jesse Ray Beard, and Theo Shaw.

These six Black teenagers from the town of Jena, Louisiana, were initially charged with attempted second-degree murder of a white classmate after a series of white supremacist events at their high school. Following mass resistance, their charges were reduced to still-serious aggravated battery and conspiracy to commit aggravated battery. The movement ultimately got all charges against the six dropped to misdemeanor battery. All were free by 2009.

Because of the racism on display in the operations of the legal system, this case sparked one of the biggest civil rights protest movements in the U.S. since the

1960s. Activists marched in cities across the country, including 60,000 in Jena itself. Below is part two of a recent interview on the legacy of Jena with Larry Hales, a Black social worker who participated in the Jena 6 solidarity movement in Denver and other cities. We have also [republished three pieces Hales wrote](#) on the Jena 6 in 2007-08. You can read part [one here](#).

Do it like Wisconsin

Gregory E. Williams: From my perspective as a white organizer, we try to support movements of racially oppressed people, or *nationally oppressed* people, to use the Marxist term. In my experience, it can often seem easier for us to just go and participate in the marches, which we need to do. (Getting in the streets is the only way we're going to survive the fascist steamroller that's coming - or is actually already here.) But marching, etc., can sometimes seem less daunting than just trying to have a conversation with a strange white person and talk to them about racism, or even class. And I'm from rural Louisiana. Or even talking to co-workers and family.

One time, I was handing out flyers at a bus stop in New Orleans with a longtime Black organizer in the city - a Black communist. And he said, "are you afraid to talk to white people? Scared they're going to be racist and say some backwards shit?" And I was like, "you know, I guess I *am*." And he's like, "I'm not *afraid* to talk to them. Like, what do you think is going to happen?" Now, I'm not talking about trying to infiltrate the Klan! By all means, be safe. Every situation is different, but we were in a group passing out flyers at a bus stop.

I raise this just because, as white activists, we often don't actually do that work of trying to reach other white workers who are prey to MAGA and all this kind of crap. Racism runs deep, and people are subjected to racist lies continually, inundated 24/7 with corporate news and often total disinformation on social media. That's all most people ever hear.

But at the same time, people are transformed by *struggle*, and it can happen fast. Did you notice any changes, say, in white people – white working-class people, especially – being won over in the course of struggles like the Jena 6 movement?

Larry Hales: One of the biggest moments I've seen in relatively recent history was the seizure of the state capitol in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2011. Wisconsin has a very interesting history, but there were a lot of reactionary bills coming down.

We can follow the trend back to the '90s, for example, with the Bradley Foundation. [editor's note: a right-wing Milwaukee-based non-profit that undermines public schools by supporting "school choice," just like the ultra-rich Walmart heirs]. I mean, in those days, the amount of money that the Bradley Foundation was putting into political campaigns pales in comparison to what happens now. But at that time, they had W-2, or Wisconsin Works, which was sort of a testing for what became the Personal Responsibility for a Work Opportunity Act. [editor's note: the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 was also called "welfare reform"] The Bradley Foundation put a lot of money into the Clinton campaign, even though that act was actually written by Newt Gingrich and his movement.

Newt Gingrich wrote that bill with some of his cronies. But it was very much trumpeted and supported by Bill Clinton. The Clinton administration represented – even though it had been happening over history – but they represented that big shift politically for the Democratic Party on a national level. And so not only that but the whole privatization movement of public schooling. There were a lot of pilot programs in Wisconsin, and the whole myth of the welfare queen and the utilization of that. There were a lot of bad things happening in the corridor to Wisconsin, the Racine, Milwaukee area, which is where the Black population is concentrated. And that represents the beginning of the attack on not just the social safety net, but public monies and public benefits.

And when Act 10 was happening after Governor Scott Walker's election, it was like the white people outside of the corridor area (and even in that area) who had supported these policies realized ... I don't know if anyone ever said it, but I feel like this became something that was focused on one population, even though the majority of people who benefit from welfare are not Black, they're white - white women in particular. But there's that idea that these people on welfare are generally Black. They think, "this is something that Black people are taking advantage of, they're taking your public money, they're taking your tax money, yada, yada, yada."

[Editor's note: the 2011 Wisconsin Act 10 is a bill designed to systematically strip public-sector workers of their rights while cutting pay and benefits. This is the bill that sparked the movement in Wisconsin.]

