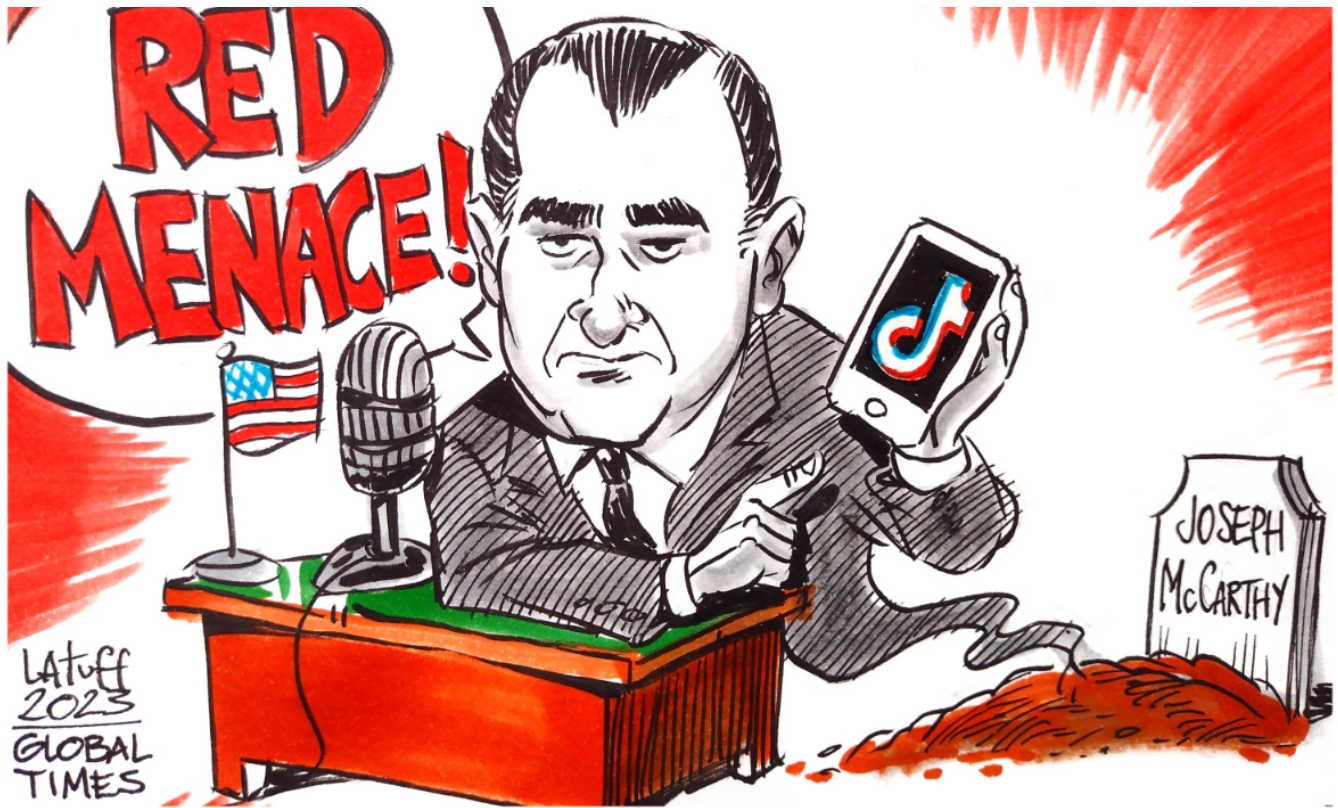


# TikTok ban paves way for suppressing speech in anti-China crusade

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 20, 2025



On Jan. 17, the Supreme Court launched a sweeping, unanimous assault on the First Amendment. By ruling in favor of a federal ban on TikTok — the fourth most popular social media platform in the United States — the Court effectively elevated “national security” above constitutional free speech rights.

This move aligns with an increasingly anti-China agenda within the U.S. government, which routinely uses the specter of “foreign adversaries” to justify censorship and attacks on democratic rights.

The ban took effect on Jan. 19. Hours after shutting down, TikTok announced that service would be restored after President-elect Donald Trump said he would sign an executive order on his first day in office to delay enforcing the U.S. ban of the social media platform.

Congress did order that TikTok ownership should be turned over to the U.S. tech-industrial complex by the Jan. 19 deadline, and Trump says his executive order is only to allow time for a U.S. takeover of a controlling interest (50%) of TikTok.

Regardless of what happens next, the Supreme Court’s ruling has far-reaching implications.

### **Anti-China justifications**

Notably, the justices anchored their decision in Congress’s claim that TikTok’s relationship with China — now labeled the primary “foreign adversary” — poses a grave risk.

The justices seem to claim that the ban is not aimed at suppressing particular viewpoints, yet they put “national security” over free speech:

“There is no doubt that, for more than 170 million Americans, TikTok offers a distinctive and expansive outlet for expression ... But Congress has determined that divestiture is necessary to address its well-supported national security concerns regarding TikTok’s data collection practices and relationship with a foreign adversary.”

In other words, the Court effectively concedes TikTok is a powerful platform for

speech — only to elevate the U.S. government's anti-China stand above the First Amendment.

## **The enemies list**

This logic opens the door to systematic assaults on domestic opposition to war or any policy the government designates as aiding “foreign adversaries.” Once a country (in this case, China) is designated an enemy, any expression or platform seen as potentially advantageous to that so-called adversary can be curbed.

