

# STRUGGLE ★ LA LUCHA

for Socialism / por el Socialismo



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# Fascists threaten, Biden concedes: Organize & fight for trans rights!

By Melinda Butterfield

The Trans Day of Vengeance was a long-planned protest in Washington, D.C., scheduled for April 1. People were coming to D.C. from across the country to participate. It was called in response to the growing legal and extralegal violence against the transgender community, egged on by far-right politicians and corporate media.

In the words of event initiator Tsukuru Fors, as reported by Struggle-La Lucha: "Vengeance means fighting back with vehemence. It is our battle cry to declare to the world that we the transgender/non-binary communities will neither be silenced nor eradicated. And we are calling to our allies, members of other marginalized communities to make themselves known and to fight with us."

On March 30, organizers were forced to cancel two days before the event because of "a credible threat to life and safety." The reason: fascist mouthpieces like Tucker Carlson and other social-media bottom feeders whipped up a hate campaign targeting the event, falsely claiming it had caused a mass shooting at a Christian school in Nashville, Tennessee, on March 27, where three students and three staff members were killed.

The alleged shooter was Aiden Hale, a former student of the school who happened to be a trans man. Hale was shot dead by police. He was consistently misgendered and deadnamed for the first 24-48 hours after the tragedy, and some right-wing social media used this to claim that Hale was a trans woman.

According to the Gun Violence Archive, by the end of March 2023 – that is, in just three months – there have been at least 130 mass shootings in the United States this year. The Nashville shooting is the only one reported to have been carried out by a trans person.

And yet, according to the right-wing, from Fox News and the New York Post to internet-famous white supremacists, Hale's acts represented the "dangerous" nature of the whole trans community, and particularly the planned April 1 civil rights protest.

At least two specific threats to the Trans Day of Vengeance march took the form of mass shootings. According to independent anti-fascist researchers working with the John Brown Gun Club DMV, a Minnesota-based white supremacist named Adam Murray made credible threats to the event. After this was reported to the FBI, Murray was briefly detained in Baltimore and then released.

Another white supremacist said to be one Benjamin Ryder of Pennsylvania, was detained by police when he pulled out a gun outside the Supreme Court on April 1, where the Trans Day of Vengeance march had been scheduled to gather.

The right-wing tried to turn the Nashville tragedy into a Reichstag fire moment to frame up the entire trans community and justify the acts of violence it encouraged from stooges like Murray and Ryder – who much more fit the profile of the typical U.S. mass shooter.

**Biden's concession fuels attacks**  
On March 25, a member of the "White Lives Matter" neo-Nazi group attempted to firebomb the Community Church of Chesterland, Ohio, for hosting a drag story hour. Just a week before, the Nazis staged an anti-trans, anti-drag demonstration in the Ohio town of Wadsworth, chanting, "There will be blood."

So far this year, 450 anti-trans bills have been introduced in state legislatures across the U.S. Some 14 states have banned life-saving gender-affirming care for trans youth, with more expected to join them. In addition, bans on trans youth participation in school sports and use of school restrooms have been enacted.

On April 5, Kansas passed a law explicitly aimed at trans girls and young women that could require genital inspections for participation in sports programs. Florida and other states are expected to follow suit. Tennessee, where the March 27 shooting took place, is one of the worst offenders, even enacting a so-called "drag ban" that places the public existence of trans people in jeopardy.

On March 31, International Trans Day of Visibility, President Joe Biden repeated his occasional claim to support "love, dignity and respect" for trans people. Yet less than a week later, the Washington



SLL PHOTO: MELINDA BUTTERFIELD

Tasiyah Woodland, an 18-year-old Black trans woman, killed in Baltimore on March 24, was remembered at the Queer and Trans Youth Autonomy March in Washington, D.C., on March 31. Black trans women are murdered in disproportionately high numbers.

