

# **Struggle □ La Lucha PDF - January 27, 2025**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 27, 2025  
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Frente a la arremetida imperialista, **CUBA VENCERÁ**

**STRUGGLE** ★ **LA LUCHA**  
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Socialist Unity Party

Partido de Socialismo Unido

# STOP funding wars – FUND CLIMATE ACTION

By Scott Scheffer

Unprecedented twin infernos have devastated Los Angeles, with Pacific Palisades and Altadena bearing the brunt. The blazes - the city's most destructive ever - have claimed 27 lives, left dozens missing, and turned 12,000 homes to ash. Early damage estimates stretch into the hundreds of billions. As of January 18, the full toll remains unclear.

A 2024 Yale study projects that the death toll, counting indirect deaths mostly from smoke inhalation, will be in the thousands. The study draws data from California wildfires over a period of 11 years up to and including the deadly 2018 Camp Fire that burned down the town of Paradise, Calif. Researchers say that 12,000 people likely died prematurely from smoke from that fire alone.

Pacific Palisades - a neighborhood on the stunning hillsides of the Santa Monica mountains - is reputed to be reserved for the fabulously rich. That is only half the truth. Among the ashes are the remains of five mobile home parks.

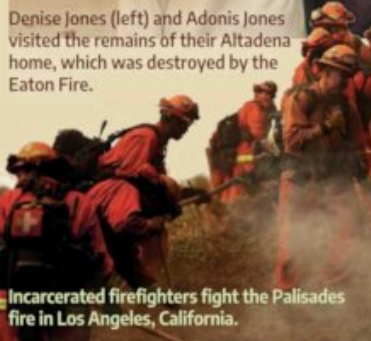
One of them would be considered the Beverly Hills of mobile home parks. But the other four are the residences of people who moved

*Continued on page 22*



Denise Jones (left) and Adonis Jones visited the remains of their Altadena home, which was destroyed by the Eaton Fire.

Below, building air purifiers in the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice.



Incarcerated firefighters fight the Palisades fire in Los Angeles, California.



BALTIMORE revolutionaries, fear from Palestinian resistance

At Trump's coronation, thousands vow to fight billionaire oligarchy

- Democrats capitulate on anti-immigrant bill
- Senate confirms warmonger Rubio ► Oligarchy already rules
- Trump's annexation redux ► Reversal of hard-won rights
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# Nazi billionaires: Fascism in the Elon Musk family tree

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It's not a secret that Elon Musk embraces fascist and reactionary political movements. He makes no attempt to hide his political leanings. Musk's support not just for Trump, but also for the German neo-Nazi party, [Alternative for Deutschland](#) or AfD, is open and widely covered in the mainstream press. Musk also financially supports the British Reform Party, another fascist European political party with a deeply anti-immigrant platform.

In recent years, Musk has become a key public figure in the politics of the global ruling class. However, Musk's personal politics are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the role fascism plays in ruling-class politics and the United States' history of recycling different fascist movements and figures to suit the imperialist agenda.

In fact, Elon isn't even the first member of his own family to be prominent in right-wing politics and promote U.S. imperialist interests. South Africa itself provided the

imperialists with a new bastion of right-wing demagogues and families after apartheid fell in the early 1990s. After Nelson Mandela took power, many white South Africans who supported apartheid found refuge in the U.S.

But the Musk family's fascist legacy goes even further back than the 1990s. Musk's maternal grandparents, Wyn Fletcher and Joshua Haldeman, were wealthy Canadian doctors with openly Nazi politics in the 1940s. In an [interview](#), Elon's father, Errol, spoke regarding the history of his ex-wife's Nazi parents: "They used to support Hitler and all that sort of stuff. But they didn't know, I don't think they knew what the Nazis were doing. But they [the grandparents] were in the German Nazi party but in Canada. And they sympathise with the Germans."

After the defeat of fascism at the hands of the Soviet Union and other allied forces, Haldeman and Fletcher continued their Nazi activism. However, explicit Nazism within Canadian politics was taboo at the time due to the recent war against Hitler's Third Reich, a war that cost the lives of many Canadian soldiers.

There is an irony here considering the widespread amnesty Canada granted to hundreds of Ukrainian Nazi SS officers, such as [Yaroslav Hunka](#). The Canadian government was widely criticized after the Canadian Parliament honored Hunka publicly. In addition to the Musk family, which is the focus of this article, the Canadian embrace of Ukrainian Nazis is another pertinent example of how the ruling class recycles fascist masses and institutions in the service of their own imperialist agendas.

Nonetheless, finding himself maligned and alienated, Haldeman moved his career and his family to apartheid South Africa, where his fascist politics were more openly supported. Once in South Africa, Haldeman stayed involved in political life, giving a [speech](#) in the 1950s where he asserted that apartheid South Africa was leading "White Christian Civilization" against the "International conspiracy of Jewish bankers" and the "hordes of colored people" he claimed the Jewish bankers

controlled. This is Elon's grandfather, and we are supposed to believe Elon's recent [Nazi salute](#) was an awkward arm gesture.

It was no surprise when Haldeman and Fletcher's daughter, Maye, married a prominent young right-wing politician and emerald mine investor named Errol Musk. Maye Musk herself has remained a steadfast fascist throughout her entire life. She has long supported Donald Trump, and just in October [posted on X](#), asserting that Democrats only obtain votes by shipping "illegal immigrants" across the Mexican border. This sort of argument grows directly from the white supremacist "great replacement theory," which asserts a Jewish cabal exists that aims to replace all white individuals in the U.S. with Black people and Latin American immigrants.

Errol remains openly right-wing in his views, and his emerald mine investments raised his family's wealth and influence to a level that only Elon has since eclipsed. Since Elon has established himself as the wealthiest man in the world, he has become more and more emboldened with fascist rhetoric and action. Ultimately, none of this would have been possible without the hyper-exploitation of African people under apartheid and the broader acceptance of fascist politics by Western imperialist powers like the U.S. and Canada.

The Haldeman and the Musk families were not the only supporters of formerly apartheid or fascist states to spread their wings and exert greater racist influence. There is no shortage of examples.

Another prominent example from South Africa is forensic physician David Fowler, who gained widespread condemnation after his testimony in defense of Derek Chauvin, the brutal racist cop who murdered George Floyd. Fowler left South Africa for Baltimore, Maryland, in 1991, just a year after the official end of apartheid. Apparently, the idea of practicing medicine in a country where the indigenous African population held political power did not appeal to an apartheid mad scientist.

Over the next two decades, Fowler would assist the Baltimore Police Department and the Maryland State Police in a large-scale cover-up of racist police murders, most notoriously the murder of 19-year-old Anton Black. Fowler's career came under increased scrutiny after he testified that Derek Chauvin's knee on George Floyd's neck for almost 10 minutes was not the cause of Floyd's death. For all those reasons, over 1,300 cases of individuals who died while in custody of Maryland police were [reopened](#) in 2021.