But when they rose up, I think that those differences, those beliefs began to sort of melt away. Based on what I understand, the conversations that happened - people began to see this as a *public* attack. It may have started with one population of people, but it was part of this trend. And I think that what it sparked in people, like it woke up our collective imagination of what was possible, even though they ultimately lost. But not only just what's possible but what's *necessary*. Like, they seized public property and they held it for three weeks or more. And like the whole world just - people from Egypt were paying for pizza orders for the people inside the state capitol.

Lallan Schoenstein: It was magnificent.

LH: Yes, and I think that is one of those moments where people began to see the common cause of the struggle. And there have been others, but the most dynamic one I've seen is that seizure of the state capitol. And I believe that inspiration has to be taken from that. Because - even if we don't say it outright, when we see these moments, these things like the uprising of the Jena 6 - it gives inspiration for what could transpire later. And there have been some great moments. It's almost as if we

only think about the losses that we've had. We've had a lot of tremendous losses. There's a lot to be sad about, but there's a lot to be energized about that happened in a very short period of time, too. And I think it was between the uprising in Jena to the takeover of the Madison State Capitol. [editor's note: Activists occupied the Madison State Capitol between February and June 2011].

GEW: So it was a little before Occupy [which started around September 2011].

LH: Yeah, it was during a time of the budgeting crises in all the major cities, right? It was the end of the Great Recession, but when things were still kind of picking up, and then I think there were all the budgeting crises. But yeah, that was one of the big moments for me that showed that white people - the white working class - were waking up in their potential to understand the history of the events that unfolded.

GEW: I'm really glad you brought that up because I left Wisconsin out of my little summation. But that was really a pivotal moment. And maybe you could even say the Tea Party - starting with the Tea Party and then Trumpism - that's kind of like the shadow side of that. It's like, what happens when consciousness is thwarted. It's like people going back to *sleep* - especially white people going back to sleep. And it's not just MAGA. The Democrats have played a role in drawing people away from the struggle.

LS: It's also the AFL leadership of the labor movement and their role. The leadership's very racist. I'm talking about the top echelons who are playing golf with the Supreme Court. The labor movement really has to come from the rank and file. The [Million Worker March](#) on Washington in 2004 is an example of the Black labor movement rising up from the rank and file. We have to mobilize in our own name and try to build something outside of the leadership's collaboration with the Democratic Party.

I mean, I worked for Unite Here!, and I saw firsthand how the State Department

plays a role directly in the top leadership of the unions and keeps things under control.

It's sort of like the way we used to analyze the Soviet Union.

GE: Right. We support the unions just like our tendency always supported the Soviet Union because the Soviet Union remained a workers' state. It was a vehicle for workers' power just like the unions are, even if the leadership distorts that vehicle of people's power. Like I said, we support the unions, but it's the political consciousness, the organization of the rank and file that's the decisive factor. Having good, fighting leadership is a big advantage, though.

LS: Yes. And the leadership of the labor movement is standing on the backs of the workers. They wouldn't exist if it wasn't for the workers. But on the other hand, if they can keep the workers passive, they can just do all their collaboration shit.

What happened in Wisconsin had so much potential. It had enormous potential. I mean, I think that the broader progressive movement actually could have gotten more behind it. The left should have been more engaged. And I think that that potential, and what Gregory was talking about during the pandemic – all those strikes, there were thousands of strikes. Every little borough in the country had strikes for protective gear for dangerous working conditions. I mean, people were using the opportunity. It was giving them something to hold onto to fight back. I think that the labor movement has potential. Wisconsin really showed that. And movement coming from the rank and file, and that rank and file supporting the struggle for Black liberation; and support for all oppressed peoples, for gay and lesbian and trans liberation, for just the unity, fighting for unity, you know, and against this onslaught from the ruling class.

LH: I was reading [Message to the Workers of Louisiana](#) by Sam Marcy. And I remember David Duke's campaign. [editor's note: KKK leader David Duke ran for

governor in Louisiana in 1991 and lost to Edwin Edwards.] I was 15, somewhere around there. But I remember that campaign. I obviously didn't know about Sam Marcy. I knew about communism. It was sort of like the monster underneath your bed that they talked about in school. It was like a bad thing, but I didn't know that there was a communist *movement* in the United States. I mean, leadership. I do remember the Erie Daily News running an interview with communist organizers in the '90s. And I do remember being like, "Huh, where are these people? They seem interesting to me."