► **Christynne Lilly Wood: 'Trans women are a threat to no one'**

## Help send a LGBTQ+ delegation to CUBA

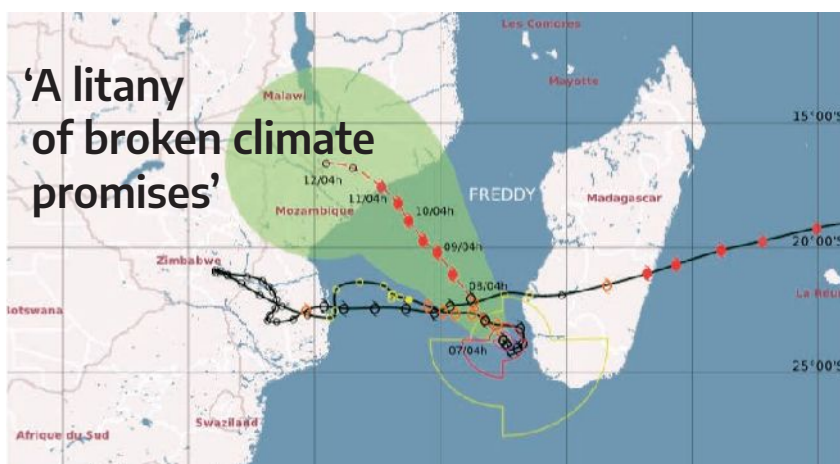
- Trans protest shuts down Hollywood traffic
- Trans youth & families flood Washington D.C. streets
- New Orleans high school students walk out

SLL PHOTO: MAGGIE VASCASSENNO

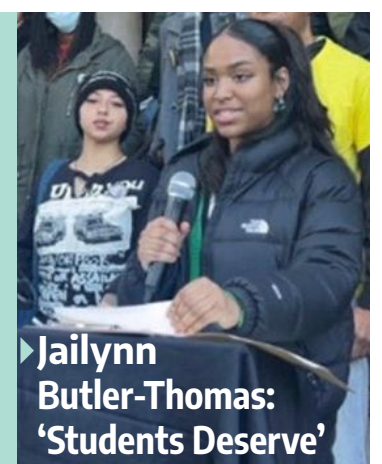
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- Job & wage cuts won't lower prices
- The capitalist crisis is just beginning
- Los Angeles: Labor's sleeping giant
- Angel Reese and racism in sports
- Lock Trump up!



**DEAR FRIEND,**

We are asking for your help to send an important LGBTQ+ delegation to Cuba this May to learn about the inclusive new Families Code and the impact of the U.S. blockade.

We're all aware of the terrible attacks on the LGBTQ+ community in the United States, especially targeting our transgender and Two Spirit siblings. People's rights to life-saving gender-affirming healthcare, and even to exist in public, are being legislated away in state after state. Queer spaces are besieged by right-wing mobs, including in cities like New York and San Francisco that were considered safe. Truly, we need to revive the spirit of Stonewall.

# HELP SEND A LGBTQ+ DELEGATION TO CUBA

All the more remarkable, then, is Cuba's incredible leap forward in LGBTQ+ rights with the passage of its new Families Code last year. Not only same-sex marriage, but equality of queer families before the law, equal standing for chosen families with biological families, parent-child relations based on rights and responsibilities, and mandated education promoting acceptance, support and full rights for all people – all this just 90 miles from Ron DeSantis's Florida!

Cuba has long been a beacon to the people of the world, despite a grueling 60+-year U.S. blockade. And the LGBTQ+ community in the U.S. is no stranger to the Cuba solidarity movement.

This May a delegation of LGBTQ+ activists from the U.S., organized by Women in Struggle-Mujeres en Lucha, will travel to Cuba for a week of activity to learn about the new Families Code, how it was accomplished, and the detrimental impact of U.S. policies on queer communities and all Cubans. This delegation includes veteran organizers as well as several young people from across the country. Your donation will help ensure that these activists can bring these lessons back to our communities, where they are urgently needed!

To donate: Please donate at <https://tinyurl.com/May7EducationalTrip> on PayPal or contribute through [Venmo@SolidarityCenter](mailto:Venmo@SolidarityCenter). You can also make checks out to Solidarity Center and mail to 703 E. 37th Street, Baltimore, MD 21218. Do not write Cuba on checks or on electronic donations! You can use "for trip" in the memo.



**PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY!  
YOURS IN SOLIDARITY,  
BOB MCCUBBIN**

## Transgender Day of Visibility

By Gregory E. Williams



**NEW ORLEANS**

# High school students walk out, leading hundreds in the streets

March 31—On International Transgender Day of Visibility, hundreds of students at New Orleans' Benjamin Franklin High School walked out of class. Benjamin Franklin students did the same last year in March as the fascist attack on trans people escalated.

Now the attacks have reached a fevered pitch nationally, with Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry, an oil-and-gas-investment millionaire, leading the charge in this state. Landry is running for governor, using a playbook similar to that of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.

The students rallied outside of class. NOLA.com reported some of their powerful statements:

"People who will never ever understand how it feels to live my life are attempting to control it in ways that will leave not only me, but many other transgender people devastated, depressed or even at risk of physical harm," said Vincent Jarand, a 16-year-old trans student. "This is the beginnings of a genocide."

"Jackie Kimbrough, a Black trans 17-year-old, wiped away tears talking about the impact the bills could have on LGBTQ youth in the state. 'I'm 17 years old, and I'm fighting for my life,' Kimbrough said."

These students are serious leaders inspiring the broader progressive movement. Starting at 5:30

p.m., they led a 500-person-strong march from Washington Square Park, through the French Quarter, to Jackson Square. This square itself has been a site of intense struggle, as Take 'Em Down NOLA has fought to have the name changed from that of the genocidal U.S. President Andrew Jackson.

Marchers took over the streets and then the amphitheater across from Jackson Square, shouting militant chants like, "If they don't see us, if they don't hear us, you'd

best believe they're going to fear us!" High school students and others gave speeches.

The students were joined by groups including Real Name Campaign NOLA, Freedom Road Socialist Organization – New Orleans, ACLU of Louisiana, college branches of Students for a Democratic Society, and others. This was an example of working class and oppressed people from multiple generations working together to take a stand against the far right's assaults.

SLL PHOTO: GREGORY E. WILLIAMS

# Los Angeles-area strikes show: Labor's sleeping giant is awakening

By Scott Scheffer

A series of strikes in the Los Angeles area provide an example of what has been happening across the U.S.

Having been in a defensive mode for decades, union workers are chipping away at the widest income gap since the 1970s. Successful strikes are giving confidence to other workers, who then go on strike. That was the case after a successful academic workers' strike at the University of California reportedly inspired nearby University of Southern California academic workers to walk out and win.

Soon after the USC workers won their strike, shuttle bus drivers for the USC campus held a rally, petitioned for a union, and in late March, won their election.

There is also an uptick in efforts to unionize workers in the service, tech and retail sectors of the economy – most notably, but not exclusively, Starbucks, Amazon and Apple.

It isn't that the billionaire owners and investors in giant corporations, nor the officialdom of various government entities and private universities, are suddenly softer. On the contrary, a Feb. 26 Guardian article reported on "Old-school union busting tactics" being carried out by companies such as Starbucks and Amazon, that simply thumb their billionaire noses at any labor law that doesn't work in their favor.

But workers across the U.S. economy have been pushed to the brink



PHOTO: SEIU LOCAL 99

School workers on the picket line in Los Angeles.

and are more willing to strike or unionize. They are finding solidarity and support. A Gallup poll conducted in August 2022 found the highest support for unions since 1965, at 71%.

On Jan. 3, pro-business website Marketplace.org reported, "In the past decade, people in their teens

and 20s have been on the front lines of strikes and organizing drives across the country..."

It all lends credence to the notion that the "sleeping giant" is stirring.

## Teachers in solidarity

In what has to be considered a labor struggle milestone, some 30,000 workers, who are vital to keeping Los Angeles public schools running, called a three-day strike. Service Employees International Union Local 99 represents cafeteria workers, janitors, building maintenance experts and teachers' assistants who struck.

Their absence from the job would've already been a major disruption. The fact that 30,000 educators from United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) refused to cross the picket lines made the strike

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# Los Angeles students support school workers' strike, oppose armed police

By Scott Scheffer

Jailynn Butler-Thomas is a student at Dorsey High School in Los Angeles. She spoke with Struggle-La Lucha about support for the recent Los Angeles Unified Public School District (LAUSD) strike and opposition to armed police in public schools.