For the U.S., the most infamous reappropriation of Nazi officials was "[Operation Paperclip](#)," which saw the CIA arrange for 1,600 German scientists, engineers, and technicians to secretly leave Germany and join the U.S. in the cold war against the Soviet Union. Many of these officials were high-ranking members of the Nazi party. Some experimented on Jewish prisoners. None of them were ever brought to justice.

Even Germany itself repurposed Nazi officials into what was known for most of the second half of the 20th century as "West Germany" or the "Federal Republic of Germany. In the mid-2010s, the current German government conducted a series of investigations into the prevalence of Nazi judges and other justice system officials in the West German government. [The final report](#) revealed that in 1957, 77% of senior officials at the justice ministry had been members of the Nazi party. A different study found that the justice department was not even a majority non-Nazi judges until 1972. The last Nazi official, a former prosecutor for Hitler, would not leave the German Ministry of Justice until 1992. The Times of Israel referred to this as "recycling Nazis."

It is beyond telling that all these different imperialist countries and apartheid regimes have such deep problems with fascist infiltration. The fact is that the imperialist ruling class, some of whom, like Elon Musk, are fascists themselves, have historically used and continue to use the fascist mass movement to enforce their plunder of the planet.



The imperialist ruling class constantly tells the world that they are the bringers of democracy and civilization. They insist that their enemies are so savage and barbaric as to justify any force necessary to defeat them. Yet, some of the most powerful imperialists, such as the entire Musk family, are openly and proudly Nazis themselves. The supposed democratic Germany during the Cold War was chock-full of Nazi judges. One of the largest historically Black cities in the U.S. suffered under a recycled South African apartheid medical examiner for two decades.

New boss, same as the old boss.

The working people of the world don't need Nazi billionaires, Nazi doctors, Nazi judges, or any Nazis at all. The working class needs jobs, land, food, water, health care, and education. Down with the imperialist ruling class. Down with Elon Musk.

*Lev Koufax is an anti-Zionist Jewish activist.*



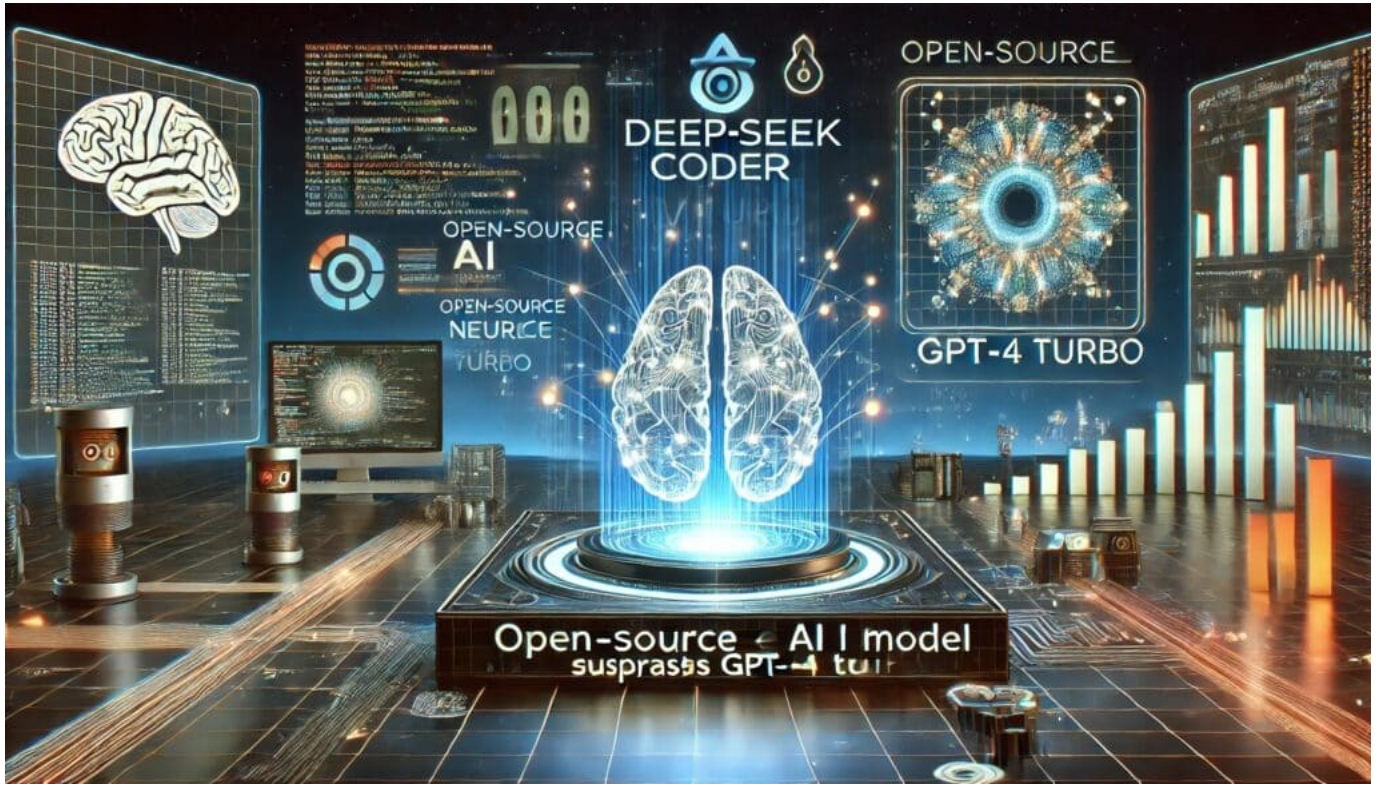
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## Open source vs. closed doors: How



# China's DeepSeek beat U.S. AI monopolies

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China's DeepSeek AI has just dropped a bombshell in the tech world. While U.S. tech giants like OpenAI have been building expensive, closed-source AI models, DeepSeek has released an open-source AI that matches or outperforms U.S. models, costs 97% less to operate, and can be downloaded and used freely by anyone.

While the U.S. tried to monopolize AI with economic sanctions on China and embargoes on semiconductor technology to China, China's technologically adept workforce quietly worked around these barriers.

While the Trump administration was busy constructing a \$500 billion AI boondoggle called Stargate, DeepSeek engineered a technological breakthrough that exposed the entire expensive Stargate charade as another giveaway to the wealthy.

DeepSeek's model outperformed OpenAI's best, using less data, less computing power, and a fraction of the cost. Even more remarkable, DeepSeek's model is open-source, meaning anyone can use, modify, and build on it. This stands in stark contrast to OpenAI's closed, profit-driven approach.

Corporate rulers want AI to monitor workers, lower wages, bust unions, or shift work to machines altogether, leading to cutbacks and layoffs. The World Economic Forum famously predicted that AI would replace millions of "useless" human workers by 2030.

Unlike U.S. tech companies seeking monopoly control, DeepSeek treats AI like electricity or the Internet — a basic tool that should be accessible to everyone.