But I've always felt that there is a way to reach people. I've always been willing to accept some backwardness because I generally think that the working class has backwardness. And what it *is* just kind of depends, but it's there, and it can't help but be there. I'm not surprised. Even in revolutionaries, there's some backwardness. We have to combat it. But I think that even with some people who vote for Trump, I think he won - not a large percentage - but he did win over percentages of Black and Latino voters, for different reasons, completely. Some of it having to do with how race is viewed in this period in history, just complicated stuff - nationality, things like that.

But it goes back to that question of neoliberalism and the missteps and mistakes that the liberal party has made with people. We have been told for so long that they represent our interests, yet we haven't seen them deliver anything, so some people say, "This is what I'm doing with *my* vote." And I can deal with that. I can talk to someone like that. I enjoy talking to someone like that because often, people's commitment to some of these backward things is not strong. Sometimes it is. And even if it's strong, I've always found that when I talk to people, it's not like I'm hitting them over the head with stuff. It's sort of like, "Okay, that's an interesting take, but what about *this*?"

And, you know, some people react to the elitism of the liberal party and then totally

miss the irony of the richest person in history, Elon Musk, being on stage with Trump and part of a movement, and Trump's supposed to be non-elitist. But this sort of contradiction is typical of fascist demagoguery.

But there's a way to talk to all people. And I think that we have to be willing to engage and talk to people. We have to be able to go to these places, people, and converse with them, and converse with them in a way that they feel respected. I might not respect everything that you believe, but I respect you, and I'm willing to listen to how you got there.

And we can talk about that. Because often people got there because of the ravages of capitalism. They just don't see the left as an option. They don't know that it exists. And they feel that the liberal party personifies that elitism, that disdain for working-class people. And so we just have to be willing to deal with that. And I think that opportunities open up when there is something like Madison, Wisconsin. But we have to be able to do it even when something like Madison, Wisconsin, does not exist. And it can be hard. It can be sad. But it's something that must be done.

GEW: You can hear the elitism when liberals talk about Trump, and they call him a populist, and they use the word populist like it's a dirty word. And part of this book that I'm putting together - and what this interview is partly for - is about this history of populism and dispelling the myth that there is a right-wing populism. No, that's fascism. Historically, populism was a progressive left-wing movement with its own contradictions and everything.

But they use it as this dirty word, basically meaning the masses - the unwashed, the uneducated masses. That's how it comes across from liberals. And it seeps into the left movement as well. And we can all fall into that trap of talking that way when we're in this really polarized political environment (really fake polarized because the two options are the Republicans and the Democrats). But like you said, most people in this country have never encountered the left at all. Just like you, I never met a

communist when I was growing up, so we have to boldly put communist politics out there, and I believe we can do it without alienating people.

We can talk to anybody on their level. And that *doesn't* mean trailing behind the reactionary ideas and going along with it at all. We combat that. It's like an inoculation. The people need to be inoculated against right-wing lies. When we go out and talk to people, we know that they're hearing lies about immigrants, and "welfare queens," and trans women, and that kind of thing. We know that they're hearing that and even people in oppressed communities are gonna repeat backwards crap that's being shoved down their throats 24 hours a day. And we have to be prepared for that and be able to bring people over to the revolutionary struggle. That's a tough thing, but it's gotta be done.

LS: It just makes me think of, like, talking to white workers who in their personal lives could be completely diverse, and even their families could be completely diverse. And they love their families, and they love their co-workers. They love their friends who could be Black or Latin American or whatever. And then they'll stand there and say something that they get from the media that is just confoundingly racist. They'll parrot something. It's so frustrating. You want to say, "Get in touch with reality, please. You're talking about the people you love, you know." I'm sure you all have that experience. It's unbelievable. It's like this disconnect from their personal lives to what they think they're supposed to think. What they're taught by the media - the constant, constant racism in the media just droning every day.

LH: People have a tendency - I was telling one of my coworkers, I said, "You know, when you're driving in traffic, and that person in front of you is driving slow, it feels like they're doing that *to* you."

GEW: But they don't even know you're back there.

LH: They're just going about their lives. And people think, like, immigrants are

doing something *to* them. They're coming here, they're taking something from *me*. And it's like, "Okay, what are you really upset about, though? Are you really upset about people who are basically trying to live?" Like this person who's driving slow, they're on a road trying to get somewhere just like you. Immigrant workers are trying to get somewhere to do the exact same things that you do, that you're trying to do.

I mean, it can be a lot to wrap your mind around. It can be a lot, like the town, Springfield, Ohio. And yes, no matter where you are in the world, when there's a large influx of people to that country, it can be a lot for people to understand and grapple with, and they get anxious, and they're like, "What's going on? And how is this going to impact me?"