**Struggle-La Lucha:** In a news article about the LAUSD strike, your organization, "Students Deserve," was written about because of the support that you carried out. But there was also a reference to your organization's ongoing struggle against armed police being stationed in schools. I'd like to start with you telling our readers a little about that.

**Jailynn Butler-Thomas:** There's so much backlash that myself and my peers and those who are fighting for police-free schools have to deal with. I think that a big part of it is the difference between restorative and punitive justice.

Punitive justice is like breaking something down. Punishment, punishment, punishment.

Not helping, like fixing or healing, or just building up rather than breakdown.

We're young, we're children, and we're going to have conflict, we're going to make mistakes. That's bound to happen.

Putting police in our schools to harass us and criminalize us, beat it out of us, or pepper spray us, or harass it out of us is not the solution. Police presence on campus is more harmful.

We're not saying that there doesn't need to be somebody there for safety reasons. We're just saying that police that are armed with any kind of weapon are not safe for students. Because of how they treat students, anything can happen any time. A lot of the times, police don't solve the problem, they only escalate it.

In Uvalde, Texas, the police didn't go inside. They stood out-

side and waited. It got to the point where parents are running inside to their children. I think that that's like a prime example that police don't help.

In a situation at my school in 2019, a fight broke out, and police were just pepper spraying anyone in the area. Just students walking to class. The nurse's office was overflowing with students getting pepper sprayed — students who were just walking into class and didn't do anything wrong.

Something similar happened recently at Garfield high school. Police aren't helping the situation. A bunch of cops that are gonna hurt children and take away from their learning experience and turn schools into this prison-like situation isn't the answer. That's gonna take away from our education.

I think the real answer for us is restorative justice. We're not saying the schools don't need anyone there for these situations. But why not pull people from the community, why not have people there for safe passage after school? Why not have a better solution that doesn't involve students getting criminalized?

Police on campus is an uncomfortable situation for people of color because of how they're being treated. We don't feel safe. You're not gonna want to come, you're not gonna be engaged. You're gonna be distracted, and that is going to take away from your education.

**SLL:** Your support for the strike was so vigorous. It got the attention of the media that students supported the strike. How did that come about? Do your co-students come from pro-union families?

**JBT:** So, I think there are many factors why students stood behind teachers and staff. Yes, some people's families have a history of union struggles. But also, we see these faces every day.



Jailynn Butler-Thomas of the organization 'Students Deserve' speaks at their press conference in support of the Black Students Achievement Program.

These are the people welcoming us, feeding us, and taking care of us, making sure that we're learning, making sure that we're safe, asking how our day is going at school.

I also think a huge factor, the main factor that rallies students behind UTLA and Local 99, is that they're struggling, and we're struggling, and that unites us. Our fight to make the Black Students Achievement Program (BSAP) permanent and to gain mental health support and support for immigrant students is something that's driving us.

This isn't anything new – we've been fighting for these things for a very long time.

We conducted a survey that was historic. It showed that 87% of students are benefiting from the BSAP program. Black students are benefiting from it.

It also showed that 49% of Black students don't have enough mental health support, as well as showing that 45% of Black students' schools don't have enough resources in general, which isn't fair and it's not okay.

We have to sit in front of the school board's new superintendent

and literally beg for things that we deserve and are necessities and are literally the bare minimum for a good educational experience, while the superintendent, who gets paid more than the [U.S.] president, sits on \$5 billion in reserve.

He can't give us the money that we were promised. It doesn't make sense, and it doesn't make sense that teachers and these essential workers were getting paid below poverty level but have to negotiate in the first place.

It doesn't make sense the superintendent is acting as if we are asking for so much, but we're asking for what we deserve. He gets paid to take care of teachers, staff, and students, and we shouldn't have to fight for this. That is what unites us all.

