

# **Cuba will win in the face of the imperialist onslaught!**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 23, 2025



## **Statement by the Revolutionary Government**

U.S. President Donald Trump has attacked Cuba from day one and without any pretext. The decision to reestablish the ironclad economic war measures against Cuba, which his predecessor eliminated only days before, is a demonstration of the aggressiveness of U.S. imperialism against the sovereignty, peace and well-being of the Cuban population. Among them is the inclusion of our country, once again, in the arbitrary list of States that supposedly sponsor terrorism, a designation that

shows an absolute disregard for the truth.

This is not surprising. The statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on January 14 already warned: "The government of that country could reverse in the future the measures adopted today, as has happened on other occasions and as a sign of the lack of legitimacy, ethics, consistency and reason of its conduct against Cuba." He also said that "American politicians do not usually stop to find justification...". This is how the country is governed.

Trump has interpreted his coming to power as the coronation of an emperor. His ambition includes, just to start, the conquest of Canada, the usurpation of Greenland, the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico and the deprivation of the Panamanians of their canal. The hegemonic Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny, which were imposed by blood and fire in Latin America and the Caribbean, are the guide of the new government team.

He is associated with the groups and politicians who have made aggression against Cuba a way of life, have profited for decades from the anti-Cuban business and today share the intoxication of the new president. They all have a high responsibility in the difficult economic situation of the country and in the increase of the migratory flow from Cuba to the United States.

This new act of aggression by the United States government against the Cuban people shows, once again, the true, cruel, merciless objective of these and so many other measures of siege and suffocation, which are applied against Cuba for the purpose of domination. It constitutes a reaction of impotence in the face of the inability to bend our will and in the face of the respect, sympathy and support that the Revolution arouses among the peoples of the world.

The economic blockade, its reinforcement and the new aggressive measures will continue to weigh, with a very damaging effect, on our economy, the standard of

living, the potential for development and the legitimate dreams of justice and well-being of the Cuban people, as has been the case in recent years.

They will not divert us from the socialist path, from the effort to recover the economy, from promoting the greatest solidarity, creativity, talent, spirit of work, and from defending as an impregnable bastion the freedom, independence, sovereignty and privilege of building a future without foreign interference.

The Cuban people are grateful for the many expressions of support and solidarity received from all over the world, from governments, Cubans living abroad, parliaments, political, religious and social organizations, and from political figures in the United States and other countries.

No one should be fooled. The Cuban people expressed themselves with clear determination and strength in the march on December 20th. Here the conviction prevails that CUBA WILL WIN!

HOMELAND OR DEATH, WE WILL WIN!

Havana, January 21, 2025

([Cubaminrex](#))



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# Stop funding wars, start funding climate action

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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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 there long ago before the glitterati began moving in. They are working class.

Other working-class people have homes passed down from parents and grandparents who moved there when it was possible for people of modest income. There has also been a staggering loss of jobs for people who serviced the wealthier class, such as gardeners, housekeepers, and maintenance workers.

### **Impact on African American community**

Altadena was a rare community where African American residents had found a welcoming home during the great migration from the Jim Crow South. At its height in 1970, the Black population of Altadena was 30%. Even now, it is higher than the national average Black population at 18%.

Until this fire, statistics painted a picture of a prosperous community. Generational wealth, with home ownership double the national average for African American neighborhoods, was evident. However, the 1960s Civil Rights Movement forced the passage of the Fair Housing Act, which outlawed the practice of redlining.

Banks in most areas of the country evaded the law and continued racist discrimination in housing. But not Altadena. Homeownership is where most wealth is for working-class families. The loss from the fires in this beautiful community in the foothills of the Angeles Forest is a tragic setback for thousands of people.

### **Criminal acts of capitalism**

As soon as the scale of the crisis became apparent, news of all the failures and criminal acts of capitalism began to emerge online and on social media. State Farm,

the largest property and casualty insurer in the U.S., had raked in \$104.2 billion in 2023, but three months before the fire, it began pulling out of “risky” markets, including Southern California, where it refused to renew many homeowners’ policies. A half dozen other insurance companies had already pulled out before this year.

News of the \$17 million cut to the LA Firefighters’ budget reemerged in the headlines too. The earlier wrangling over the city budget gave an increase to notoriously racist LAPD at the same time as cutting fire safety. The cuts forced the department to lay off civilian staff, including mechanics, and dozens of fire trucks sat idle in an LAFD parking lot as Altadena and Pacific Palisades burned.