Understandable. I can deal with people having those sorts of anxieties, right? And I think that that's where it starts. I can see, okay, it's a lot. But what are you upset with? What's really happening here?

The ways in which people get to the Metropole [imperialist countries like the U.S.], they risk their lives because they don't feel that there's any other choice. It's what President Aristide said: Haitian people are given two options, a quick death or a slow death of starvation. And that slow death of starvation is agonizing because it's not only starving yourself. You're watching your family starve to death. People are willing to risk their lives and risk having a quick death, because maybe I die, but maybe I don't, and then I'm able to save myself and my family from that slow, agonizing death.

So what are we really upset about here? If there is a lack of housing, it's not because immigrants are here; it's because of this system. That's why there's no housing. Immigrants didn't create this system. They're responding to it just like you are. So what are we really upset about here? To my co-worker, I was like, we're not really

upset at that person driving in front of us who isn't moving as fast as we want them to move. We're upset because we have so little time to do things because we work until we drop dead. That's what we're upset about.

To be continued.



Uruguay - Conversatorio con Carlos Alejandro

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 12, 2024

URUGUAY



Conversatorio con Carlos Alejandro

*De la Comisión de Asuntos y
Relaciones Internacionales del Frente
Amplio de Uruguay (CARIFA)*



Tema:

Experiencias del Frente Amplio, las vicisitudes y desafíos a lo largo de los 15 años de gobiernos del Frente Amplio. Interrumpido por el derechista Lacalle y la vuelta al poder del Frente en las recientes elecciones.

Fecha: Miércoles, 11 de diciembre 2024

Hora: 7pm Puerto Rico, 8pm Uruguay

Facebook Live: Puerto Rico Tribunal

<https://www.facebook.com/puertoricotribunal/>

Auspicia: Comité del Tribunal Internacional Sobre Crímenes de EUA en Puerto Rico





EMERGENCY ACTION: South Korea's Yoon must resign

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 12, 2024

한국의 대통령 윤석열은 즉각 사임하라! 그만두라! 그만두면 좋다!

EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION



YOON MUST RESIGN



NEW YORK CITY

DEC 4
WED, 5 PM EST

ROK CONSULATE
460 PARK AVE
NEW YORK, NY 10022

RALLIES IN NEW YORK CITY, SAN FRANCISCO, AND LOS ANGELES:

Join us this Wednesday as we mobilize against the martial law declared by South Korean president Yoon Seok Yeol and to join our South Korean comrades' demand for his resignation!

Earlier today, President Yoon Seok Yeol of South Korea declared martial law for the 13th time in the country's history. **While our brave people in South Korea have gained the upper hand, this fight is not yet over.**

South Korea's largest progressive union has called a general strike until President Yoon resigns. Tomorrow, Wednesday December 4, we will mobilize across the US to demand Yoon's resignation and the complete transformation of South Korean society! **Join us as we mobilize to uplift the demands of South Korean workers and help isolate Yoon internationally.**

What: Rally at the ROK Consulate

When: Wednesday, Dec 4, 5:00 PM EST

Where: [460 Park Ave, New York](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2024/page/3/)

Yoon's regime has cracked down on the South Korean people, who have faced a mounting economic crisis and political repression under his administration. Yoon has targeted leaders of trade unions, women's organizations, and organizations struggling for peace, sovereignty, and reunification in Korea.

As a result, throughout November on multiple occasions, over 100,000 people showed up on the streets of Seoul to protest Yoon. Over 1 million have signed a civilian referendum demanding Yoon's resignation. Before his coup attempt, Yoon had already faced 22 impeachment attempts in the national legislature.

Until Yoon resigns, we can't say the threat of martial law is entirely over. As long as Yoon is in power, there's a possibility the US will support him in committing more atrocities against our people.

See you in the streets,

Nodutdol



'You never know when an eruption will occur': A veteran activist on Jena 6 and beyond

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 12, 2024

This December marks 18 years since the start of the case of the Jena 6 — Robert Bailey, Mychal Bell, Carwin Jones, Bryant Purvis, Jesse Ray Beard, and Theo Shaw.

These six Black teenagers from the town of Jena, Louisiana, were initially charged

with attempted second-degree murder of a white classmate after a series of white supremacist events at their high school. Following mass resistance, their charges were reduced to still-serious aggravated battery and conspiracy to commit aggravated battery. The movement ultimately got all charges against the six dropped to misdemeanor battery. All were free by 2009.