This strike has shown that when teachers, students, and parents come together, they can really shut it down. I think that the school district and superintendent are scared about that because it was beautiful and it made an impact. And we're not gonna stop until we get these things. We're all struggling, and that's what brings us together in solidarity. 📌

# Trans rights protest shuts down Hollywood traffic

By John Parker

March 31 – Members of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice and the Socialist Unity Party joined activities on March 31 in Los Angeles demanding an end to the genocidal attacks against the trans community.

Stating “we want more than visibility,” Tsukuru Fors of Trans Radical Action Network (TRAN) initiated the Trans Day of Vengeance demonstration in Washington on the weekend of Trans Day of Visibility. That call inspired local Trans Day of Vengeance rallies in other cities.

Los Angeles was no exception. Hundreds of people gathered on the corners of Hollywood Boulevard and Highland Avenue, a very busy shopping and traffic intersection – and shut it down.

The Los Angeles action was organized by @queerxact. Their announcement for the event said: “@queerxact has put together a safe and intentional protest to celebrate Transgender Day of Visibility and to remind the world that we do not

accept the way the now-47 states proposing unconstitutional legislation are attempting to silence the transgender community. See you in the streets.”

The lively demonstration, with signs of different colors, shapes and sizes, expressed determination to not live in fear, and demanded an end to bigotry, transphobia and homophobia, and the cessation and reversal of anti-trans legislation.

As the crowd swelled at Hollywood and Highland, protesters marched into the intersection, allowing only ambulances and city buses through. Surprisingly, the police – feeling the intensity and determination of the protesters – decided to not interfere with this unpermitted demonstration.

After about a half hour blocking traffic, the procession remained in the streets and marched east towards downtown Los Angeles, where a die-in was staged at the Hollywood Police Department.

Afterward, one of the organizers said on TikTok: There was “no cop interference or injuries. We put on a completely peaceful protest where



SLL PHOTO: JOHN PARKER

we shut down Hollywood with our signs. ... Republicans were spreading false information that we were

calling for violence. But we weren't – we were calling for vengeance, and we got it.”

# Trans youth and families flood Washington streets to demand rights

By Struggle-La Lucha Washington bureau

More than a thousand trans youth, family members, and allies joined the Queer and Trans Youth Autonomy March in Washington, D.C., on March 31, Trans Day of Visibility. The march was called by Queer Youth Assemble, which presented a list of demands supported by many organizations.

The D.C. action was one of dozens held in cities across the U.S. to rebuke and resist hundreds of bills targeting trans youth in nearly every state and the growing campaign of anti-trans hate and violence promoted by media from Fox News to the New York Times.

The multinational crowd gathered outside busy Union Station, then marched to the Capitol, where a rally was held in Grant Park. The protest drew people not only from the capital and surrounding states but from as far as California, Florida, Massachusetts, and New York.

Official Washington's sheltered, well-manicured streets rang with chants of “Protect trans youth” and “No justice, no peace!” A colorful banner from Women in Struggle – Mujeres en Lucha declared: “Trans people won't be erased. Bigots say get back, we say fight back!”

Protesters were outraged by the far-right Republican campaign to outlaw gender-affirming health care, prevent students from playing sports or using school restrooms, and ban trans people from public life – measures that will increase suicide and transphobic violence.

Several speakers also called out Democrats for claiming to support trans rights but doing nothing to stop the growing onslaught that has already robbed youth in at least 14 states of gender-affirming care and imposed many other Draconian laws aimed at causing harm to the entire trans community.

“These last few months have been hard for all of us. One side likes to act like we are not real, just products of a social trend, not every bit as real, as valuable, as deserving of freedom as everyone else,” said Samira Burnside, a trans youth activist. “Some even suggest that we be eradicated, shunned, pushed into a quiet corner, and silenced.

“Look at SB 264 in Florida, where I'm from, which would take us from our parents and make those who give us the care we need felons. They cloak their disdain for us in phrases like ‘save the children’ and moral grandstanding. But they truly only seek to save their positions of power.

“And the other side? Democrats say things like ‘pass the Equality Act immediately,’ but don't put their words into action when they have the power to do so. They say, ‘I support my trans family,’ yet sit idly by while we are legislatively attacked,” Burnside said.