TikTok's ban was initiated under Trump's first administration, spurred by Republican “China hawk” Michael Gallagher and other anti-China crusaders. The justices also cited the Biden administration's 2021 Executive Order on “Protecting Americans' Sensitive Data from Foreign Adversaries,” which defines “foreign adversary” so broadly as to encompass any government or organization considered “significantly adverse” to Wall Street and U.S. corporate interests.

Under such an expansive definition, practically any government from Beijing to Panama City could be labeled a hostile actor if it dared challenge U.S. policies. Indeed, Trump recently called the Panama Canal a “national security” asset. If Panama were to resist U.S. control of the Panama Canal, it, too, could be construed as posing a “threat.” In this context, banning an app because of its Chinese ownership signals how aggressively U.S. policymakers are prepared to stoke anti-China paranoia under the banner of defending “national security.”

## **Criminalizing social media**

Particularly insidious is the Court's reference to “Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project (2010),” which criminalized providing “material support” to designated “foreign terrorist organizations” — even if that support was simply legal advice. By drawing an analogy to China's tech companies, the ruling essentially endorses the

notion that working with or using technology from a “foreign adversary” is tantamount to collusion or aiding hostile interests.

The hypocrisy is striking. U.S. government agencies and corporations, with a documented history of unlawful surveillance (brought to light by Edward Snowden’s 2013 revelations), are now positioning themselves as defenders of privacy and security, justifying the ban of Chinese platforms on these grounds.

The NSA and other U.S. agencies have systematically gathered personal communications on a massive scale, aiming at “total information awareness.” However, none of this has produced bans on U.S. companies or apps. Instead, only the “adversary” label is invoked to quash a highly successful Chinese-owned platform that is not accused of gathering any more data than all other social media companies. In fact, the [Washington Post](#) found that TikTok gathers less data than Facebook. The Chinese government would never need TikTok to get access to personal info, which is widely available through multiple sources.

The Supreme Court falsely claims that TikTok’s ban doesn’t target specific viewpoints, but the legislative record shows otherwise. Leading Congressional voices have consistently accused TikTok of pushing “Chinese propaganda” and undermining pro-U.S. narratives, citing the platform’s lack of “fact checking,” allowing everything from the use of pro-Palestinian hashtags to criticisms of Washington’s foreign policy. Senator Mike Gallagher — one of the ban’s main orchestrators — branded TikTok “digital fentanyl” and openly called for crushing the platform to counter “the CCP’s worldview,” that is, to impose a capitalist ideology and an imperialist agenda.

The ban on TikTok represents more than just a regulatory action against a social media platform; it signifies a strategic maneuver in the escalating U.S. campaign against China. As the U.S. government broadens its anti-China initiatives, fundamental democratic rights, such as freedom of speech and the right to speak

out, are among the casualties.



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# Baltimore revolutionaries say learn from Palestinian resistance

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 20, 2025

*Following is a talk from the Jan.18 Honor Dr. King Jr. Rally and March, organized by the Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore, launching the new Peoples Fightback Network. Those gathered stand in solidarity with Baltimore's sanitation workers, for union rights and worker safety, and against war and genocide. The rally took place at McKeldin Plaza with the march ending at City Hall. Colby Boyd is an organizer with the Peoples Power Assembly.*

Good afternoon sisters, brothers, and siblings in the struggle.

The fourth most dangerous job in the United States is sanitation work. And how does the leadership of the city of Baltimore treat the brave workers of sanitation and the overall Department of Public Works? They force them to work in unsafe trucks, force

them to work without proper uniform items and protective equipment. They force them to work and drive through cramped spaces and unsafe alleys. They even force them to go out there in the blistering heat or freezing cold to handle all forms of waste and hazardous materials. All without a livable or comparable wage.

And focus on that word FORCE, in all of its hideous meanings. The workers of DPW work to keep the city safe with a whip to their back.

I could spend the entirety of my time up here recounting horror stories I have been told. How they have been mugged, maimed, or murdered on the job. Abandoned by their superiors during times of crisis or denied basic necessities or life-saving care.

But instead I want to talk to you all, my family, about how we can help our brothers and sisters at DPW. We all know it starts at being kind. Ensuring you properly dispose of your trash, slow down in work zones and be friendly to the DPW workers you may cross paths with. After that, we know to call our respective city officials to voice our complaints into the void of the countless other ones. We even know to make our individual feelings on the issue be known and voice it to any who listen, to spread the word. And after all that we all know that we must do more.

Many of us here have organized and mobilized for other crises befalling oppressed communities all around the world. From Palestine to the Philippines, we have collectively analyzed the systems that keep the people down and have committed to ending them. I would like to specifically raise the Palestinian struggle here today. The harmony between the people driven to action around the world and the Resistance battling the enemy within the heart of the Entity is the specific layer of the struggle I am raising. Through to this day, as the Resistance has called on us, we have answered however we can. When the people of Palestine were forced and bombed into tents, students turned campuses into encampments. As the Resistance attacked the occupiers' bases, students occupied campus buildings. As the Houthis attacked Maersk in the Red Sea, we unmasked them in our ports. When they

escalated overseas, we never failed at escalating here.

