

They blame immigrants while corporations steal billions – sound familiar?

written by John Parker
June 13, 2025



Los Angeles, June 9 - John Parker, coordinator of the Harriet Tubman Center for

Social Justice and a member of the steering committee for the Community Self-Defense Coalition, speaks during the ongoing rebellion against ICE fascism.

In May, the Struggle for Socialism Party (SSP) Los Angeles branch discussed the new book, “Against fascism: reclaiming populism’s legacy for today’s class struggle,” compiled by Louisiana socialist Gregory Williams.

Following is a presentation for the series of classes, given by John Parker on May 10. He is an organizer with SFSP, the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, and the [Community Self-Defense Coalition](#), which is confronting ICE on the ground in Los Angeles.

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Straight line from David Duke to Elon Musk’s Nazi salute

Today we had a big Community Self-Defense Coalition meeting. It was really good. About 71 people were here, and it went a little bit longer than usual. So, I’m just going to get right into it.

I really enjoyed reading the section of the book, “Straight line from David Duke to Elon Musk’s Nazi salute.” The parallels really hit you. Like it says, it’s a straight line. But it’s also a straight line to Trump, to the fascists, and what’s going on right now. And it’s just amazing.

The political perspective that came from Sam Marcy was very helpful and unique to communist, socialist tendencies, putting the national question in the front, as well as understanding imperialism – especially U.S. imperialism – imperialism versus non-imperialist countries. Marcy's analysis really shows the importance of being a part of the anti-imperialist struggle and being in solidarity with the nations fighting against imperialism.

And Sam Marcy, in the writings in this section, talked about what was going on in 1991, when former Klan leader David Duke was running for governor in Louisiana. And it just seems like Sam Marcy had a crystal ball in terms of what's going on today, and how fascism is being used, and the context of the working-class struggle right now.

And he talks a lot about the differences between 1991 and the 1960s and 1970s, when other fascist folks like George Wallace and Lester Maddox were running for office. These folks were also fascists, but they were going upstream in terms of what was going on in the 1960s.

At that time, the movement was on the rise: the Civil Rights and other movements fighting against racism, the union struggles, the working-class struggles. So Wallace and Maddox were fighting that tide, and they weren't as successful.

Economic conditions and fascism

That was more of a defensive use of fascism. But in the case of Duke in 1991, the situation for the workers was a lot worse. The economy was going down. Wages, health care, everything was going down.

And it was easy to see who the enemy was: the corporations and the monopolies that were causing so much pain. But if you're not political, you're wondering, "Why am I suffering like this?" And if somebody comes along and they're eloquent, and they

give you somebody to hate and blame, they can divert you from the real struggle. They use racism, which is one of the main props of U.S. capitalism and imperialism.

And when you push fascism during a crisis, like Hitler did, you can be successful; you can divert people. And even if the corporations and banks don't support you right away, they'll eventually come around, like they did with Hitler. So, Duke was much more successful. He didn't win the governorship, but he was much more successful in breaking through.

His appeal went international, getting a lot further because of the context of what was going on. And that's why Trump is so dangerous right now, because his appeal is coming at a time when our standard of living is going down - health care, wages, everything is just going down.

Current conditions and Trump's takeover

It was a lot different for our generation or my parents' generation, where many working-class people could get a house. Now, many people can't even get a house. Union membership is also down. With these conditions, Trump and other fascist figures can say, "Okay, it's the immigrants, it's the migrants that are doing all this stuff." That's why we have to push back.

The Democratic Party is also enabling this. They're complicit. They're not fighting. In fact, Biden, Obama, and other Democrats enabled it by attacking and deporting migrants. Obama's record of formal detention hasn't been broken.

So, they set up the situation, and then Trump went and took it over from there. And now he's just a blatant fascist. And you see Elon Musk with the Nazi salute and things like that. They're kidnapping and torturing people.

And it's just unbelievable. And you think about the Gaza war and what they're doing. Something like 14,000 children are due to die - starve to death. Babies are due to

starve to death soon because of the United States and Israel.

But that's why it's so dangerous right now, when the economy is in decline, when people are looking for answers. Trump is a very dangerous individual. So, one of the main things I got from these readings is that the role of these fascists is to distract. From Hitler to Duke to Trump to Elon Musk, their role is to distract.

So, of course, they're going to vilify people and use racist scapegoating. They vilify Palestinians, Iranians, and Chinese people. That's their role, but they also make appeals to workers, promising to help their situation. They make promises, but they don't deliver. They just cause destruction.

Trump's already doing it, right? He promises this, he promises that, and then you see what he's really doing. He's going to take away your Social Security, he's going to take all these things away.

Corporate welfare and migrant exploitation

There is something from Sam Marcy's writings in this book. He quotes one of the senators exposing corporate welfare. I mean, the fascists tell you, "Oh, it's the welfare cheats, they're taking your money away. The immigrants and migrants are taking the money away."

Of course, that's not true. Especially immigrant communities – migrant communities who are forced to pay taxes and don't get any kind of benefit from that. They just get exploited. I'm just going to read from this.

"Nobody was more eloquent in describing how big business has brought about the real welfare system in the United States than the former Majority Leader and Whip from Louisiana, Senator Russell Long. In April 1967, he told the Senate:

"Most campaign money comes from businessmen. ... Many businessmen

contribute to legislators who have voted to exempt their businesses from the minimum wage. Businessmen contribute to legislators who have fought against taxes that would have been burdensome to their businesses. ... Power company officials contribute to legislators who vote against public power. ... Bankers, insurance company executives, big moneylenders generally contribute to legislators who vote for policies that lead to high interest rates.

“Many large companies benefit from research and development contracts which carry a guaranteed profit. ... In recent years, quite a battle has developed over the desire of government research contractors to obtain and keep lush private monopoly patent rights on those things discovered with billions of dollars of government research money. The possibility of windfall profits in this area defies imagination. ...

“Drug companies are often able to sell brand-name drug products at anywhere from twice to 50 times the price of identical nonbranded products for welfare and Medicare patients. ...

“Executives of drug companies will contribute to legislators who vote to permit or bring about such a result.

“Executives of regulated companies contribute to legislators who vote to go easy on the regulation. ...

“Many industries are subsidized. This includes the merchant marine, the ship builders, the sugar producers, the copper producers, and a host of others. ...

“This list is merely illustrative; it could be elaborated upon and enlarged to include many more.”

And then Sam Marcy adds, “All this welfare for the rich corporations that run Louisiana, but has Duke ever told it like it is? Has he ever tried to mobilize the workers against these rich corporate criminals who thrive off government welfare?”

That's what Sam Marcy was writing in 1991, and we see that, whoa, 50 times isn't enough for how much these pharmaceutical companies are ripping off the workers nowadays!

To be continued.