Because of the racism on display in the operations of the legal system, this case sparked one of the biggest civil rights protest movements in the U.S. since the 1960s. Activists marched in cities across the country, including 60,000 in Jena itself. Below is part one of a recent interview on the legacy of Jena with Larry Hales, a Black social worker who participated in the Jena 6 solidarity movement in Denver and other cities. We have also [republished three pieces Hales wrote](#) on the Jena 6 in 2007-08.

Gregory E. Williams: Can you tell us about your political development?

Larry Hales: I'm a social worker working in homelessness prevention and eviction defense.

I'm from the former industrial sector of the country, smack dab in the middle - Erie, Pennsylvania, Lake Erie. As teenagers, my parents moved from the deep South, Mississippi, to get jobs in factories. When my father first worked as a janitor, he and then my mother got jobs in a factory. I'm not sure if either graduated traditional high school. My mother later got her GED. I was born in the '70s, both my brothers and I, so we grew up in the '80s. Our coming of age was after the smashing of the Black liberation movement and all liberation movements in the dark era of the Reagan administration.

I guess it's hard to put a specific timestamp on deindustrialization because of the tendency to so-called revolutionize the means of production to speed up workers that are left and cast off the others. But in terms of when it hit, I think if you look for

a time period when it was on its ascent, the late '70s and '80s is where it really just started picking up. And that, of course, was a period when Reagan smashed the Air Traffic Controllers union.

So that had a big impact on me growing up with parents working in the manufacturing sector. I didn't grow up with my mother. She left when I was young. Tried to come back a few times, but I didn't get to really know her until I was 15 - *really* get to know her.

They were from the Deep South, and I spent many parts of my summers there. But I grew up with family members working in factories in Erie, Pennsylvania. And my father was a UE member who supported Jesse Jackson in '84 and '88. Jesse Jackson actually spoke to the union in Erie. I can't remember if it was '84 and '88, but I remember my father speaking glowingly about that. That had a big impact on me.

And there were these twin calamities that hit in the '80s. When I was a kid, parents weren't pushing their kids to go into the factory. They were pushing their kids to take the civil service exam and become postal workers. That was the big thing. Everyone was telling their kids - Black parents, I don't know what white parents were telling their kids. I think this was because they foresaw that there weren't going to be manufacturing jobs.

At that time, people were being cast off and laid off and factories were being shuttered. This is also right around the time when the U.S. government had made use of the fact (or they allowed, depending on how you believe it happened) that certain communities were being flooded with illegal chemical substances, right? At that time, crack cocaine had hit big. And so you had people in my field who were social workers, who were breaking up families, taking families away. And there was all this pseudoscience about crack cocaine and the people who are addicted to it, and "crack babies," for lack of a better term.

A little bit later, you had the Clinton administration. You had all these bills being passed: the personal responsibility and work authorization bill [editor's note: the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 was also called "welfare reform"]; you had the omnibus crime bill; you had both anti-terrorism bills under Clinton. These things were all happening, and it just had this effect on the Black community with a huge uptick in people being imprisoned. It was a very tough time.

But the one shining light for me was the [L.A. Rebellion](#). That had a profound impact on me. And I had tried to get a rebellion started myself. My brother worked at Chi Chi's. And so I went in, they're like, "You do something." So I said, "We're all gonna rush in there, like you go first." I went in the back door, stole some steaks and some other stuff, and ran out. And I thought everybody was going to start rushing, and it was going to start this big thing, but nothing happened, unfortunately.

But the impact the L.A. Rebellion had on me and seeing the people who could fight like that - that impact set a pretty firm political foundation for me. And it wasn't a straight line. I got in a lot of trouble. Things happened. I grew up. I was a Black Muslim for a while; I was a Black nationalist.

I would say that the thing that really got me formally into politics was going to Palestine in 2002. (And I was in the military before that, from 1997-1998 but was kicked out. Really a medical discharge, a complicated thing. It's a contradiction, right?) And so, after Palestine, I didn't turn back from that point. It started the leftward trajectory. Being able to see the Palestinian struggle and be involved in it to some degree is a point at which there was no going back. Because I saw people that had very little means with which to fight but were willing to use their very bodies; they were fighting because they really had no choice. It was either fight or allow yourself to be disappeared.

And, you know, *that*, to me: I feel like if Palestinian people could fight with *very*

little, and still be hopeful, and still be able to smile, still be able to enjoy one another's company - all these things that are actually part of resistance because I think the oppressor always tries to stamp that out. But that act in and of itself, being able to love and be loved and to share these quiet moments - personal, intimate moments with people - is an act of resistance. And that, along with the act of physical fighting, to me, is why I believe that it is my duty to continue to fight as much as I can until I'm no longer around anymore.