The ability to offer a powerful AI system at such a low cost and with open access undermines the claim that AI must be restricted behind paywalls and controlled by corporations. In contrast to monopoly capitalism, this approach offers an alternative that fosters innovation and benefits society in general.

AI, as a public utility, can be used to complement human labor, improve safety, reduce drudgery, and create better-paying jobs rather than eliminate them.

Beyond mere manufacturing, China has methodically built technological ecosystems that now dominate global markets: Huawei's telecommunications, BYD's electric vehicles, CATL's next-generation battery technologies, and Tongwei Solar's advanced photovoltaic systems.

In just 15 years, the global technological landscape has been transformed. Between 2003 and 2007, the United States led in 60 out of 64 key technologies. By 2022, this

dominance had reversed, with China leading in 52 technologies—a dramatic shift in global technological supremacy.



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# **China responds to Rubio's remarks on South China Sea after his phone call with Philippine FM**

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In response to a U.S. State Department statement claiming new U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio discussing Beijing's "dangerous and destabilizing actions in the South China Sea" with his Philippines counterpart Enrique Manalo over phone and underscoring the "ironclad" U.S. defense commitment to Manila, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Thursday that the U.S. is not a party to the South China Sea issue and has no right to interfere in the maritime issues between China and the Philippines.

Mao said “the military cooperation between the U.S. and the Philippines should not undermine China’s sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea, still less should such cooperation support or advance the Philippines’ illegal claims.” China will continue to take necessary steps to firmly safeguard its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests and uphold peace and stability in the South China Sea, said Mao.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke Wednesday local time with Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Enrique Manalo about issues of mutual concern, including so-called China’s “dangerous and destabilizing actions in the South China Sea.”

Rubio underscored the U.S.’ “ironclad commitments” to the Philippines under the Mutual Defense Treaty. The two sides also exchanged views on ways to advance security cooperation, expand economic ties for shared prosperity, and deepen avenues for further regional cooperation, according to a readout released by the U.S. Department of State on Wednesday.

Li Haidong, a professor at the China Foreign Affairs University, said that the U.S. will continue the diplomatic rhetoric, but to what extent Rubio’s remarks will turn into concrete actions in the region is still a question.

“The Marcos Jr. administration of the Philippines also needs to learn that the U.S., especially under the leadership of the Trump administration, will not be hijacked by any other countries, including its allies, for any unnecessary dangers,” Li noted.

Lü Xiang, an expert on U.S. studies and research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told the Global Times on Thursday that the Trump administration is likely to continue to launch groundless accusations against China’s legitimate acts in the region.

“However, the Trump administration will be less interested in getting involved too much on issues not directly related to U.S. core interests, as this is what ‘America First’ means. In addition, China now has much more strength [to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests] in the region, and the consequences of being ‘unnecessarily provocative’ would be unaffordable to both Washington and Manila,” Lü noted.

The Chinese military conducted [joint sea-air combat readiness patrols](#) in the South China Sea from January 17 to 19 to maintain peace and stability in the area, according to a statement by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Southern Theater Command. The statement was issued after the Philippine Navy held live fire drills and carried out joint maritime exercises with the U.S. in the South China Sea.

“Any military activity that stirs up trouble in the South China Sea is within our control,” the PLA statement read. The statement directly targets the provocative exercises conducted by the Philippine navy near Huangyan Dao, and its joint exercises with the U.S., Zhang Junshe, a Chinese military expert, told the Global Times.

Humphrey Arnaldo Russel, director of the China Research Center in the Institute for Strategy and Global Studies at the University of Indonesia, told the Global Times in an [exclusive interview published on Tuesday](#) that “ASEAN is a family. When a family faces a problem, it is unwise for one member to turn to external parties for ‘help.’ ASEAN, as a unity, is bound by shared values such as harmony, non-interference and the commitment to finding peaceful solutions to problems.”

“These core values will not change because of any single member’s actions. Therefore, it would be far more beneficial for the Philippines to engage directly with China, as this is where the solution lies,” said the Indonesian expert.

Source: [Global Times](#)



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# **A new military strategy of French neocolonialism in Africa: Reorganizing under the cover retreat**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 27, 2025

In his New Year's address, Alassane Ouattara, president of Ivory Coast since 2010—when he took power with the aid of French military intervention—[announced](#), “We have decided on the coordinated and organized withdrawal of French forces” from the country.

However, his address didn't mention terminating the 1961 military agreements with France. These “agreements are at the root of the problem. As long as these agreements exist, France will be able to use them to carry out military maneuvers or intervene at the request of its servants in power in Ivory Coast,” general secretary of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Ivory Coast (PCRCI), Achy Ekissi, told Peoples

Dispatch.

The only concrete commitment made by Ouattara in his speech was that “the camp of the 43rd BIMA, the Marine Infantry Battalion of Port-Bouët, will be handed over to the Ivorian Armed Forces as of January 2025.”

Originally known as the 43rd Infantry Regiment, and established in 1914 as a detachment of the French colonial army in Ivory Coast, this battalion served France “during both world wars, the Indochina War, and the Algerian War. In 1978, it was renamed the 43rd BIMA without altering its primary mission: safeguarding imperialist interests, particularly those of France, monitoring neocolonial regimes, and intervening militarily when necessary to uphold the neocolonial order,” PCRCI said in a statement.

Directly under French command, this battalion “is one of the visible faces of French domination in Ivory Coast,” which the former colonial power needs to invisibilize to salvage the last few military footholds it has left in its former colonies in the West African region.

### **France reorganizing toward ‘a less entrenched, less exposed model’ of military deployment**

“We have bases in Senegal, Chad, Ivory Coast, and Gabon. They are located in capital cities and sometimes even within expanding urban areas, making their footprint and visibility increasingly difficult to manage. We will need to adapt our base structure to reduce vulnerabilities, following a less entrenched, less exposed model,” General Thierry Burkhard, Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces, [reckoned](#) in January 2024.

By then, France had lost its major bases in the region. Amid a wave of protests against France’s continued economic and military domination of its former colonies,



the regimes it had backed in Mali, Burkina Faso, and [Niger were removed by coups](#), supported by the anti-colonial movements.

The popularly supported military governments replacing them ordered the French troops out. Enduring sanctions, threats of a France-backed military invasion, and attacks by terror groups it allegedly supports, the three neighboring countries united to form the Alliance of Sahel States (AES).

Reenergized by their success, the popular movements in other countries listed by Burkhard were growing, posing an increased threat to the French bases and its allied regimes, increasingly perceived as French puppets in the region.

Less than three months after the general had stressed the need for a “less entrenched, less exposed model” of French military deployment in this region, Macky Sall, who was then Senegal’s France-backed president, was ousted by popular vote in the March 2024 election. Promising to free Senegal from the yoke of French neocolonialism, the then-opposition leader Bassirou Diomaye Faye won the election, despite preelection violence and a crackdown by Sall’s government.