### **Landlords are price gouging**

Activists in the LA Tenants Union put together a spreadsheet that lists hundreds of greedy landlords who are price gouging. It shows the already absurd costs of housing in LA that, in hundreds of cases, doubled or tripled as soon as the news of the fires broke. Those landlords belong in jail. Gov. Gavin Newsom declared it illegal, but the record of California prosecuting price gougers, including landlords, after disasters is nil. It has never happened.

The fire in Pacific Palisades began at about 10:30 a.m. on Jan. 7. Despite warnings about the weather and the dry conditions, the city and county fire departments’ response was less than in previous times of danger. The fire quickly overwhelmed their resources.

The first evacuation order was late, but thousands began evacuating anyway. Sunset Boulevard is the main route to the other Los Angeles neighborhoods. It became so clogged that people abandoned their cars and fled the flames on foot. Later, to bring in more fire equipment, bulldozers smashed cars out of the way.

The other major fire began in the evening near Eaton Canyon, quickly engulfing Altadena and parts of Pasadena. The winds were too violent for helicopters that were sent to drop water. Firefighters' command centers repeatedly relocated away from the flames. A nursing home housing 93 residents self-evacuated. Staff pushed patient's beds and wheelchairs into the parking lot to wait for rescue.

As of Jan. 18, the Eaton and Pacific Palisades fires are still burning. Firefighters are making progress on containment, having had their ranks bolstered by hundreds of prisoners being paid \$10.24 a day. Firefighters from the Navajo Nation, Mexico, and Canada are all helping. A brief respite from the fierce Santa Ana winds is giving them a window of opportunity as well, but the winds are expected to pick up again on Jan. 22, according to the meteorologists at the National Weather Service. Already, the fires have burned the largest urban area in California's history.

### **Climate change fuels unprecedented destruction**

Southern California is a fire-prone area, but the fires that began on Jan. 7 are qualitatively different. Capitalist-induced climate change has set up disastrous fires in two ways.

Southern California's regular rainy and dry seasons did not occur in 2024. Instead, a historic, long, terrible drought was followed by heavy rains, which produced a lot of new vegetation. Then came eight months of virtually no rain, which dried the underbrush of chaparral and other plant life to massive amounts of tinder.

Under these conditions, a spark caused by anything can start a fire, and the hot, dry Santa Ana winds are a regular weather pattern that can make fires challenging to extinguish. This time, global warming intensified the winds, which generally can gust up to 70 miles an hour. They whipped through the mountain passes at speeds up to 100 miles an hour.

The monstrous winds blew hot embers for miles. They pushed the flames forward throughout Pacific Palisades and Altadena communities, creating the two worst wildfires in California in living memory.

Investigations are underway to determine what sparked the two major fires, as well as several others that were smaller. Evidence is being considered that smoldering embers from a previous fire set off by New Year's Eve fireworks reignited in the neighborhood called the Highlands of Pacific Palisades.

### **Electrical equipment explosions**

Witnesses, videos, and photos show sparks and the sounds of explosions near electrical equipment in the hills above Altadena. Southern California Edison owns the equipment, but officials won't definitively say they are at fault.

Altadena residents have launched lawsuits. Attorneys for Evangeline Iglesias, who lost her home, asked a judge to order SCE to preserve evidence, citing the possibility of a coverup.

Out of 20 California wildfires since the turn of the century, eight were proven to be caused by faulty electrical equipment or power lines being broken from towers during high winds. This problem could be mitigated by burying power lines.

Many power lines in Europe are "undergrounded." SCE says it is working on an "undergrounding" project. The company says the cost of \$1-3 million per mile presents difficulties, and the project is moving at a snail's pace. Their parent company, Edison International, has a market capitalization of about \$24 billion. The cables *are* buried in the wealthiest part of Pacific Palisades, the Highlands, but not anywhere in Altadena.

Attorney Ben Crump, the attorney for the family of George Floyd and for many other civil rights cases, is representing the family of retired pharmacy technician Erliene

Kelly, who perished in the Eaton Fire in the first wrongful death suit against SCE.

## **Demanding reparations from Big Oil**

Another group of Altadena fire survivors held a press conference to pressure the state for legislation that would demand reparations from Big Oil. Resident Sam James was [quoted in the Guardian](#) when she spoke about the loss of her grandfather's home and the overall loss of Black families' generational wealth. James said, "It should not continuously fall on us to address the consequences of big oil's negligence! They must take responsibility for the harm that they've caused, pay reparations to the affected communities who lost their homes and businesses, and take immediate steps to mitigate further damage."

## **A global crisis**

This tragic episode for Los Angeles is a microcosm of the global crisis of climate change. Huge capitalist corporations continue to drill and frack for oil and gas even with all the crises, death, and destruction caused by the heated atmosphere. Like the residents of Altadena, Global South countries have to fight the U.S. and other big imperialist countries for reparations in the form of the Loss and Damage fund created at the UN's series of annual climate conferences.