GEW: When you look at the L.A. Rebellion - in the longer timeframe - it's sort of an island of struggle erupting in a bleak period after the '60s and '70s. And like you said, the country went through Reaganism and deindustrialization. But moments like the L.A. Rebellion really spark something. And I think we're seeing those moments happening in quicker succession in the past 10 to 20 years.

And that's what I'm getting at in my second question:

In [your writings](#) from the period of the Jena 6 campaign, you put those events in historical perspectives up to that point, addressing the terrible history of lynching, and explaining what these events in Jena really meant. This was when some in the media, and leaders in the town, would try to brush it under the rug. "Oh, hanging nooses in trees is just a youthful prank."

This December, we're coming up on the 18th anniversary of the events that started the case of the Jena 6, which was in 2006. This was a couple of years after Katrina, a big thing for us here in Louisiana. It was several years before Occupy, and it was before the Black Lives Matter movement that began several years later. It prefigured Charlottesville with the white supremacist march in the town and the mass fight back against that.

At the same time, there was a movement to take down symbols of white supremacy all over the country and outside of the U.S., including in the Caribbean, for example.

Here in New Orleans, we had the Take 'Em Down movement to remove symbols of white supremacy. That was most active around 2015 to 2020. White supremacists from around the country gathered here to defend Confederate monuments. This is at the height of Trump's first presidency. But they were outnumbered by thousands opposing white supremacy. It got so intense that at one of the biggest marches, law enforcement had snipers posted up on top of buildings surrounding the crowd. Ultimately, many of the monuments were taken down.

Then in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, workers carried out work stoppages across the country, resisting the bosses who were endangering their lives. Millions were dying from the pandemic globally, including well over a million people in the U.S. Nurses went on strike. Sanitation workers went on strike, including here in New Orleans, where there was a strike of majority Black, non-unionized sanitation workers. Nationally, retail workers went on strike, etc.

Simultaneously, the movement around the police murder of George Floyd grew to gigantic proportions. That was probably the biggest mass uprising of the period. Millions were in the street. And our editorial view in Struggle-La Lucha is that it was really this mobilization of the people that kept Trump in check, not the Democrats. It wasn't all the legalistic stuff, but the people in the streets, the solidarity.

And now we have the Palestinian struggle, which has been a mass movement. And that's one of the biggest flashpoints since the 2020 George Floyd summer. That's just a summation of points in the struggle leading us to where we are now. Feel free to bring up anything that I missed or that you want to talk about. There's a lot we could get into with the labor movement: the 2018-19 Red for Ed teachers' strikes, the campaigns to unionize Amazon and Starbucks, the historic auto strikes of 2023.

But just thinking about this span of time and the people's struggles, what do you see as the significance of the Jena 6? How does that fit into this narrative of recent history?

LH: I would say that the Jena 6 marked a resurgence of the Black struggle in a lot of ways. Not that it had ever gone away, but I think that it was a start of this new struggle against the repressive state.

My generation, what they call Generation X, at the time when it was young, was probably called the most progressive generation yet. But if you look at people who made up that generation now — obviously there's been two or three generations since then — but the people who I grew up with who were thought to be progressive aren't so much now, necessarily. I think people are like that, you know, because they're dialectical. People are shaped; their ideas are shaped and molded and changing, sometimes contradictory and go back and forth. But I think that if it wasn't for the Jena 6, I can imagine that if it wasn't for that uprising, that struggle, Barack Obama wouldn't have been elected in 2008. I think that he was elected on the back of that uprising. Some people may disagree.

I think that the ruling class at a certain point realized what they needed in terms of the masses of people being excited about that. It came at the right point in history, I guess. And I think in terms of what it meant as far as white supremacy and the growth of white supremacy, I feel like if we go back to 2008, Black people were excited. There were a lot of people who were excited. I think it was one of the elections in this country that had the most participation of people who were of age to be able to participate in the election, if not *the* most.

But it had a very brief honeymoon, right? It lasted right up until Henry Louis Gates was arrested. And Henry Louis Gates is not progressive by any means in the Black context. He can be counter-reactionary. He's one of those middle-of-the-road academics. But that experience and Barack Obama's response to that, it seems in a lot of ways, led to a lot of liberal white people to basically turn their backs on him (especially middle-class moderate to liberal white people).