Let us remind the world that it was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who said, “I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!” Let us remind the world that he also told us “the price that America must pay for the continued oppression of the Negro and other minority groups is the price of its own destruction.” He knew that America in its current form was in no way accepting of the oppressed peoples of the world, and died fighting to change it.

After the assassination of Dr. King, the government made sure to bomb that mountain and the promised land. COINTELPRO, the war on drugs, mass incarceration, and police brutality forced us to find a new way to these ideals. Here in Baltimore, following the deaths of Ronald Silver II and Timothy Cartwell, it has been made crystal clear that the City Council and the mayor, Brandon Scott, would rather follow in the footsteps of the Memphis City Council and Mayor Henry Loeb of 1968 then work to achieve the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King. The government, to no surprise, would rather try to cover up these problems than actually fix them.

In fact, I would go so far to say that the city government is actively using these deaths and all of the mistreatment of the workers to quietly strip more rights and protections from the workers. Do not forget that they brought in the anti-worker and reactionary law firm of Conn Maciel Carey LLP out of Washington D.C. to “conduct a thorough review of DPW’s safety policies, practices, and procedures.” The city is doing everything it can to keep the workers divided and away from community-based solutions in order to continue this suffocating oppression.

The resistance in Palestine calls its ability to communicate through spatial differences and any barriers imposed by the occupier “the unity of the fields.” This constant communication through signals and actions allows the many different

factions within the resistance to stay unified through the highs and lows of the campaign for liberation and never fall victim to cooperating with countering forces.

Bringing it back to Baltimore DPW, I hope you all understand what I am trying to get at. With the workers in a constant daily battle for their survival, they are forced into positions where they are taken advantage of by the city. This is not to say that they have not escalated the struggle; in fact, the DPW workers have been and continue to signal to the community, awaiting a signal in return to show that we see them and are ready to weather the storm with them – in other words, escalate.

It was Fredrick Douglass who said that “if there is no struggle, there is no progress.”

We must not let the city continue to choke the voices of our class siblings at the Department of Public Works any longer. We must adopt the unity of the fields strategy and free the workers of DPW by showing them that the community, their fellow workers, and fellow human beings will not stand idly by while they suffer at the hands of the city. Here in 2025 I say we learn from the Palestinian people and resistance. We dig into that mountain and make it ours; we tunnel our way to the Promised Land unapologetically, and we fight for those we have lost. We organize and fight together through any barriers imposed by the city, and together with the workers, we can smash the culture of oppression here in Baltimore.

Long live the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Long live the hard-working and brave workers of Baltimore DPW

Long live the Palestinian people and the resistance

Long live international solidarity





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# From Baltimore to New Orleans, workers fight back, hit the streets!

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 20, 2025

*Following is a talk from the Jan.18 Honor Dr. King Jr. Rally and March, organized by the Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore, launching the new Peoples Fightback Network. Those gathered stand in solidarity with Baltimore's sanitation workers, for union rights and worker safety, and against war and genocide. The rally took place at McKeldin Plaza with the march ending at City Hall. Gregory E. Williams is a co-editor of Struggle-La Lucha.*

Hi everybody, it's an honor to be with you all here in the struggle. I'm a public health worker visiting from New Orleans. This is my first time in Baltimore, and in talking to comrades here, I'm learning so much about the people's day-to-day struggles, but also the incredible fightback. There are so many similarities between our two cities.

For example, with the ongoing Baltimore sanitation workers' struggle. The

conditions sound so similar. Back in 2020, at the height of the pandemic, sanitation workers went on strike in majority-Black New Orleans. They were employed by Metro Services Group, a private company contracted by the city.

The pandemic really exposed the brutal conditions of capitalism everywhere, and it certainly did in New Orleans, where there was never a real recovery for the working class following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The pandemic also showed that it is workers who are essential, not the bosses and shareholders. Like in other places, New Orleans sanitation workers have low wages, and they weren't getting hazard pay for risking their lives during COVID-19, or the PPE they needed. They were getting \$11 an hour, some working up to 100 hours a week. They didn't have a union, but they were fed up.

So, they went on strike and formed the City Waste Union. They carried picket signs saying, "I am a man," just like they did in the Memphis sanitation worker strike in 1968. They didn't get everything they were demanding. Of course, the bosses pulled out all the stops, hiring scabs and all the rest of it. But by the end of 2021, the city approved \$15 an hour for city contract workers.

That's a victory, never mind that those wages still aren't enough, especially with inflation. And just think about the trillions and trillions hoarded by the billionaires - Biden's "oligarchs" that he actually serves. And all the money that the government is spending on war. Think about all that wealth, and workers are the ones creating all of it. And then \$15 looks like the pocket change it is. But it was still a victory.

Sometimes, we feel like our local struggles are *merely* local, but they're not. It's the whole capitalist system. And since our problems are connected, the fightback has to be connected.

From Baltimore to New Orleans, workers fight back, hit the streets!



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# **NYC rallies for a ceasefire in Gaza and Palestinian liberation**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 20, 2025

Jan. 16 — Cold weather didn't stop a thousand people from coming to New York City's Times Square tonight to demand an end to the genocide in Gaza. The bold action was called by the Shut It Down 4 Palestine Coalition.

Speakers emphasized that it was the courageous resistance by the people of Palestine, Lebanon, and Yemen that forced Netanyahu and Biden to agree to a ceasefire. Among those who spoke were those from The People's Forum; Nodutdol for Korean Community Development; PAL-Al Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition; and the Party for Socialism and Liberation.