The Biden administration's flagship legislation was supposed to address climate change. It was a staggering amount of money - more than \$800 billion - earmarked for mitigation and adaptation. But still not enough.

Furthermore, much of it was directed toward projects that enable rather than phase out fossil fuel exploitation. On the first day of his second term in office, Trump withdrew from the 2015 Paris Agreement.

According to Britain's Met Office, 2024, the hottest year on record, also saw the most significant spike in CO2 emissions ever recorded and has already surpassed

the goal of 1.5 set in Paris in 2015 for the first time. The Met's report says that a drastic reduction in fossil fuels must happen soon to get back on track.

Surpassing the threshold in one year doesn't mean the goal can't still be met. However, much more needs to be invested in research and development to meet the planet's growing energy needs and eliminate fossil fuels.

A first step toward real funding would be to halt all spending for the Pentagon, stop funding wars and genocide, end all U.S. weapons production, and end all U.S.-led military alliances that menace the world. Studies have shown that the annual spending for all of that is somewhere near \$2.5 trillion. There is another \$6.9 trillion - more than the GDP of all but two countries in the world - being held by non-banking U.S. firms.

All this money has been stolen from the labor of the worldwide working class. It's time to take it back and use it for the future of the planet and all of humanity.



# Racism and exploitation: Incarcerated firefighters and a burning city

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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The State of California boasts one of the highest minimum wages in the country at \$16.50 an hour **unless you're a prisoner**. The reality of pay beneath minimum wage is no different for the hundreds of incarcerated workers in California who have been pressed into service to combat the most destructive fires in Los Angeles County history. The fact that a measly \$16.50 still manages to be one of the best minimum wages in the 50 states is a topic for another day.

Since a series of fires have rolled through northwestern Los Angeles, including the Palisades and Eaton fires, local and state authorities have struggled to contain the blaze as it advances towards the more densely populated city proper. In this desperation, the California Department of Corrections deployed over 900 incarcerated firefighters to the front line against the deadly wildfires.

These incarcerated workers make a minimum of \$5.80 and a maximum of \$10.24 a day. Needless to say, an incarcerated firefighter's "day" is unlikely to be a standard eight-hour day. It is entirely common for firefighters to work 24-hour shifts.

Prison labor is used widely across the United States. Incarcerated workers produce roughly \$9 billion in services and \$2 billion in goods per year for an absolute pittance. There is nowhere in the country where incarcerated workers are entitled to minimum wage. This is all allowed under an exception to the 13th Amendment prohibition on slavery.

The LA fires have brought this issue back into the spotlight as hundreds of prisoners risk their lives for dollars a day performing menial and grueling work. According to [\*The Marshall Project\*](#), incarcerated firefighters generally work on “hand crews” using hand tools to clear vegetation and dig trenches to slow the spread of wildfires. The operation of fire hoses or the spreading of flame retardants is left to the professional firefighters, all while prison laborers swelter and struggle in the dirt.

The entire capitalist system is predicated on underpaying workers to maximize the ruling class’s profits. This principle applies to workers in the public and private sectors. The ruling class is fanatically committed to as little state investment as possible in programs that benefit the general welfare and as much as possible in corporate tax breaks and militarized police forces. For this reason, incarcerated workers generally comprise 30% of California’s firefighting force.

The job of a firefighter is an essential part of society. This job should be a public service that is equally funded, with workers fairly compensated and provided with health care. Not only do firefighters risk their lives to immediate danger without a question, they are also exposed to invisible toxic chemicals that burn from the industrial waste capitalism produces. Incarcerated firefighters have no health care. [Cancer](#) is the leading cause of death for firefighters more generally.

In addition to the class oppression inherent in prison slave labor, the Los Angeles firefighting crisis highlights the racism at the heart of U.S. capitalism. Black and Latino people, mostly men, comprise 71% of California’s prison population, but only 55% of the overall population. Only 5% of California’s population is Black according to the 2020 U.S Census; however, almost 30% of California’s prisoners are Black. So when these prisoners are ordered into the field to dig a ditch ahead of an advancing fire, the chances are those are Black and Brown people facing hyper-exploitation and the hardest of labor – as is so often the case in this country.

Progressive Twitch Streamer [Hassan Piker](#) conducted an unfiltered interview with

incarcerated firefighters on Jan. 11, as the fires burned high. “It’s way better because if I was in the prison yard, I’m seeing guys get stabbed, get beat up, the cops treat us like shit, but here we get better treatment,” he said. “They talk to us like humans. We got a job. We’re underpaid, but we have a job. And then the community shows us all kinds of love. We never received that growing up.”