Struggle-La Lucha spoke with trans activist Melinda Butterfield



SLL PHOTO: ANDRE POWELL

dren and are determined to do everything they can to help them lead happy, healthy lives.”

Butterfield said that a Black trans woman who came all the way from Missouri, another state where trans rights are under fierce attack, made a big impression. “She said she's been waiting for a national protest and was determined to be here no matter what. It's not an exaggeration to say that she and pretty much everyone I spoke to – young and old, queer and allies, union organizers – were excited at the prospect of a national march for trans youth in Florida.

“People are eager for bold action. There is a huge vacuum that will be filled with the same old lesser-evil voting politics that led to the end of Roe v. Wade unless independent forces take action soon. But if we do act boldly, I think we will be surprised by the response.”

For more information, visit [WomenInStruggle.org](http://WomenInStruggle.org).

of Women in Struggle – Mujeres en Lucha, who was distributing leaflets and talking to people in the crowd about her group's proposal for a National March to Protect Trans Youth to be held in Florida in Autumn 2023.

“It was heartening to see so many parents and families supporting their trans kids,” Butterfield said. “The media and politicians try to make it seem like parents are only interested in protecting their ‘right’ to treat their children like property, to be whipped into line with conservative expectations. But today there are many, many families that accept their trans and queer chil-

PHOTO: NADIA BEN-YOUSSEF

# Christynne Lilly Wood: Trans women are a threat to no one

By Gloria Verdieu

The March 21 Santee School Board meeting was my first time seeing Christynne Lilly Wood in action. Wood — mother, grandmother, auntie, retired health care worker, and community activist — was on the list to speak to the Santee school board members along with many others, including parents, students, teachers, and community activists. The subject centered on adding a children's book, "I Am Jazz" — number 2 on the list of banned books in all Santee public schools and libraries.

As the room filled, Wood greeted and directed people to sit and went to the staff, asking for more chairs, reminding people who wanted to speak to sign in to get on the list. She seemed to know most of the people, which was comforting knowing that this meeting was not filled with haters. Banned Books was going to be first on the agenda.

Christynne Wood, pronounced Kris-tin, is the African American trans woman who was the most recent target of the racist, anti-trans panic that continues to sweep through the country. I am sure most people have heard about this incident or rather some version of it because it made national news.

## Showered with lies

On Dec. 29, last year, Wood showered after her weekly water aerobics class at a Santee YMCA, where she has been a member for quite some time. But this day, a 17-year-old white girl reported to the YMCA staff that she was traumatized when she saw a naked man in the women's changing area. The staff explained that the person she saw was a transwoman and she had every right to use the women's bathroom and dressing area.

The 17-year-old did not like that answer. She repeated her made-up, well-rehearsed, descriptive, and emotionally dramatic story to the Santee City Council and news broadcasters like Tucker Carlson. Carlson and other fascist mouthpieces rebroadcast the lie until the truth came out.

Wood initially did not know about the incident until a friend from her aqua class called her, expressing how sorry she was about what had happened in the dressing room, and sent a video of the 17-year-old on Instagram. After viewing the video, Christynne started crying and shaking.

The YMCA was forced to close when a hate rally was staged outside the facility. Wood listened to the lies as she stood with the counter-protesters and supporters. Many were patrons of the Santee YMCA.

## 'We Love Chrissy'

After weeks of being demonized by right-wing media and listening to repeated lies, Wood spoke at the Jan. 25 Santee City Council meeting, where she explained what happened. She showered and dressed in a private stall after her water aerobics class. Wood said, "I am a mom and Grandma. I am

a threat to no one." Her supporters filled the Council chambers, many holding signs with a heart that read, "We Love Chrissy." Her statement was recorded and posted on YouTube.

The 17-year-old girl then slightly changed her story, saying she saw the backside of a man and hid in a nearby shower stall until he left.

Christynne and I met for breakfast at her favorite restaurant in Santee a week before the school board meeting. When I arrived, I walked in and told the woman at the counter that I was there to meet up with someone, and instantly she pointed me in the direction of the table where Christynne sat, waving me over. She commented how much she appreciated people who pay attention to time. Then, she told me to look over the menu, order what you want, "everything is good," and insisted on paying the bill.