“Senegal is an independent country, it is a sovereign country and sovereignty does not accept the presence of [foreign] military bases,” President Diomaye [told](#) AFP in late November 2024. French military foothold in Senegal, the first in General Burkhard’s list of four former colonies where the last of its military bases were to be salvaged, is all but lost. Diomaye announced in his [New Year speech](#) that he had instructed his defense minister to draft a new policy ensuring the withdrawal of all foreign troops in 2025.

### **Electoral threat to French interests in Ivory Coast**

“France does not want to find itself in a situation like in Senegal, where the pro-imperialist camp was wiped out by Pan-Africanists” in the election, Ekissi [explains](#).

Ivory Coast's former President Laurent Gbagbo, who was bombed out of office by the French military in 2011 to bring Ouattara to power, is challenging Ouattara in the presidential election due in October 2025.

Ekissi described Gbagbo as a socialist who was "sometimes anti-imperialist and Pan-Africanist, but hesitant in directly combating French interests" during his presidency from 2000 to 2010. Anti-imperialism directed against France was not a part of the populist politics in the early years of his rule. Such politics was mostly limited to the small Communist Party, which was founded in 1990. But that was about to change.

Soon after Gbagbo took office in 2000, the Socialist Party-led coalition running the French government lost power in 2002. "The liberal wing of French imperialism, which had come to power, could not allow Gbagbo, a socialist, to lead the most important French neocolony in West Africa," [added](#) Ekissi.

## **Civil war**

Taking advantage of the discontent that had been brewing in the Muslim north, which had for decades felt marginalized by the Christian south, France helped Ouattara organize an armed rebellion in 2002.

After serving as the prime minister during the last three years of the one-party France-backed dictatorship of Félix Houphouët-Boigny—president of the country since independence in 1960 until his death in 1993—Ouattara had been marginalized in the succession race within the ruling party, which he then lost to Gbagbo in the 2000 election.

Following a five-year stint in the IMF as its deputy managing director from 1994 to 1999, Ouattara returned to domestic politics by starting a civil war in 2002 and dividing Ivory Coast's army.

In the meantime, French troops "positioned themselves between the two armies,

splitting Ivory Coast into two.” Repressing anti-French protests with massacres that killed hundreds in 2002 and again in 2004, French troops positioned themselves to become the key player in the crisis, which ended with the ouster of Gbagbo in 2011.

The election in 2010, in which Ouattara contested against Gbagbo, was “manipulated by France,” Ekissi maintained. Defecting to Ouattara’s base at a hotel in the capital Abidjan, guarded by French troops under the UN’s cover, the election commission’s president announced that Ouattara had won with 54.1 percent of the vote.

However, the country’s Constitutional Council declared the announcement as “invalid” as it was made after the deadline had expired. It thus reversed the verdict in favor of Gbagbo, citing “irregularities” in the results submitted by the election commission.

### **French bombardment of Ivory Coast’s presidential palace**

In the months after Gbagbo’s swearing-in ceremony in late 2010, French troops, operating mainly from the 43rd BIMA, killed thousands of soldiers and protesting civilians defending Gbagbo, Ekissi recalled. Finally bombing the presidential palace in April 2011, France helped Ouattara’s forces capture Gbagbo.

Accused of crimes against humanity, Gbagbo became the first former head of state to be tried at the time in the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Hague. Almost eight years after his arrest, he was [acquitted in 2019](#). The prosecutors’ appeal against his acquittal did not succeed. The ICC [upheld his acquittal](#) in 2021, following which he returned to Ivory Coast.

In March 2024, Gbagbo declared his candidacy for the presidential election in October 2025. The popular support he enjoys today is “unequivocal,” [said](#) Ekissi. And the popular movement against France is today stronger than ever before.

In the early years of Gbagbo's administration, after the civil war broke out in 2002, "people had already come to understand the full extent of France's ruthlessness, criminality, and manipulations," Ekissi [explained](#).

The anti-imperialist politics had begun to spill out of the confines of the left and consciously pan-Africanist organizations and into the populist domain. But the "hesitant leaders" of Gbagbo's party "had not allowed it to flourish."

### **'A rallying cry of the Ivorian people'**

However, after 2011, following France's bombardment of the presidential palace and killing of Ivory Coast's soldiers and civilian protesters, "the call for the unconditional withdrawal of French troops from Ivory Coast has become a rallying cry of the Ivorian people," [maintained](#) the PCRCI.

"Pan-Africanist and anti-imperialist victories in the AES countries have further galvanized the movement against France in Ivory Coast," [added](#) Ekissi. Ouattara's "imprisonment of human rights activists visiting Mali, Burkina Faso, or Niger for up to six months," has not succeeded in quelling the growing domestic popularity of the AES example. "Today, even the right wing or so-called centrist parties, historically opposed to any emancipatory struggle, dare not openly attack" the AES countries.

The demand for French withdrawal, initially championed only by the communists and Pan-Africanists, is now being raised by all major opposition parties. After Gbagbo emerged as a credible electoral threat to Ouattara's regime, the government barred him from contesting.

The stated reason was that, months after his acquittal by the ICC, the Ivorian judiciary had convicted him in absentia in 2019 of robbing the Central Bank, which he had nationalized. Arguing that he was "unfairly" convicted, Ekissi pointed out that "the Central Bank had never filed a complaint" against Gbagbo.

Relying on several legal arguments, his party has nominated him despite the government taking his name off the electoral roll. Other opposition parties are also growing increasingly assertive in their demand that the election must be “inclusive.”

With the prospect of the electoral defeat of Ouattara by a Pan-Africanist coalition on the horizon, France has been unable to find a replacement for him, Ekissi [explained](#). “It could accompany Ouattara in his madness to win these elections in blood. But this is a big risk, against which Senegal’s result is a warning.”

### **Feigning a retreat to confuse the sovereignty movement**

Instead, France is feigning a retreat in an attempt to “confuse the sovereignty movement, while waiting for an opportunity to reposition itself in the ‘center,’” camouflaging its military presence in the meantime, Ekissi [argued](#).

This decision, in line with the strategy articulated by Burkhard, requires France to get rid of its direct command of the 43rd BIMA, the country’s most visible and provocative structure of neocolonialism.

It was not Ouattara’s decision to expel French troops from this base, the Communist Party maintained, arguing that it was rather France that decided to hand over this “land asset” to the army of Ivory Coast to get rid of its visible presence.

But “there are light bases in Assini, Bouaké, and Korhogo,” Ekissi [pointed out](#), adding that U.S. troops expelled from AES countries have also set up a base in the Odienné region along the borders with Mali and Guinea.

The French army has also established an international counter-terrorism school in the coastal town of Jacqueville. It is a part of the NATO countries’ effort “to prepare destabilization operations to target the AES countries, and carry out surveillance and ‘neutralization’ of supposed Russian advances in the region,” he [said](#).

By merely receiving command of the 43rd BIMA, while retaining other smaller foreign military bases, training schools, and the 1961 military agreements with France, Ouattara is only helping “to hide its army from public view,” Ekissi [said](#).