The irony of these men and women who receive this training is that once they are released from prison, it is rare that they get hired as full-time firefighters due to their status as formerly incarcerated people. This country needs more firefighters, and they should be fairly compensated, not exploited.

During the LA fires, billionaire and former Republican mayoral candidate, Rick Caruso, hired privately contracted firefighters to protect his shopping mall in the Palisades. The mall, a prominent symbol of capitalism, remains relatively untouched. Meanwhile, the neighborhoods and schools in the surrounding area were consumed in flames. Caruso and other LA capitalists defend their choice to protect the mall where Angelinans work and congregate.

One central danger in this situation is a greater reliance on private contractors for the proliferation of public services and spaces. As public services are privatized, the quality of the service often plummets as profit takes the driver’s seat. One can simply look to the aftermath of Texas’s or Puerto Rico’s privatized power grid as examples of the utter chaos ushered in by privatization.

The destruction and subsequent exploitation created by these fires provide strong arguments against capitalism. As long as an ultra-wealthy few direct the affairs of the U.S. working class, macabre scenarios akin to the incarcerated firefighters deployed around Los Angeles will continue to manifest.

For all these reasons, the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles is demanding a full people’s program to confront the fires, including a clear path to

permanent employment for incarcerated firefighters and strong unions for all workers combating these fires.

Please see the Harriet Tubman Center's full program [here](#).



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# **Harriet Tubman Center of Los Angeles issues 10 demands for people's recovery in wake of devastating fires**

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# **Money & support for fire victims and the people of Los Angeles, not war and genocide**

Fires continue to rage; it is key that every possible effort, both local and national, is undertaken to STOP the fires. If the government can spend billions on wars abroad and genocide in Palestine, then it is urgent to turn our priorities around.

## **We demand of local, state & federal officials:**

- 1. Stop landlord looting & end price gouging. Rollback rents now!**
- 2. Provide emergency housing and compensation for all.** We need a rent and mortgage rollback across the Los Angeles region and an eviction moratorium. Provide 0% interest loans to workers, the poor, and small businesses to rebuild, and provide equal relief for renters who often have no insurance.
- 3. Workers & people's take-over of the greedy insurance companies.** The insurance industry must pay up! No increase in rates.
- 4. Reject racist & white supremacist policies.** End disparities between Black, Brown, and poor communities with wealthy communities: Equal attention to historic Black communities like Altadena, California. Enact preventative measures such as converting to underground electrical power lines, fireproofing homes, and rentals in all neighborhoods, not just the wealthy.
- 5. Convert military production from bombs and guns to air purifiers and PPE.** Protect the health and lives in the Los Angeles region. Prioritize distribution to Black and Brown communities, families with children, seniors, and health challenges, and the broader poor community.
- 6. Restore cuts and expand funding for firefighting capabilities in the**

**region.** Levy a special tax on the banks, billionaires, and big businesses, including PG&E and the insurance industry in California, to expand services.

7. **Suspend and halt ICE raids.** People need food and shelter, not repression.
8. **Pay prisoners union wages & guarantee a path to employment in the fire department after incarceration.** Presently, over 900 prisoners are risking their lives fighting fires. They are paid as little as \$5.80 a day.
9. **Elected “Workers and Peoples Commission” to guarantee preventative measures.** This commission will be mandated to hold town halls and assemblies in neighborhoods and regions to hear people’s suggestions and grievances. It will have the power to call on scientific expertise and to implement changes.
10. **End the root cause of these catastrophes — capitalist climate crisis —** by stopping the big oil companies, the Pentagon, and the capitalist profiteers who have created this crisis.



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# **Straight line from David Duke to Musk's Nazi salute**

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David Duke is a neo-Nazi and peddler of conspiracy theories who ran for governor of Louisiana in 1991. He was the “Grand Wizard” (national leader) of the Ku Klux Klan from 1974 to 1981. Running as a Republican at the end of Reagan’s presidency, he was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives, where he sat from 1989 to 1992.

In the 1991 campaign, Duke half-heartedly attempted to distance himself from Klan politics, claiming to be a born-again Christian who repudiated his past affiliations. Nevertheless, his campaign was filled with racist dog-whistles like the demonization of “welfare queens,” and he spoke of representing the “white majority.” This surely emboldened his die-hard racist base while – in classic fascist style – he attempted to appeal to broader sections of the population who were tired of being treated like trash by establishment politicians. (In subsequent years, he gave up any pretense that he wasn’t a Nazi, openly spewing Holocaust denial and other racist lies.)