And I think that they initially supported him because politically he was actually a

moderate anyway. He was more of a Reagan Democrat, as they say. But he also symbolized the hopes and dreams of Black people who never dreamed that they would live to see a Black person hold that position. But right around that time is where we saw the growth of the Tea Party movement and the development of this new, more vocal, white supremacist, fascistic base that has grown louder and also younger. That has grown in numbers since then, especially under Trump.

And it's something that is a reaction to the growth of neoliberalism and this global competition that opened up, especially with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and more workers able to be exploited by capital, being offshored and shipped out. And so in that destruction and ruin of working-class jobs - good paying jobs with unions and benefits - you got this trend towards reaction, not just in the U.S., but in the whole Western metropole world, the European countries. So you had this growing, which has gotten even bigger, and you have this new reaction to the repressive state growing from the Jena 6. And with George Floyd 14 years later - and not just George Floyd, but with Michael Brown, and all the other instances of police brutality that sparked these mass movements - that may have happened, but I think the Jena 6 and the uprising that happened with the Jena 6 laid the groundwork for this type of response.

I feel that it's not just that there are Black people, and oppressed people, and white folks as well, who are progressive to revolutionary. It's like these two poles have erupted in U.S. society, one reactionary and the other progressive. And I think that going forward, especially with people who are participating in the Palestinian movement, we have to begin to not just engage (revolutionaries have already been engaging), but we have to find a way to communicate the growth of these phenomena to one another and build some type of cohesive movement amongst the so-called revolutionary left, but also be able to engage with these movements. Because it seems as if a lot of times there's this eruption and it doesn't completely go away. And then people get tired because they don't see victories. But we have to

use opportunities, things growing and developing to learn from the people involved, but also develop the political consciousness of the people involved. Somewhere in there, I think, is my answer to your question.

GEW: I think it's in there for sure. Thank you. You've given a very good global answer, like putting it in a global perspective. In terms of capital, even - what's happening with the capitalist system.

So, how did you become involved in Jena 6 solidarity? And what movement activities did you engage in?

LH: I found it like a lot of other people. I think it was Michael Baisden's radio show that really broke the news. Then Jasiri X made a hip-hop song about it and a video, if I'm remembering the order of things correctly. That helped spread it. That's where a lot of people found out. And so we had a number of solidarity actions in New York. I wasn't able to go to Louisiana, and I can't remember exactly why that happened, but I was still living in Denver at that time. I didn't move to New York until a little bit later, but we had actions in Denver, of course.

Denver has an interesting history with the Black community and other oppressed communities as well. So I participated in a lot of actions, and I wrote a lot about it and I talked a lot about it and what it meant - the significance of it to the history of the Black struggle, but also the struggle against the repressive state. And I think that some of the victories that we have had in terms of mass incarceration owe to that period in history, that start.

In terms of what it *meant* to me, well, sometimes even when you're involved in a political struggle, you get sort of demoralized and upset. And then these things like the Jena 6 movement happen - seemingly from out of nowhere - and it makes you believe in the possibilities of people. And you never really know when an eruption is going to occur, but you should always, to some extent, be ready for it to occur. And

that was one of those things that was a big shot in the arm, I think, not just to me, but to a lot of people, to say that, yes, we can, in a moment's notice, rise up. And we are very much still aware, just as the rest of society is, of social relations as Black people in this society.

Lallan Schoenstein: Larry, when you were in Denver, I remember you were very involved in the struggle against police brutality, and you were coming under a lot of personal threats. And while you were living in Denver, we were really scared for you.

LH: Yeah, I had my home raided, I think the same year my mother died. It was Nov. 30, 2007. I remember because I was watching the Lakers in Milwaukee. And there was a gentleman by the name of Joe Teague who had been shot by the police, by a parole officer, because parole officers in Denver, like a lot of major cities, carry guns and they have badges. And he had been shot three times, and he had violated and was sent back to prison. And I was his lifeline on the outside. I was in contact with his mother, and then he paroled out and rolled to my house.

And then one night, it must have been almost 11:00 p.m., 10-12 police officers and parole officers showed up at the door doing the cop knock, which is not a knock, but like just pounding like they're breaking the door down. That ultimately led to me being arrested and jailed.

And there was also a girl, Cassidy, who had her collarbone fractured by a cop who was moonlighting in a parking lot with King Soopers [supermarket], which was part of a mini-mall. We had organized a campaign, and we had boycotted that King Soopers because two security guards who worked there helped that cop. And we basically said, "If they don't respect our community, then we shouldn't shop there." And it was successful. It was so successful that they had a couple of so-called leaders hold press conferences announcing that the boycott was over. These were people who weren't part of it. They took advantage of a woman who was, unfortunately,

very mentally ill, and they had her coming around to the rallies saying that I worked for the police. They tried to snitch-jacket me. So they used a number of tactics to try and quiet that movement.