The billions that Biden spent killing Palestinians go right back into the pocket of the warmakers. "Even the jet fuel used by the planes bombing Gaza is shipped daily

from Texas by the Valero Corporation,” said Bill Dores of PAL-Awda.

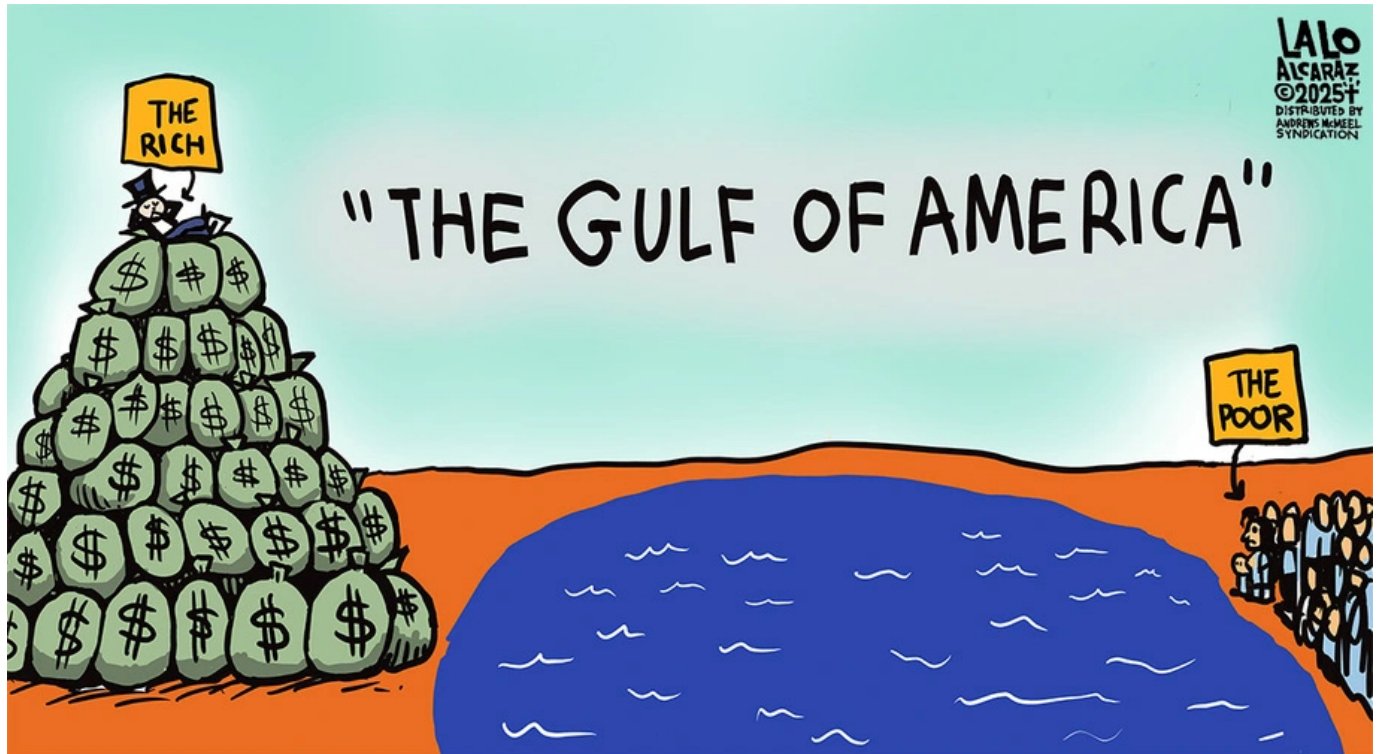
People marched north from Times Square before coming down Fifth Avenue. Everywhere, drivers and truckers honked their horns in support. Palestine will be free!



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## **Oligarchy already rules: Top 0.1% gained \$6 trillion under Biden**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 20, 2025



On Jan. 15, President Joe Biden gave his farewell address from the Oval Office. In a speech packed with self-congratulation and lofty claims about his four years in office, Biden made one striking admission.

“I want to warn the country of some things that give me great concern,” Biden said. “And that’s the dangerous concentration of power in the hands of a very few ultra-wealthy people. Today, an oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power, and influence that literally threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights and freedoms.”

Biden cited Dwight Eisenhower’s 1961 farewell address, in which he warned about the dangers of the “military-industrial complex.”

After World War II, Eisenhower was the chief architect of the military-industrial complex. However, more than a decade later, he warned, “In the councils of

government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

Biden said, “Six decades later, I’m equally concerned about the potential rise of a tech-industrial complex that could pose real dangers for our country.”

Biden spoke as though this oligarchy were merely “taking shape,” when in fact, it’s already a harsh reality for working people — one that has been decades in the making and upheld by both major parties. And, as Biden knows, the oligarchy is not just the tech-industrial complex.

Capitalism is not democratic. The U.S. is a capitalist republic but not a democracy. As Aristotle explained, democracy means the rule of the poor. Rule by the rich is an oligarchy. Aristotle says the real difference between oligarchy and democracy is whether the wealthy or the poor rule.

The settler war of independence from the British colonizers was led by men of wealth — merchants, bankers, and plantation owners. The Constitution set some democratic rights (limited to men only; none for women, Indigenous peoples, or enslaved people), but the Constitution did not establish a democracy. The House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Presidency are all set up to ensure control by wealth. Put simply, money rules. What’s taken place over the last decades is that it has become more and more concentrated.