“The imperialist power, sensing its end, is trying to protect its military power in the region with a new strategy,” involving a “minimal physical troop presence” scattered over “small mobile bases,” while “multiplying its training schools” and increasing “assistance operations,” [added](#) Ekissi.

### **Tried and tested in Benin**

“Since February 2023, Benin has served as the testing ground for this new military strategy,” the Communist Party of Benin (PCB) [said](#) in a statement. The increasing number of French troops arriving that year after their expulsion from the AES countries set up camp next to the Beninese military base in the Kandi region in the country’s north.

After this provoked a public backlash, the French presence was downsized in the region. French troops still operate from Kandi late at night, flying “military equipment and personnel to the airport constructed in the W National Park, located at the intersection of Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger.” But they are fewer in number, and do not maintain a high visibility in Kandi anymore, PCB’s first secretary Philippe Noudjenoume [told](#) Peoples Dispatch. “Another more discreet base has been constructed further inland near Ségbana.”

New camps, which the Beninese government calls “advanced posts,” have been cropping up “along the borders with Niger and Burkina Faso.” French troops have been dispersed across Beninese camps “to direct military operations and intelligence,” while officially masquerading as “instructors,” Noudjenoume explained.

“The objective” of such dispersal “is clear: to conceal the presence of French forces, whose previous concentration in military bases inflamed local patriotic sentiments, by making them less visible,” [reads](#) PCB’s statement.

This posture has allowed Benin’s President Patrice Talon to claim that there are no French military bases hosted in the country. “While technically true—there are no autonomous French military camps—the reality is different,” the statement [added](#). French military personnel, in collaboration with the European Union, are not only training and equipping the Beninese military but are also directing its ostensible counter-terror operations.

AES countries, on the other hand, have accused France of using such border bases in Benin and Ivory Coast to support terror operations aimed at destabilizing its popular governments that ordered French troops out.

Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger are “closely monitoring the deceptive maneuvers initiated by the French junta, which pretends to close its military bases in certain African countries, only to replace them with less visible mechanisms that pursue the same neocolonial ambitions,” the AES [said](#) in a statement in December 2024.

### **‘France itself has engineered its retreat’**

This statement followed the announcement of French troops’ withdrawal by Chad’s government in late November 2024, soon after Senegal’s president indicated in interviews that the continued presence of French troops was unacceptable.

However, unlike Senegal, Chad is not ruled by a Pan-Africanist movement-backed leader who came to power by defeating a France-backed incumbent in an election. Chad’s President Mahamat Déby is a second-generation French loyalist, whose military coup to inherit power after his dictator father’s death in April 2021 was backed by France.



Repressing anti-French protests with massacres, mass arrests, and custodial torture, Déby has since maintained his power through brute force.

With his main opponent from the Socialist Party Without Borders (PSF) being gunned down by his security forces and other serious opposition candidates being barred from contesting the election, Déby won the presidential election in May 2024, with his own prime minister playing the opposition candidate.

However, his grip on power had become increasingly insecure, with mass protests aching to break out again at the slightest opening of democratic space, amid murmurs of discontented sections of the army ready to back the anti-France protest movement against Déby.

His government's announcement of French troops' withdrawal in this backdrop was met with skepticism, despite affirming, unlike in the case of Ivory Coast, that it had scrapped its military agreement with France.

"All the African governments that have successfully expelled French troops from their territories have popular support, unlike Chad, where the people have endured unprecedented repression under Déby's rule backed by France," PSF's Ramadan Fatallah told Peoples Dispatch.

Other sections of the anti-French movement who initially believed in the slightest credibility of the announcement by Déby's government are also now increasingly skeptical.

Mahamat Abdraman, secretary general of the Rally for Justice and Equality of the Chadians (RAJET), [said](#) that "France itself has engineered its retreat" from Chad. It has "adopted a new method of colonization," requiring a smaller presence of its troops while embedding itself within African militaries and government. Déby's security adviser and former director of his political police, along with his foreign

minister and two of his wives, are all French nationals, he pointed out.

While continuing to exercise control through subtler means, France is “orchestrating” a formal withdrawal from Chad. Such a posture will allow it to deny responsibility for more domestic atrocities Déby’s regime may commit in the future and evade being openly implicated in any acts it may undertake to destabilize neighboring Niger at France’s behest, Abdraman [told](#) Peoples Dispatch.

The fact that France is compelled to cover up its tracks in the region with such maneuvers is a testimony to the “weakening” of its neocolonial power, [said](#) Ekissi. And “no amount of imperialist maneuvering can halt the inevitable collapse of French colonialism in Africa,” PCB’s statement concluded.

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# Like David Duke before him, Trump's goal is to reverse hard-won rights

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 27, 2025



Following is a piece by U.S. Marxist leader Sam Marcy on the 1991 gubernatorial campaign of neo-Nazi David Duke in Louisiana. We have already re-published Marcy's "[Message to the workers of Louisiana](#)" and argued that the movement against Duke provides lessons in combating fascist Trump.

In the present piece, Marcy explains what was truly *new* about Duke's campaign. He

argued that even if the racism was the same old, same old espoused by segregationists George Wallace and Lester Maddox in the Civil Rights era, Duke was more dangerous because the 1960s and '70s were a very different period politically from the early 1990s.

Marcy says:

"In the 1960s, when both Maddox and Wallace were trying to become national figures, their type of all-out, segregationist racism was basically *defensive* [emphasis added]: They were trying to hold onto white supremacy as it had existed for a century; they were trying to retain the status quo of racism. At that time, there was an upward, progressive movement throughout the whole country. ...

"In contrast to the present, it was a progressive era. ...

"The Duke movement is not just a defensive attempt to halt the progress of Civil Rights. It is a wholesale offensive to undo and reverse the historic gains made by the Black and other progressive forces.

"The Duke campaign comes in the midst of an anti-labor offensive. Gains made by the workers have been crumbling; the capitalist recession and the attacks on the living standards of the workers have brought frustration and anger. The labor movement has been forced into concession after concession. Strike breaking and scab herding are on the order of the day.

"The situation is ripe for a fascist demagogue to prey upon these frustrations, especially among the middle class who are losing their moorings to the bourgeoisie."

In 2025, most of the progressive gains of the past centuries have *already been reversed*. We are in a deeply reactionary period, with economic conditions rapidly deteriorating and staggering inequality being the order of the day. The situation now

is truly ripe for fascist demagogues, as Marcy said of 1991.

- Gregory E. Williams

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## **Perspectives on the Duke campaign**

By Sam Marcy, Nov. 14, 1991

The gubernatorial election in Louisiana is not just a referendum on racism. Of course, racism is the principal issue. But there is much more to it. To understand this struggle, you have to go beyond the external features of life in this important Southern state.

To many throughout the country, Louisiana is New Orleans, with the exciting nightlife and Old World charms of the French Quarter. It is the colorful Mardi Gras. But there is another Louisiana.

### **The other Louisiana**

It is the Louisiana of the giant oil refineries, the modern petrochemical plants, and the many metal foundries. Thousands of Black and white workers keep these industries going and depend on them for their livelihood. There are many more workers in the sawmills and paper plants. Still others produce salt and sulfur, which are marketed all over the United States and beyond.