Duke made it through the gubernatorial primary, coming in second to Democrat Edwin Edwards, the last Louisiana governor in the Huey Long tradition. Duke ultimately lost to Edwards, but progressive people and revolutionaries around the country recognized the danger of Duke's campaign, whether he won or not, as this campaign normalized fascism. In retrospect, it was a precursor to Trump's MAGA movement. We can trace a straight line from Duke to Elon Musk giving a Nazi salute at Trump's 2025 inauguration. There's also a line going from Duke to Louisiana's current racist millionaire governor, Jeff Landry.

Following is a historical piece by U.S. Marxist leader Sam Marcy. In this newspaper article, he makes a broad appeal to Louisiana's working class. He calls on workers of all races and nationalities to reject Duke, based not solely on moral grounds but on their *shared class interests*; whatever they may say, fascists like Duke and Trump always represent the ultra-rich, often while outright defrauding their supporters (Duke infamously pleaded with his supporters for money, claiming to have fallen on hard times while using the money for gambling).

With the disaster of Trump's second term upon us, it is a good time to revisit the fightback against the Duke campaign. Readers can judge for themselves whether Marcy's words are still relevant. Our view is that they are. In fact, the rotten conditions of that period have only gotten worse. Our situation today is drastically more dire. The capitalist-imperialist system is in a much more advanced stage of decay, while capitalist governments around the world are throwing off the liberal-democratic shell like an old skin. The best answer will be a massive, unified movement.

— Gregory E. Williams

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# Message to the workers of Louisiana

By Sam Marcy (Nov. 21, 1991)

If you are one of the million or so workers in Louisiana, you may be thinking of voting for David Duke in Saturday's gubernatorial election.

As a worker, you have much to think about these days. Almost everybody agrees these are hard times. Some people say that the depression now hitting this country began 10 years ago in Louisiana.

As a worker, you are concerned with your own livelihood and standard of living. If you have a family or dependents, you surely are concerned about them.

## **Hawks' resignation from Duke staff**

You have probably heard that Bob Hawks, the state coordinator of the Duke campaign, resigned the other day and blasted Duke. Some say Hawks was an agent for the Edwards campaign working to undermine Duke. Others say he's a rat leaving a sinking ship.

Whatever the case may be, Hawks raised the religious question. He accused Duke of not following the path of Jesus and said he hadn't seen him read the Bible or go to church.

Now, religion should have no place in this campaign. The religious beliefs of any person, whether Christian, Jewish, Moslem, Hindu or whatever, should be considered a private affair. The Constitution prohibits state promotion of religion. This is a political campaign, not a religious one. Throwing it into the campaign

diverts attention from the main and fundamental issues, which have to do with the economic, social and political problems in the state of Louisiana.

### **Corporate letter-writing campaign**

You might have received a letter from your employer urging you to vote against Duke. Quite a few companies have been sending such letters to their workers: Stewart Enterprises, the Lamar Corporation — we don't know who else, but Business Week magazine of Nov. 18 says many.

It is a violation of the Constitution and Labor Relations Law to tell workers how to vote, either in union elections or in political campaigns. Of course, many workers who know the anti-labor record of the companies they work for are suspicious when their bosses suddenly go on a media campaign against Duke. Where have they been all this time? And why right now?

The way they're talking now, you would think the gas and oil would evaporate, and the Mississippi River dry up if Duke's elected. However, these bosses might just as quickly change their minds the day after the election and embrace Duke in the same way the German industrialists and bankers supported Hitler.

These are questions we have to keep in mind when these bosses — and some are the most greedy when it comes to wages and working conditions — suddenly become knights in shining armor urging us to do battle. Whatever their motives may be, it has nothing to do with our own interests as workers

Every worker ought to question their motivation. It has always been how to get profit out of their enterprises by taking our labor and giving us in return as little as possible.

So, let's not speculate on what their motives may be. Let's examine David Duke independently of what they say and consider his candidacy from the point of view of

our class interests as workers.

David Duke has been a state representative long enough that he should have been able to clearly and simply address the burning issues facing Louisiana. These are: joblessness, health care for the hundreds of thousands who have none, and the growing poverty, which is 20% above the national level.

Yet he has introduced no bill, made no speeches, nor raised as much as a whisper in connection with these very profound issues.

### **Rich state, poor people**

David Duke has avoided addressing the most important question of all. That is, why should this state, which is so rich in natural resources, have so many poor people? And why should you as a worker have to worry about your job?

Louisiana is not poor. It has one of the greatest natural resources in the world — oil. It also has another important source of energy — natural gas. It has a big petrochemical industry.

Its fertile soil provides a rich variety of agricultural products that are shipped to all parts of the world. Its forests yield lumber and paper products. Off the coast are rich fishing areas.