### **The reality of an entrenched oligarchy**

Biden’s remarks ignored his administration’s role in further consolidating the power of a tiny billionaire class.

The very richest are among the biggest winners from President Joe Biden’s time in office, the [Seattle Times](#) reports, despite his farewell address warning.

“The 100 wealthiest Americans got more than \$1.5 trillion richer in the past four years, with tech tycoons including Elon Musk, Larry Ellison and Mark Zuckerberg leading the way, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. The top 0.1% gained more than \$6 trillion, Federal Reserve estimates through September show.”

Bidenomics meant the rich were getting richer. The top U.S. billionaires did far better than everyone else.

The Seattle Times adds:

“The 100 largest fortunes combined now exceed \$4 trillion — more than the collective net worth of the poorest half of Americans, spread over 66.5 million households. The share of U.S. wealth owned by the top 0.1%, at nearly 14%, is now at its highest point in Fed estimates dating back to the 1980s.”

Biden leaves office talking about an oligarchy that his policies, together with those of the Democratic and Republican parties, have promoted to protect corporate profits and drive down wages, hitting the working class hardest. When adjusted for inflation, average weekly wages are now less than when Biden came into office.

### **A president who served corporate interests**

While the warning about the threats of the oligarchy and the tech-industrial complex is true, Biden has never done anything other than promote that oligarchy. His administration and the entire political establishment support the economic system — capitalism — that feeds the Wall Street and Big Tech oligarchy.

Donald Trump, along with Biden and many others, represents a capitalist oligarchy that has been concentrating wealth for decades. We have seen how billionaires and mega-millionaires — Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Peter Thiel, and Larry Ellison, among them — use their economic power to undermine labor rights, squeeze wages, promote racism and sexism, attack trans rights, and reshape society in their

interests. Their alliances and political maneuvers are not abstract threats; they have immediate consequences.

## **The path forward**

Biden's farewell address may seem to acknowledge a grim truth, but words alone won't protect rights or improve wages and conditions. From Amazon to Tesla, from Silicon Valley to Wall Street, the ultra-rich have grown wealthier and more aggressive.

We, the working class majority, need to fight back against these forces. Our solidarity, ability to organize, and determination to defend and expand workers' rights are potentially far more powerful than all the concentrated wealth of the oligarchy. We cannot rely on hollow speeches or empty promises from any politician. The only way to address this "dangerous concentration of power" is through our collective action — on the picket line and in the streets.

Stand united. Fight for what's rightfully ours. Together, we can build a socialist future that serves the many, not just the wealthy few.





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# Louisiana Gov. Landry kidnaps unhoused people ahead of Super Bowl

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 20, 2025

**\$16 million spent to intern unhoused people could give them all apartments**

Jan. 15, New Orleans – Before daylight on January 15, Gov. Jeff Landry took the next step in taking over New Orleans. On Landry’s commands, armed state police rounded up unhoused people who had been camping close to the French Quarter and the Superdome, which is hosting the profitable Super Bowl on Feb. 9. Personal items, IDs, medicine, medical and social service records were destroyed. At least 1 arrest was made.

Bypassing the city government, Landry bussed unhoused people to a “transitional” warehouse shelter that had been set up in an industrial area. The mainly Black residents of the nearby neighborhood were not informed or consulted at all. The

shelter — which is surrounded by a barbed wire fence — had no heat, showers, beds, or eye-level windows. One unhoused hospitality worker called it an internment camp.

According to the NOHHARM collective, the governor gave a contract months ago to a company called Workforce Group to set up the so-called shelter. Workforce is owned by a private equity firm, Bernhard Capital Partners, a major donor to Landry's campaign funds. This cruel pre-dawn raid was done with less than 48 hours notice.

The warehouse is almost six miles from downtown and has no sidewalks. The nearest bus stop is a half-hour walk away, making it impossible for people to make their social service appointments, which sometimes take months to schedule. Meetings with agencies at the site will take place in tents. The temperature in New Orleans this week is dropping to 28 degrees Fahrenheit. Unhoused people with jobs at night would be shut out of their beds at 9:00 p.m.

The Super Bowl is an exclusive event, bringing billions in profits to New Orleans and national corporations. The city itself undertook 400 projects and, with the state, spent millions of tax-payer dollars in preparation. Meanwhile, a ticket is going for \$5,000 each. Luxury boxes (renovated with taxpayer money) are upwards of \$50,000.

NOHHARM exposed that “not counting cost for the Louisiana State Police...the warehouse carries a price tag of \$11.4 million for two months or \$16.2 million for three months, about \$80,000 per each of the 200 beds. With \$16.2 million, 200 unhoused people could get six years of rental assistance for a studio.” So why isn't that done? Because just like state prisons and immigrant prisons, there is a profit to be made by jailing people.

Landry wants to hide the massive cost-of-living crisis that has been forced on

Louisianans by the government. The state, with almost no resistance from New Orleans officials, has refused to allow the city to vote for rent control, wages, or any meaningful measure to stop soaring rents. Year after year the Louisiana legislature has refused to raise the \$7.25 per hour minimum wage. The racist governor wants to push out working-class, predominantly Black residents in order to make New Orleans a playground for the rich.