Many thousands of laborers still work in the cotton fields, grow rice and soy beans, raise cattle, and have made Louisiana sweet potatoes a staple throughout the whole country.

But besides being a great producing state, Louisiana is also a vast battlefield between the working class and the absentee millionaires and billionaires who control all the vital arteries that make it so productive. And now, the capitalist recession has sharpened these class antagonisms.

The ruling class, in its effort to avoid taking responsibility for the deteriorating economic conditions of the workers, Black and white, has picked up a demagogue, one of the most venomous in Southern history. They want David Duke to divert the class struggle into reactionary, racist, and anti-labor channels.

### **Lester Maddox**

The earlier racist endeavors of the ruling class have to be taken into account in order to put the Duke adventure into proper historical context.

What are the specific characteristics that distinguish the current campaign of David Duke from those of Lester Maddox of Georgia and George Wallace of Alabama in the 1960s? Both were openly racist candidates supported by and associated with the Ku Klux Klan. And both got elected as governors.

Lester Maddox, elected governor of Georgia in 1966, was regarded in the rest of the country as no more than an oddity, an old-fashioned type of arch-segregationist. He made segregation the centerpiece of his campaign. A restaurant owner, he had achieved national notoriety a few years earlier when he stood in the door of his restaurant with an ax handle and said he'd physically drive away any Black person who tried to enter. He deliberately closed his establishment rather than desegregate it.

This got him the support of arch-segregationists in the state's ruling circles, who pushed his campaign for governor. However, from a national point of view, Maddox never was a significant political figure outside Georgia and its immediate Southern

environs.

Because Maddox couldn't succeed himself as governor, he ran in 1970 for lieutenant governor and was elected along with Jimmy Carter, the new governor. Trying again in 1974, he lost the primary election, thus ending his racist career. An appeal to outright racism was proving inadequate to stop the advance of the Civil Rights movement.

## **George Wallace**

His career bears somewhat of a kinship to that of George C. Wallace, who got even more national attention by defying the order of the federal government to desegregate the public schools of Alabama. This came after the Civil Rights movement had reached a truly massive scale. Wallace, then governor, got widespread publicity when he stood in the door of the University of Alabama to bar the entrance of African-American students. But he finally capitulated in the face of federal troops sent in by President John F. Kennedy.

Wallace created the biggest stir on the national level when he entered the race for president in 1968, again on a program of preserving white supremacy.

It was no accident, then, that David Duke, in a Nov. 2 television debate, managed to interject the names of both Maddox and Wallace. Did he want to show that both men were linked to the Klan but got elected anyway?

## **What makes Duke different?**

However, there are important differences between David Duke and these earlier racist politicians. What most distinguishes their careers from his is that they operated in a very different epoch.

In the 1960s, when both Maddox and Wallace were trying to become national



figures, their type of all-out, segregationist racism was basically defensive: They were trying to hold onto white supremacy as it had existed for a century; they were trying to retain the status quo of racism.

At that time, there was an upward, progressive movement throughout the whole country. The Civil Rights and liberation struggles had started in the 1950s. They picked up speed with the 1954 Supreme Court decision desegregating the schools, and then galloped ahead with the freedom marches in the South and the rebellions that broke out in Watts, Detroit, Harlem, Newark and dozens of other cities when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

Wallace attempted to make his campaign a national one. But it faltered. Some thought that the assassination attempt which left him partially paralyzed was his undoing, but that wasn't it. The real reason was that the Black liberation movement was on the rise and neither Maddox nor Wallace could overcome it. Eventually, Wallace did get back in the Alabama state house, but only because he moderated his program.

The all-out racism of the Maddox-Wallace type proved altogether inadequate to stop the inevitable development and considerable victories of the Black and Latino movements. Segregation eventually had to be abandoned.

### **Tried to hold back a progressive tide**

The 1960s and '70s were years of upsurge not only of the oppressed nationalities but also of other progressive movements. The anti-war movement was particularly youthful and dynamic. The women's movement was beginning to broaden into a mass awakening. Lesbians and gays were asserting their rights and adopting militant tactics.

The anti-imperialist movement was making gains everywhere. The very existence of

China and the Soviet Union provided support to the national liberation struggles and the progressive and anti-imperialist forces.

In contrast to the present, it was a progressive era. Even someone like George Shultz, best known as Reagan's Secretary of State, mediated on behalf of hospital union Local 1199 in the South when he was Nixon's Secretary of Labor. And the union won a victory.

Up until the recession of 1974-76, the labor movement was on the rise. Black and white workers were making gains in the South. Rank-and-file workers often rebelled against union leaders who were too moderate.

### **Fascists on the offensive**

The present racism of David Duke differs in style and tone from that of Maddox and Wallace, even if in essence it's the same old stuff. However, he is much more dangerous because this is a very different epoch.

The Duke movement is not just a defensive attempt to halt the progress of Civil Rights. It is a wholesale offensive to undo and reverse the historic gains made by the Black and other progressive forces.

The Duke campaign comes in the midst of an anti-labor offensive. Gains made by the workers have been crumbling; the capitalist recession and the attacks on the living standards of the workers have brought frustration and anger. The labor movement has been forced into concession after concession. Strike breaking and scab herding are on the order of the day.

The situation is ripe for a fascist demagogue to prey upon these frustrations, especially among the middle class who are losing their moorings to the bourgeoisie.

Duke is utilizing the economic situation in Louisiana, where the bust began some

years ago with the collapse of the oil industry, to foment racism. But what is happening there is part and parcel of a national phenomenon — serious unemployment, wage cuts, and budget cuts which lead to more layoffs of state and municipal workers.

His two rivals in the gubernatorial race, Edwin Edwards and, in the primary, Buddy Roemer, have not addressed these questions at all. They've exacerbated the situation with their policies. They have no more answers than James Florio, the governor of New Jersey, who carries out the same policies but without the racist demagoguery.

Racism alone could not win in the Louisiana of today, were it not for the economic disaster produced by capitalist decline. Of course, those really responsible for this crisis are not the Black people or the poor, but the bankers and businessmen, especially the oil companies.

### **Depression spawned Hitler**

They are the ones supporting Duke behind the scenes, in the same way the bankers and industrialists supported Hitler — one of Duke's idols. Hitler started off as a local phenomenon in Munich who would never have attained national stature had it not been for the severe and unprecedented capitalist breakdown that began with the stock market crash of 1929 and lasted through the 1930s.

Hitler served the German capitalists by breaking the back of the strong workers' movement there. He used both violence and demagoguery to divert popular anger over the economic crisis into antisemitism, making Jews the scapegoats for everything that had gone wrong while diverting attention away from the real capitalist rulers of Germany.

While he did the dirty work of the capitalists by breaking up the workers'

organizations and decimating their socialist and communist leaders, he demagogically called his party the National Socialist Workers Party.