So why is life becoming more and more difficult?

Consider one thing that Duke never seems to mention. Whether you make your living as a wage worker or as a professional, your income level is lower than that for comparable work in almost all the Northern, Eastern, and Central states of the United States.

If you are a public school teacher in Louisiana, you earned an average of \$21,280 in

1987. But a teacher in New York state got \$32,620 in that same year (World Almanac, 1988).

Wages have gone up a bit since 1987 but the differential is still about the same. That's a fact, and facts are stubborn things.

This kind of differential in pay between Louisiana and other states holds true not only for teachers or other professionals but for all workers.

Some may say, and properly so, that wages in Louisiana are better than in Mississippi, Arkansas, or other states of the old Confederacy. But that only helps to make the most important point.

Why should the Southern states have lower wages than the rest of the U.S.? It's not because of geography. It's history that makes the difference.

### **Jefferson and slavery**

Take the case of Louisiana, which became a state in 1812, nine years after it was purchased from France during the presidency of Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson was considered one of the most enlightened people of his day, especially in France, where he served as the U.S. representative. He was a writer and thinker, a scientist and statesman, and the man who wrote the Declaration of Independence with its famous line about "All men are created equal."

Yet Jefferson, as President of the United States, purchased the vast Louisiana Territory, which had been the home of Native people for thousands of years. And instead of taking an enlightened and democratic approach to this territory, Jefferson, a slaveholder himself, was most interested in extending slavery there.

Many think that the mass of the whites were made better off by the enslavement of

Black people. But it isn't true. The enslavement of great numbers of Black people made a few whites rich and powerful. But the white workers never got anything from slavery to benefit them historically. Far from being lifted above the ordinary workers in Detroit, Cleveland, Los Angeles or Philadelphia, the white workers in the South have lagged behind the rest of the country. The idea that white workers were helped by slavery is a myth.

Of course, there may be some sick psychological satisfaction in being free while others are forced into involuntary servitude. But the upshot of it is that the standard of living of workers in the former states of the Confederacy has never come close to that of workers in the Northern, Central and Western states. Today, more than 125 years after the bloody Civil War, which cost the lives of so many people and finally resulted in the abolition of slavery, workers in Louisiana must still grapple with this problem.

### **Who's Duke against?**

Now comes David Duke, who is running not just against Edwards, but against the Black people. That is what is firmly implanted in the minds of the electorate as Saturday approaches.

But that is not the whole truth. What he carefully conceals is that he is running against the working class as a whole, Black and white.

Duke's slick and well-publicized campaign shows that he's not just an individual. Who's behind him? At first he said he was for the "little people." Now he claims he has letters of support from some of the biggest monopolies, the billionaires, although that has yet to be proven. It is known for sure, however, that he gets a lot of money from millionaires on the far right. (Don't forget, a billionaire has a thousand times as much as a millionaire!) But either way, he is proving himself very useful to the big monopolies.

This is a time when mass anger could very easily focus on the big corporations and banks as they throw workers into the streets and the economy goes into a tailspin. Duke is helping big business by diverting attention away from those responsible for the economic disaster and blaming everything on the poorest people.

You have heard that Duke used to openly praise Hitler and was selling Nazi literature from his office just two years ago. Hitler, too, directed the anger and fear caused by the 1930s depression away from the biggest bankers and industrialists. He organized a movement that destroyed the progressive and labor movement in Germany, using racist oratory to whip people up. But like Duke, at the beginning of his career Hitler tried to look anti-establishment. He talked against the international bankers, claiming they were part of a so-called Jewish conspiracy.

That didn't stop the biggest German bankers and industrialists from eventually coming in behind him. They needed a Hitler, with all his violent and totalitarian methods, to save their system of capitalism. Eventually, all he had to offer was a monstrous war that ended in smoldering ruins.

Now, in Louisiana, Duke is trying to build a similar movement. And what is its objective? Not to help raise wages for all working people, or guarantee their job security. It is to reverse the entire period of the last 40 to 50 years, when gains have been made not only in civil rights but in union organization, in women's rights, in education, and in social reforms generally. Many of these gains have been under attack since the late 1970s. But Duke wants to sweep them all away.

One of David Duke's most vicious arguments concerns, of course, the question of welfare. He gives the impression that Black people and other minorities consume a great portion of the state budget and that if they were penalized, this would help reduce the budget.

In one form or another, this same argument has been put forward in almost all the

states. The more rabid politicians make it a principal point in their election campaigns, calling people on welfare freeloaders, parasites, and so forth.