But it was a very tense time. It was definitely a tense time, especially when they raided the apartment. They threw me around the apartment and ripped out my hair, punched me in the stomach and threatened me. And at one point they drove me around the back, behind the apartment building, and I just thought ... You didn't know what was gonna happen. I didn't know what was gonna happen. I was like, "This is it." And he's arguing with me, and I'm arguing with him, and I'm like, "Listen, you're gonna do what you're gonna do anyway." So he's like, "Be quiet." I was like, "No, you're gonna do what you're gonna do, but you're not gonna have my dignity. You ain't gonna get me to shut up." My mouth could have got me in a lot of trouble, but I was gonna be in trouble anyway, so I might as well use the one weapon I had, which was to tell them how I felt.

GEW: They used so many tactics of repression against people in the struggle, especially Black people, and we saw that recurring throughout the Black Lives Matter movement in different cities.

LH: A common theme for sure. Yeah, absolutely.

To be continued



An open letter to President Joe Biden: Free Leonard Peltier

written by Struggle - La Lucha

December 12, 2024

Mr. President, If you can pardon your son, why can't you free the Indigenous political prisoner Leonard Peltier?

The 80-year-old man, a leader of the American Indian Movement, has been imprisoned for 48 years. He suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, and a heart condition.

The FBI framed Leonard Peltier in retaliation for the historic 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee. Three years of violence followed this courageous stand for Indigenous rights, with over 60 AIM members and supporters murdered. Despite a large FBI presence, nothing was done to stop these murders and even more numerous assaults.

Peltier was convicted of killing two FBI agents — Jack Coler and Ronald Williams —

in a shootout on the Pine Ridge Reservation on June 26, 1975. The agents were in unmarked cars.

Leonard Peltier was asked by traditional people at Pine Ridge, who were being targeted, to protect them from violence. Peltier and a small group of young AIM members set up camp on a ranch owned by the traditional Jumping Bull family. More than 150 FBI agents, cops, and vigilantes surrounded the ranch when shooting began.

Besides the two FBI agents killed, an AIM member — Joseph Stuntz Killsright — was shot and killed by a sniper's bullet. His death has never even been investigated.

Although the FBI claim that 40 Indigenous people were involved in the gunfight, only AIM members Bob Robideau, Darrell Butler, and Leonard Peltier were brought to trial. A jury acquitted Robideau and Butler on grounds of self-defense.

Leonard Peltier was arrested in Canada on Feb. 6, 1976. The U.S. government in its extradition request, used affidavits signed by Myrtle Poor Bear who claimed she saw Leonard Peltier shoot the two FBI agents.

Ms. Poor Bear had never met Mr. Peltier and wasn't present during the shoot-out. Soon after, Ms. Poor Bear recanted her statements and said the FBI threatened and coerced her into signing the affidavits.

Leonard Peltier was brought to the United States and tried in 1977. Myrtle Poor Bear wasn't allowed to testify by the Nixon-appointed Judge Paul Benson. Not one witness identified Mr. Peltier as the shooter of the FBI agents.

More than 140,000 pages of FBI documents were withheld from the defense. A ballistic test proving that a bullet casing found near the FBI agents' bodies did not come from the gun tied to Mr. Peltier was intentionally concealed.

Because this evidence was withheld, the jury found Leonard Peltier guilty. Judge Benson sentenced Mr. Peltier to two consecutive life terms.

The Eighth Federal Appeals Circuit ruled that “there is a possibility that the jury would have acquitted Leonard Peltier had the records and data improperly withheld from the defense been available to him in order to better exploit and reinforce the inconsistencies casting strong doubts upon the government’s case.”

Yet, the court denied Mr. Peltier a new trial. The late Federal Judge Gerald William Heaney, who wrote the decision denying a new trial, later urged Leonard Peltier’s release, stating that the FBI used improper tactics to convict him.

Among those calling for Leonard Peltier’s freedom was the late South African President Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in apartheid prisons. Leonard Peltier has spent 48 years in federal prisons.

Mr. President, you recently apologized for the federal government’s role in running boarding schools where thousands of Native American children endured abuse, neglect, and eradication of their tribal identities.

Follow up on your apology by freeing Leonard Peltier.