Landry's pre-dawn raid is part of a larger campaign to criminalize poor people and undermine working-class solidarity in order to cut food stamps, Medicaid, and other basic social services. The state has already cut thousands off of Medicaid and has reduced benefits for thousands more.

The state is creating more conditions of homelessness by giving insurance companies a free hand to raise insurance costs by three times or more, which raises rents and causes foreclosures. Every week, foreclosed properties are auctioned off to developers in New Orleans. The governor and state legislature are using the government as a transmission belt to funnel money away from us into the pockets of the capitalists.

We New Orleans workers have had a war declared on us by the billionaires. Thousands are a paycheck or rent payment away from homelessness. A third of children are in poverty and senior hunger is higher here than anywhere in the country. Rates of incarceration are among the highest in the world. We are not taken in by the governor, who is reducing taxes for the rich while maintaining the highest sales tax in the U.S., claiming this raid and kidnapping of unhoused people makes us safer.

We need to unite and fight to impose rent controls, raise wages, cut insurance rates, and protect and expand our SNAP and Medicaid benefits.



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# Declaration of the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity for Cuba

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 20, 2025

From the ***International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity*** we salute the victory of the Revolutionary Government, the Cuban people and the international solidarity that fought tirelessly for four consecutive years for Cuba to be removed from the List of Supposedly Sponsoring Countries of Terrorism (SSOT List) where it should never have been.

The decision of the Biden administration, six days before the end of his term, with the official and express recognition in the White House presidential memorandum, acknowledges that Cuba does not sponsor terrorism.

The arbitrary inclusion in the unilateral and spurious List was political, within the framework of the multidimensional war imposed by the U.S. blockade, plus the 243

economic and financial sanctions, to strangle the Cuban economy and provoke an internal outbreak that would put an end to the achievements of the Revolution and impose a government subservient to Washington.

We reaffirm what Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel expressed on the social network X: “It is a decision in the right direction, although belatedly and with limited scope,” since “the blockade and most of the extreme measures that were put in place in 2017 to suffocate the Cuban economy and cause shortages to our people remain in place.”

The inclusion in the list of sponsors of terrorism “has had a high cost for the country and Cuban families.”

A very high cost that will never be forgotten by the Cuban people deprived of medicines and food by the criminal policy of the U.S., which on November 20 reaffirmed in a massive demonstration in Havana its rejection of the longest genocidal blockade in history, the demand to be taken off the List and its support for the Cuban Revolution.

As for International Solidarity we will continue working together with the Cuban people and government until we achieve the end of the blockade and the extraterritorial laws, we will continue advocating for peace and friendship between the peoples of the United States and Cuba, beyond the four years of the current government in power in the White House.

Sixty-six years of heroic and peaceful resistance is the clearest message to the outgoing and incoming administration.

Here is Cuba standing with its sovereign flag, before which the noble men and women of the world, the peoples who resist and struggle, bow down.

**Long live Cuba, its Revolutionary Government and its heroic people.**

Source: [Cuba en Resumen](#)



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# **‘I’ve been to the mountaintop’: A call to action then and now**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 20, 2025

On Jan. 11, members of the Baltimore community gathered at the Harriet Tubman Solidarity Center for a screening of “At the River I Stand,” a film documenting the Memphis sanitation workers strike in 1968. The working class civil rights struggles intertwined in this strike drew Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Poor People’s Campaign to Memphis. Just two months later, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

Memphis sanitation workers at the time were predominantly Black, working long hours in dangerous conditions, compensated with wages so low that workers qualified for welfare. Working conditions are described in the film as a plantation mentality, with Black workers under-compensated while toiling in inhumane

conditions, all under the oversight of racist government officials and supervisors.

After two garbage collectors, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were crushed to death by a garbage compactor, 1,300 Black sanitation workers went on strike. Workers demanded recognition of their union, safer working conditions, and fair wages.

Members of the community engaged in a boycott and supported the strike, and a sit-in of sanitation workers and supporters pressured the City Council into voting to recognize the union and increase wages.



### **‘I am a man’**

However, Memphis Mayor Henry Loeb rejected this resolution. The strike and daily marches continued, and the now famous anti-racist slogan, “I am a man,”

developed.

In March, Mayor Loeb called for martial law and brought in 4,000 National Guard troops to patrol the streets after police escalated the non-violent protest into essentially a police riot. Dr. King Jr. returned on April 3 and delivered his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech to sanitation workers.

The next day, he was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. The sanitation workers strike concluded on April 16 when the City Council agreed to union recognition and increased wages for the sanitation workers.

### **Baltimore sanitation workers**

Although the film depicts struggles that took place 57 years ago, the issues in the film are strikingly similar to issues faced today. Two sanitation workers in Baltimore City were killed in 2024 due to unsafe working conditions: Ronald Silver II died at work in August due to heatstroke and Timothy Cartwell was crushed to death by the garbage collection truck on which he worked in November.

Their deaths are directly connected to the gross negligence and inadequate working conditions of the Department of Public Works. Their deaths could have, and should have, been avoided with proper safety training and regulations to protect workers in extreme weather.

It is necessary for the Baltimore City Council to improve the safety conditions of workers. Much like the community in Memphis in 1968, the Baltimore community needs to rally around sanitation workers to pressure the Baltimore City Council to act.