### **Racist scapegoating**

The Duke campaign is still in its embryonic stage. Nevertheless, it is clearly a fascist movement that is attempting to utilize the disastrous economic situation in Louisiana, made particularly severe by the slump in oil and gas there, to break into national politics.

The ruling class in Louisiana doesn't want another populist of the Huey Long type, who actually did carry out economic reforms that aided the working class. They want an out-and-out demagogue who can utilize racism and make promises and yet be totally controlled by big business.

The danger of the Duke campaign goes beyond being an attack against Black people. It's an attack against the whole working class. It's an attempt to reverse historical gains made by Black, white, and Latin people, women, gays, and others. It's a real fascist threat and has profound national and international significance.

It is already public knowledge that Duke's financial contributions come not only from sources in Louisiana but from New York, Los Angeles, and elsewhere. The Maddox-Wallace segregationists had no international connections. Maddox was regarded as an oddity, a curiosity, who represented the past. Wallace had a broader movement, but it, too, foundered on the basis that it really had no national base, let alone international support. It was strictly a Southern racist movement.

The Duke candidacy, however, represents an international phenomenon. Duke finds kinship not only in New York City's racist elements but as far away as Switzerland, France, Germany, and England. Many eyes on the global front are carefully watching what happens in Louisiana.

Even A.M. Rosenthal, a conservative columnist for the New York Times, is greatly alarmed at the prospect of “a Nazi governor” being elected for the first time in the U.S. However, he leaves out the fundamental causes for the rise of the Duke movement — the capitalist economic crisis — just as bourgeois historians leave out what was the basis for the rise of Nazism in Germany.

All the more is it necessary to tender the greatest support to the anti-Duke, anti-racist, pro-labor, progressive movement that is arising in response to this very significant threat. As has been seen so many times before, it is the whip of political reaction that stimulates and brings to the fore the vital forces and inexhaustible energy of a working-class resurgence.



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## **Did Trump ‘fix’ TikTok? Users report censorship after outage**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 27, 2025

On Jan. 19, after a 12-hour outage, TikTok resumed service for its U.S. users, but

many noticed what they believe to be a shift in their experience. Shortly after regaining access on Sunday, creators began posting videos expressing concerns that the platform's recommendation algorithm felt different.

Some users claimed they were no longer seeing the types of videos typically suggested to them, while others reported issues with their primary feed, search function, and comments, alleging potential censorship. Posts highlighting these changes have garnered millions of likes.

On X, [@AlexNaivety](#) declared: "TikTok is dead. 'Free Palestine' is now considered a symbol of hate speech."

Some speculated that the shutdown involved a system jigger to make changes demanded by Donald Trump.

### **At Trump's inauguration**

TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company, but it operates independently, with its headquarters in Singapore. The Chinese government does not own TikTok. The Singapore-born and Harvard-trained CEO, Shou Zi Chew, attended Trump's inauguration, sitting next to Tulsi Gabbard, Trump's pick for national intelligence director.

When the platform came back online, U.S. users were greeted with a message crediting its return to Trump: "As a result of President Trump's efforts, TikTok is back in the U.S.!"

Shortly after taking office on Jan. 20, the president issued the order to delay the app's ban for 75 days. Trump announced on Truth Social that the executive order "extends the period of time before the law's prohibitions take effect, so that we can make a deal."

During a press briefing on Jan. 20, Trump said that he envisions either Tesla CEO Elon Musk or Oracle Chairman Larry Ellison as potential buyers of TikTok.

## **Tech imperialism**

TikTok's success and its ability to compete with U.S.-based social media giants like Facebook and Instagram made it a target. The TikTok ban is part of a broad effort to assert control over a highly successful global platform that operates outside U.S. corporate ownership.

Some call it "tech imperialism," with the foreign-owned platform being forced to either turn over ownership or be banned. Compelling a foreign company to sell its U.S. operations has never been done before.

The action against TikTok comes amid what many describe as a "New Cold War" by the U.S. against China. TikTok, with its massive user base and cultural influence, became an especially prominent target.

Washington is actively targeting Chinese tech companies that are gaining global prominence and influencing technology standards. This is evident in actions taken against Huawei's 5G infrastructure, TikTok's social media platform, and efforts to restrict China's access to advanced semiconductor technology. Tech imperialism indeed.



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# U.S. Senate votes unanimously to confirm warmonger Rubio

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 27, 2025

On the same day that Donald Trump was inaugurated as a wannabe dictator, every U.S. senator voted to confirm Florida Sen. Marco Rubio as Secretary of State. There wasn't a single no vote.

Rubio is a super war hawk who is determined to overthrow the governments of Cuba and Venezuela. He's such a vicious enemy of the People's Republic of China that the Chinese government has barred him from entering the country.

Yet Bernie Sanders voted to confirm Rubio. So did every Democrat in the Senate. It shows how phony and useless the Democratic Party's leadership will be to oppose Trump's program of war, racism, and cutbacks.

Rubio [told the Senate](#) Foreign Relations Committee that China was "the most potent and dangerous near-peer adversary this nation has ever faced." He claimed that "in



less than 10 years virtually everything that matters to us in life will depend on whether China will allow us to have it or not — everything from the blood pressure medicine we take to what movies we get to watch.”

“Holy hypertension,” Robin might have said to Batman about this war propaganda. Iran will continue to be a target as will Yemen.

Marco Rubio was sworn into office by race-baiting Vice-President JD Vance, who claimed that Haitian residents of Springfield, Ohio, were eating cats and dogs. Within hours Rubio [met with the ambassadors](#) of India, Japan, and Australia — who, along with the United States, formed the so-called Quad — to plot new aggressive moves against the People’s Republic of China.

Trump’s choice as Secretary of State also threatened Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Rubio told senators that he was down with Trump using military force against Mexico.

Rubio [claimed](#) that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela “is governed by a narco-trafficking organization.” That’s the same lie that the first President Bush used to invade Panama in 1989, killing thousands of Panamanians.

As a political representative of the counterrevolutionaries in Miami, Marco Rubio has a special hatred for socialist Cuba. While Trump & Co. are planning World War 3 against China, the first attacks by the Pentagon may be in Latin America.

## **What we must do**

The resistance that will stop Trump’s terrorist regime has to be built in our neighborhoods, unions, and movements. We have to protect our fellow workers who are immigrants from being seized by La Migra. Transgender people, particularly youth, must not be victimized.

The labor movement — marching alongside all those oppressed and threatened — needs to call a new Solidarity Day. It's only poor and working people that can stop Trump and fascism.

Never forget that 22 Democrats in the House of Representatives in 2023 joined with Republicans to [censure](#) Rashida Tlaib — the only Palestinian-American in Congress — for attacking the genocide in Gaza. The next year, she stood alone to oppose Netanyahu when the bloody war criminal addressed Congress.

Millions of dollars were spent to defeat Cori Bush, Tlaib's fellow fighter in Congress. Any elected official who wants to do the right thing will face retribution.