But who really gets welfare in this country? Who gets the billions and billions of government funds? Not poor people. The ones who devour huge sums from the federal and state budgets are the giant corporations! They've been living on welfare all the years of their existence. Almost all of them are subsidized in one form or another. During the Reagan years, their subsidies came in the form of huge reductions in taxes. It got so ridiculous that some giant oil companies paid less taxes than a working-class family!

In addition, they get special financial benefits through grants for research and development and other forms of hidden subsidies. This is particularly true for military contractors, especially those in aerospace.

### **Russell Long on corporate welfare**

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 shipbuilders, 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." (Quoted in "The Rich and the Super-Rich" by Ferdinand Lundberg.)

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?

### **White workers and affirmative action**

In addition to welfare, Duke harps on affirmative action. As he tells it, whites are being penalized because the law now requires that Black and Latino workers who have faced past discrimination should be compensated affirmatively in promotions.

There's no reason that affirmative action has to hurt white workers. The discrimination in the past was the result of the policies of the bosses. They instituted discrimination in the workplace, and they should pay for it.

Are there ways to erase racial discrimination in the workplace without taking it out of the hides of white workers? Take the matter of promotions. Say a white male is entitled to a promotion from labor grade 2 to labor grade 3, but a Black (or woman) worker with less seniority is now eligible for the job because of the law on affirmative action. The worker who would have gotten the job on the basis of seniority should also get an equivalent pay increase. That way the worker isn't penalized because of the past discriminatory practices of the company.

There can be many other approaches to make sure that affirmative action doesn't hurt any workers. It is a pity that the labor movement has gradually acquiesced to a half-way measure regarding affirmative action which puts the burden on the workers. It leaves the labor movement open to vicious racism.

### **Extended jobless benefits**

Duke doesn't address the question of why Louisiana pays out so little in unemployment benefits when so many are out of work. Unemployment insurance isn't just a federal program, like Social Security, it's a federal-state system

Wouldn't this be an opportunity for Duke, if he really was for the workers, to demand a state extension of benefits? This is particularly important in a state like Louisiana where the crisis has lasted so long that benefits have run out for hundreds of thousands.

Living in Louisiana, you have seen periods of boom as well as bust, especially in the oil and gas industry. The boom periods made the powerful corporations much richer, more aggressive and predatory. But have they left the workers any better off?

Louisiana has the resources to be one of the most self-sufficient states in the union. Instead, it has become more dependent on what is happening to the economy, not just nationally but even globally. Why is that?

If all the natural wealth of Louisiana were being utilized to provide for the needs of the residents of the state, there wouldn't be any problem. But that's not what's happening. Everything is produced in order to make a profit. When the profit system goes bust, the most significant section of the population, the workers, are left helpless.

But the workers don't have to be helpless. We're the majority of the population! If we get together, we can be tremendously powerful. We have the ability to stop everything from moving, as can be seen in other countries when workers go out on a general strike. Certainly, the big bosses are aware of that, and will do all they can to prevent the workers from getting any ideas.

That can mean throwing their weight behind a demagogue like Duke in order to get him elected, so he can channel everything into a racist struggle.

What is needed in Louisiana, as elsewhere, is a change in the relationship between the working class and the capitalist class. It is necessary for the working class to take hold of all the natural resources and means of production and use them for the interests of society as a whole, not for a handful of millionaires and billionaires.

Voting against Duke will help open the road to such a development.



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# **Baltimore showed out to protest Trump's inauguration**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 23, 2025

Baltimore showed out to protest Trump's inauguration. Our commitment is to not only keep the FIGHTING MASS MOVEMENT alive, but to make it STRONGER and MORE CAPABLE. Revive the fighting spirit of Dr. King! We won't back down from the billionaires' assault on working and poor people, from Baltimore to Palestine!

#freepalestine #fromtherivertothesea #OpenRafahCrossing #shutitdown4palestine  
#internationalsolidarity #March4Gaza #CeaseFireNow #baltimore #baltimorecity  
#amazon #baltimorestandswithpalestine #Maryland #orioles #camdenyards  
#imperialism #antiimperialism #resistnato #nato





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**'Donald Trump is scared of us!':**

# Brooklyn says NO! to fascism

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 23, 2025

Jan. 20 — Hundreds of people marched down Harriet Tubman Way (Fulton Street.) today In Brooklyn, New York, determined to resist fascist Trump. They chanted, "We're not scared of Donald Trump; Donald Trump is scared of us!"

The militant action was called by the December 12th Movement for Human Rights. It began at Jitu Weusi Plaza, named for the Black educator and activist who fought for community control of New York City schools.

D12 chairperson Omowale Clay chaired the rally. He reminded listeners of Dr. King's opposition to the U.S. war against Vietnam. A loudspeaker played King's April 4, 1967, anti-war address given in Manhattan's Riverside Church.