As pointed out by community members who attended the film screening, Dr. King Jr. fought for worker power and against racism, not some broad ideal of “freedom” as often is asserted in the mainstream press. To honor his legacy, community members



in Baltimore can fight for material change for city workers.

Other issues in the film that are present today are the suppression of unions and the plantation mentality. Workers at Amazon and Starbucks are striking for fair wages and safer working conditions.

However, much like Mayor Loeb refused to negotiate these demands, leadership at these corporations refuse to work with unions to increase wages and improve worker safety.

### **Inmates fighting California wildfires**

The plantation mentality plagues incarcerated workers, with inmates fighting wildfires in California. Inmates fighting fires face dangerous conditions while earning between \$5.80 and \$10.42 per day. This labor is only possible due to an exception in the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery: “except as punishment for crime.”

The struggle in Memphis for workers’ rights and civil rights never truly ended. Since that time, oppressed peoples and workers across the United States have fought the capitalist state to achieve basic human rights. As this struggle goes forward, we must remember the legacy of the Memphis sanitation workers and Dr. King’s fight against racism and capitalism.



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# **Senate Democrats capitulate to racism on anti-immigrant bill**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 20, 2025



Thirty-three Democratic Senators — led by Charles Schumer — voted on Dec. 9 to push along the anti-immigrant Laken Riley Act, virtually guaranteeing its eventual passage. This legislation will allow the deportation of immigrants, including children, who are merely charged — not convicted — of shoplifting and other minor offenses.

Whatever happened to the “presumption of innocence”? Weren’t we told in grade school that defendants in the United States were considered innocent until proven guilty?

The bill is demagogically named after Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student in Athens, Georgia, who was killed last year while jogging. José Antonio Ibarra, an immigrant from Venezuela, was convicted of killing Riley.

Bigots in Congress and on Fox News are cynically using this tragedy to smear

millions of immigrants as dangerous criminals. It's no different than saying if a Black, Latinx, Muslim, Jewish, or transgender person was guilty of a crime, then all of "them" should be punished.

Georgia politician Mike Collins sponsored this hate legislation in the House of Representatives. He had earlier introduced his self-named [RAZOR Act](#) to allow Texas to string concertina wire in the Rio Grande so migrant children and their families could be cut to shreds.

The [NAACP](#) has demanded Collins be investigated. He praised white fraternity students at the University of Mississippi who racially taunted and made ape-like gestures towards a Black woman who was protesting the genocide of Palestinians.

One of the loudest congressional backers of the Laken Riley Act is Collins' fellow Georgian, Marjorie Taylor Greene. This nutjob claimed that the 2018 California forest fires were caused by space lasers, including those allegedly manipulated by Jewish people.

Both Collins and Greene were silent when another jogger, the 25-year-old Black man Ahmaud Arbery, was murdered in 2020 while jogging near Brunswick, Georgia. The local district attorney advised that no arrests be made. It took people mobilizing in Georgia and across the country that Arbery's killers were brought to trial and convicted.

To mock the Black Lives Matter movement, Greene wears a t-shirt emblazoned "Say Her Name: Laken Riley." Tens of thousands of people wore t-shirts saying, "Say Her Name: Breonna Taylor," in memory of the Black woman who was killed in 2020 by Louisville, Kentucky, police.

[Greene](#) hates the Black Lives Matter movement and compares it to the Ku Klux Klan.

## **Cowardly retreat before Trump**

Last year, Senate Democrats stopped this legislation using the Senate's filibuster rule, which requires the approval of 60 senators before a bill can be voted on. But following Trump's narrow victory, the vast majority of Democratic senators are jumping on the anti-immigrant train.

Only eight Democrats and independent Bernie Sanders refused to go along.

Democratic Senators John Fetterman from Pennsylvania and Rubén Gallego from Arizona are among the sponsors of the Laken Riley Act.

These politicians are not only craven but also shortsighted. In a country of 340 million people, Trump won by less than 2.3 million votes. Just the drop-off in Democratic votes in California — 1.8 million — accounted for most of that.

Trump's nutty and dangerous cabinet picks are already provoking derision. So are his schemes to invade Greenland, Panama, Mexico, Canada, and maybe — with his sidekick Elon Musk — Mars.

The 33 Senate Democrats allowing this anti-immigrant bill to proceed are like those who supported the Iraq war over 20 years ago. Half of the Democratic Senators — including Joe Biden, Charles Schumer, John Kerry, and Hillary Clinton — voted for the 2002 resolution to allow George W. Bush to wage his bloody war.

Kerry's vote didn't do him any good when he ran for president in 2004. Neither did it help Clinton in 2016.

## **Echoes of Dred Scott**

In its notorious 1857 Dred Scott decision, the U.S. Supreme Court declared Black people had no rights that white people need to respect. The Laken Riley Act tells

cops and judges that immigrants have no rights at all.

Any bigot with a badge will be able to racially profile someone who they think “looks funny” and claim they stole a candy bar. In some states, a person can be accused of shoplifting without even attempting to leave a store.

That’s what happened to Frank Wills, the Black security guard who caught Richard Nixon’s Watergate burglars on June 17, 1972. In 1979, Wills was accused of hiding a pair of sneakers in a bag. South Carolina authorities jailed the Watergate hero in revenge for helping to drive Nixon out of the White House.

The congressional steamroller to pass the Laken Riley Act goes hand-in-hand with Trump’s vow to take away citizenship from children born in the United States whose parents are immigrants.