It was the Democratic caucus that removed Harlem congressperson Adam Clayton Powell, Jr, as chair of the House Education and Labor Committee. Powell fought to raise the minimum wage, whose [real value has dropped](#) 32% since it was last raised in 2009.

The working class — which includes all the unemployed and those locked up in prison — also needs its own political party. A party that's socialist, fights all forms of bigotry, and whose elected members won't vote for a warmonger like Marco Rubio.

Into the streets to stop Trump!



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# **Thousands protest Trump's coronation, vow to fight billionaire oligarchy**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 27, 2025

Washington, D.C., Jan. 20 - Despite below-freezing temperatures and strong winds, a thousand or more people took to the streets today during President Donald Trump's inauguration to demonstrate that the movement for Palestine and for workers' and migrants' rights isn't going anywhere just because the oligarchy-supporting fascist has now taken back the Oval Office for a second term. In fact, our united struggle for liberation will only continue to intensify against Trump's plans to enact his far-right billionaire agenda against the working class fully.

That agenda includes but is not limited to: mass deportations of migrant workers, severe repression of unions' rights, LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights, and the student intifada, and more reckless spending for the U.S. war machine to further its aggression against the Axis of Resistance in the Middle East, against China and

Latin America, and in Ukraine through the U.S.-NATO proxy war against Russia.

The action was organized by the We Fight Back Network, a coalition of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, the Palestinian Youth Movement, Maryland 2 Palestine, and Anakbayan DC, with dozens of other endorsing organizations including the Peoples Power Assembly and Struggle-La Lucha who were well represented in the streets.

People gathered at Malcolm X Park, a very fitting location for MLK Day, symbolic of the continuous struggle for justice once led by these well-known revolutionaries, all while our fascist government once again used this day to try to reduce both men's legacies, pushing the myth of their opposition to each other. We know that they both knew that extreme poverty and racism in this country are directly linked to capitalism and militarism. They both also knew that the only way to end these material conditions is for all oppressed workers to unite together and fight back against the ruling class.

During the rally, it was announced that Indigenous revolutionary and political prisoner Leonard Peltier, who was wrongfully incarcerated over 50 years ago for the murder of two FBI agents, had finally been granted executive clemency in one of President Biden's final acts before leaving office. This surprise announcement brought immense joy and relief to an already fired-up crowd ready to take to the streets.

People marched down 16th Street past various embassies and luxury apartments, much to the disgust of a few Trump supporters straining their necks to make their obnoxious voices heard amongst the roar of those chanting "No Trump, No KKK, No fascist USA!" "The people, united, will never be defeated!" and "There is only one solution, intifada, revolution!" to name a few.

While both the MPD and U.S. Park Police encroached on the marching crowd with

their bicycles on the sidewalks, other onlookers watched from either their balconies or on the sidewalks, taking plenty of photos and videos. A notable feature that stood out against the various signs and protest art held by the crowd was a large makeshift guillotine smeared in fake blood with a sign underneath that read “COME GET SUM!” an obvious jab at the billionaire oligarchy set to rule during Trump’s second presidency, inspiring the need for revolution against the ruling class.

The march then turned onto Massachusetts Avenue before stopping at the Philippine Embassy, where members of Malaya DC and Anakbayan DC held another brief but energetic rally, which denounced the economic and militaristic relationship between both Trump and President Marcos Jr.’s governments. “We will see that [President Ferdinand] Marcos Jr. will continue to intensify militarization in the Philippines,” said Norynne Caleja of Malaya DC. “We will continue to see the United States bring forth funding for aerial bombings in our peasant communities, in our Indigenous lands.”

The march continued down Massachusetts Avenue before ending at DuPont Circle, where the final and perhaps most spirited rally was held. Speakers emphasized the importance of continuing to organize and build alternative structures outside of the capitalist, imperialist system that has worked exactly as intended: to press the boot further onto the necks of the working class through starvation wages, lack of affordable housing, union-busting, piss-poor education and health care, and insanely high grocery prices.

The struggle for a better future for all is a commitment we must continue to make, and, seeing as we are no strangers to what repression against our movement has looked like under a Biden administration, we must not retreat when the right-wing extremists under Trump launch their all-out assault against us!

We must revive the fighting spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as well as all the great revolutionaries who precede us, as it is only through the power of the people

that we will put an end to this seemingly endless nightmare of capitalism! Long live Palestine! Long live Lebanon! Long live the struggle for liberation! Long live international solidarity! The people will continue to fight back!



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# **Baltimore rallies for sanitation workers and against genocide**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 27, 2025

The chill of winter and impending rain showers did not faze the Baltimore community as roughly 60 people gathered for a rally and march to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 18, 2025. The demonstration focused on standing with sanitation workers, the struggle for union rights, and prioritizing workers' rights above government funding of war and genocide. The group marched from the McKeldin Plaza to Baltimore city hall, chanting slogans like "What's disgusting? Union Busting!" and "Money for workers and education, not for war and occupation!."

Once at City Hall, the program began with remarks from Andre with the Peoples Power Assembly, speaking about how the community can take inspiration from Dr. King's fighting spirit. The first speaker was Colby Byrd, an activist with the Peoples Power Assembly deeply involved in the struggle to win rights for Baltimore's sanitation workers ever since two Baltimore sanitation workers died on the job due to unsafe working conditions. [Colby's speech](#) connected the struggle of the sanitation workers to the words of Dr. King Jr. as well as the struggle in Palestine, highlighting that unity between people and workers across the world will allow the chains of oppression to be broken:

"We must not let the city continue to choke the voices of our class siblings at the Department of Public Works (DPW) 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 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."

The next speaker read a statement written by an Amazon worker in solidarity with sanitation workers and all oppressed people. The statement spoke of the hypocrisy at Amazon and how on the same day this worker heard that Amazon cut its diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, they first saw a shrine and banner celebrating Dr. King Jr. in the lobby of the warehouse. The statement also highlighted how Amazon has worked to crush unions as well as allowed their facial recognition technology to be used against migrant workers and in the genocide of the Palestinian people.

The program continued with talks from representatives of the Peoples Power Assembly and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, speaking about Palestine, the fight for prisoners' rights in Baltimore, and workers' rights. Gregory Williams, co-

editor of Struggle La Lucha, [spoke at the rally](#) and demonstrated how the struggles in Baltimore connect to struggles across the country as well as the work of Dr. King Jr., as he spoke about a similar sanitation worker struggle in his home city of New Orleans. The workers in New Orleans formed the City Waste Union and went on strike to demand better safety conditions and fair pay:

“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.”

Despite the efforts of the ruling class to crush the strike, the undying spirit of the workers brought about change, inspiring those in attendance that the fight today would ensure a better tomorrow. The demonstration concluded with attendees gathering in a Black-owned restaurant to build connections and discuss plans for the future. Overall, the event stoked the fire of resistance and showed the community that the struggle would continue with strength from solidarity.

[embedpress]<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DE-kxMHy566/?igsh=MTczYXJ5MThxMXl6NA==>[/embedpress]