Dr. King declared from the pulpit that the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world today — my own government." Exactly one year later, he would be executed in Memphis, Tennessee.

It's obscene that Donald Trump was inaugurated president on the federal holiday that people fought for to honor the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Speakers remembered the late Viola Plummer — former chairperson of the December 12th Movement — who passed the previous year on Jan. 15, Dr. King's birthday. Plummer devoted 70 years of her life as a fearless freedom fighter.

People marched out in military order, two by two, led by those carrying African liberation flags designed by the honorable Marcus Garvey. They proceeded down Harriet Tubman Way through the heart of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Black Community.

Drivers of cars and other vehicles honked in agreement while those on the sidewalk showed their support. At Nostrand Avenue — the heart of Bed-Stuy — people marched around, occupying the intersection.

Going further east, the march ended at Malcolm X Blvd., across from Boys and Girls High School. Speakers at the concluding rally included State Senator Jabari Brisport and representatives of Black Men Build and PAL-Awda, the Palestinian Right to Return Coalition.

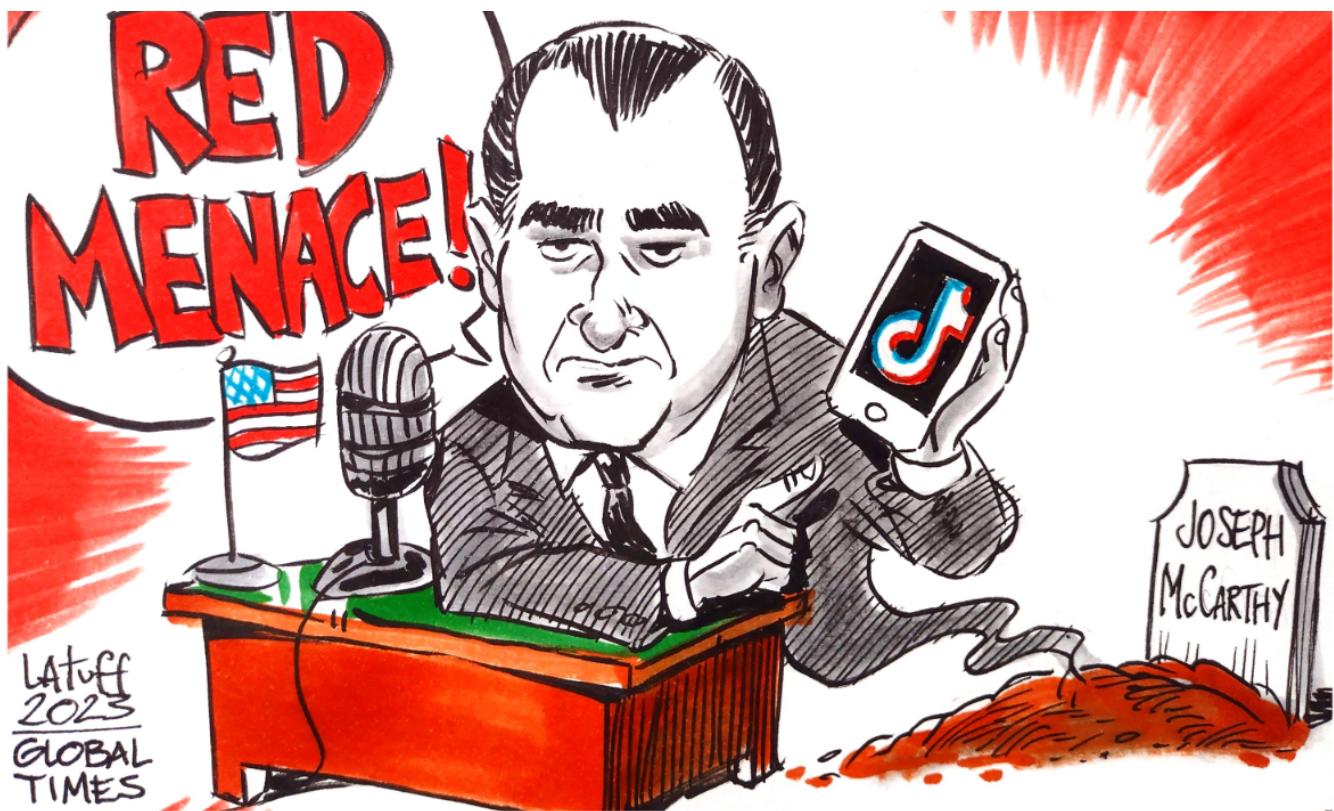
The people will defeat Trump and all the fascists!



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

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 23, 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 23, 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 than 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 23, 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!