Trump’s proposed action — which he promises to accomplish by

executive order — would repeal the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, overturning the Dred Scott decision. Along with the 13th and 15th amendments, it was written in the blood of hundreds of thousands of members of the Union Army and Navy who defeated the slave masters.

### **States rights vs. human rights**

The [Laken Riley bill](#) would also allow state attorney generals to sue the federal government on immigration matters. It gives them the right to take the State Department to court if visas are issued to people from countries that don’t allow deportations from the United States.

This not only echoes Trump’s ban on immigrants from Muslim countries. It also recalls the old Confederate slogan of “states’ rights.” Immigration, like tariffs, was always a matter for the federal government.

Ronald Reagan began his 1980 presidential campaign by calling for “states’ rights” in Philadelphia, Mississippi. Reagan — who called the people of Watts, California, “mad dogs” — did so where the martyrs James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner were murdered by the Mississippi Ku Klux Klan.

Any actions by state officials, like the corrupt homophobic and transphobic bigot Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, concerning immigration recalls the repudiated doctrine of “interposition.”

Segregationists claimed that state legislatures had the right to overturn U.S. Supreme Court decisions. That’s what the [Mississippi legislature did in 1956](#) by unanimously declaring invalid the Supreme Court’s Brown vs. Board decision that banned school segregation.

The decision of most Senate Democrats to turn their backs on immigrant rights shows that we have to organize ourselves. The demonstrations scheduled in Washington, D.C., and across the country against Trump’s inauguration are a good start.

The labor movement should call a new Solidarity Day against Trump. We need to continue to struggle to stop the genocide in Gaza and the war against poor people here in the United States.



# ILWU Local 10 pensioner and labor activist Howard Keylor passes

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 20, 2025



Howard Keylor, a longtime Local 10 member and longshore activist, died on October



5, 2024, shortly before his 99th birthday. In 1953, he started as a casual in the port of Stockton. He became a registered longshoreman in 1959 and transferred to Local 10 in 1970.

He strongly upheld ILWU's Ten Guiding Principles that state: "Labor solidarity means just that. Unions have to accept the fact that the solidarity of labor stands above all else, including even the so-called sanctity of the contract. We cannot adopt for ourselves the policies of union leaders who insist that because they have a contract, their members are compelled to perform work even behind a picket line. Every picket line must be respected as though it were our Own."

Howard was one of the last living ILWU members who fought in WW II. He was in the army in Okinawa when the U.S. dropped atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which killed a quarter of a million people, mainly civilians. It was those nuclear weapons of mass destruction that turned him against war and led him to become dedicated to fighting for the rights of oppressed people around the world. Born in rural Ohio, Howard attended a one-room country schoolhouse yet amazingly became a member of the scholarly National Honor Society. Living in Appalachia not far from the mines, Howard developed a strong sense of the need for solidarity and building working-class power.

In Stockton, with the support of his wife Evangelina, he committed himself to working with the legendary Filipino farm worker leader Larry Itliong in the 1948 asparagus strike. In ILWU Local 10, Howard was a member of the Militant Caucus, a class struggle group in longshore and warehouse, which organized solidarity actions protesting the shipment of military cargo to the junta in Chile in 1974 and in 1980 against the Salvadoran military dictatorship. The Militant Caucus organized a strike of undocumented ILWU Local 6 warehouse workers in Union City who had to defend against police attacks.

They also participated in protests against the Nazi rally at San Francisco City Hall in

1980 and supported the demonstration in 1984 to tear down the Confederate flag hanging in Civic Center Plaza, reported by the San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper. Howard was also a member of the Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee, whose members organized solidarity actions for Liverpool dockers in 1977 and the Charleston, South Carolina, longshore workers in 2000.

Brother Keylor was also active in the defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal. He suggested that Abu-Jamal's attorney use the famous labor case of Sacco and Vanzetti to defend Mumia. They were working-class activists who were convicted of murder in 1921 and eventually executed despite a massive campaign by labor activists across the country who proclaimed their innocence and noted their lack of fair trial.

In 1999, Howard participated in the Local 10 contingent, leading a march of 25,000 protesters through the streets of San Francisco chanting, "An Injury to One is an Injury to All," while all ILWU ports were shut down in support of Mumia.

The most significant action by Howard was the 1984 action against the Nedlloyd Kimberley, a ship from South Africa. While the apartheid regime was shooting down striking miners and arresting their leaders, Howard raised a motion at the Local 10 membership meeting to hit the

next ship that docked in San Francisco from South Africa. Leo Robinson, leader of the "Southern African Liberation Support Committee," amended it to strike the South African cargo only. It passed unanimously. The rest was history.

Nelson Mandela, on his world tour in 1990 at the Oakland Coliseum, commended Local 10 for being on the front lines in the Bay Area of the international struggle against apartheid. Last year, the dockworkers union in Durban, South Africa, represented by the Revolutionary Trade Union of South Africa (RETUSA), invited Local 10 to send a delegation to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their strike that

led to a General Strike against apartheid. The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa and the Liverpool dockers have sent condolences to Howard's family, to Local 10, and to his comrades.

A memorial service will be held for Brother Keylor on January 25, 2025, from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. at Local 10, 400 North Point Street, San Francisco in the Henry Schmidt Room.

-Jack Heyman, #8780  
Local 10 Pensioner