She knew most of the waitresses by first name and ordered her "usual" breakfast. After breakfast, she was scheduled for a photo shoot at the San Diego Union-Tribune, so we were on the clock. I introduced myself and told her that I and a few friends from Los Angeles came to the Santee City Council to show our support earlier this month. I thanked her for making time in her busy schedule to speak with me.

She said you and your group must attend the Santee School Board meeting next week. "We are going to demand that 'I Am Jazz,' a book on the list of Banned Books, is added to all Santee public schools and libraries."

## The story of Jazz Jennings

"I Am Jazz" is the story of a transgender child based on the real-life experience of a transgender activist, Jazz Jennings.

According to PEN America, a national advocacy group for literacy and free expression, this children's book is one of several banned picture books in the United States in the school year 2020-2021.

At breakfast, I spoke about the 17-year-old who reported to the Santee YMCA staff that she was terrified when she saw a naked male in the women's changing room.

Christynne said she was shocked



SLL PHOTO: MAGGIE VASCASSENNO

John Parker, Christynne Lilly Wood, and Gloria Verdieu.

by the teen's complaint and that the most graphic part of the story could not be true because she has had gender reassignment surgery. The whole incident was a manufactured lie.

I asked if she could talk about her childhood and journey to become a community activist and advocate for LGBTQ+ rights.

Wood, a Black woman born in 1956, grew up in Ohio during the '60s and '70s and originally moved to California in 1975 during her first Navy enlistment. She returned to San Diego County to stay in 1980, which Woods said "was the best decision I ever made."

**SLL:** When did you realize that "I have a girl brain but a boy body," a quote from the book "I Am Jazz"?

**CLW:** Oh, I knew when I was four years old. My kindergarten teacher told my Grand Auntie, who raised me, that I identified with the girls. She would let me lie down with the girls for nap time.

My Auntie told me not to share this with everybody; People can be cruel, and it could be dangerous. We would play "dress-up" inside the house; it was our secret.

In the 8th grade, I checked out "Christine Jorgensen: A Personal Autobiography" from the library. I would keep it and just renew it over and over. Jorgensen, a celebrity, entertainer, and memoirist, was the first internationally known transexual personality of the 20th century to become widely known in the United States for having sex reassignment surgery in the early 1950s and provided an unprecedented example for thousands of gender dysphoric individuals who followed in her footsteps.

**SLL:** You had some support from your auntie; what about your parents and other relatives?

**CLW:** My mother didn't raise me. She was rarely around, visiting on rare occasions. I am a self-reliant woman. I've been on my own for over 36 years. I began medical transition in July 2016 when I started estradiol and HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy). I legally changed my name and gender in San Diego Superior Court in February 2017. My first surgery, breast augmentation, was in May of 2019 at Sharp Grossmont Hospital. My final surgery was at Sutter Mills-Peninsula Hospital in San Francisco with Dr. Marci Bowers on Jan. 29, 2020.

I visited my mother with my daughter, granddaughter, and niece. I hadn't seen her for over 30 years. My mother did not recognize me at first. When she did, her response was, "You finally became the person you wished to be." She never got it. It was not a choice. It



At the Santee City School Board meeting.

SLL PHOTO: MAGGIE VASCASSENNO

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# Mergers, monopolies and inflation: Unemployment & wage cuts won't lower prices

By Stephen Millies

How many people have to lose their jobs before Federal Reserve Bank system chair Jerome Powell is satisfied? High-tech firms including Alphabet (Google), Amazon and Meta (Facebook) have shed 118,000 jobs so far this year. They fired 140,000 in 2022.

Speaking at the Economic Club in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 7, Powell claimed that January's 3.4% unemployment rate may be beyond "maximum employment." He hinted the jobless rate needed to rise before the rate of inflation would fall.

Powell and the Federal Reserve Bank governors actually want a "small" recession to weaken the multinational working class and wipe out any wage gains and union victories. They're glad that February's unemployment rate rose to 3.6%.

Pro-capitalist economists consider that to be "low" unemployment. It still represents 5.9 million people desperately looking for a job.

The official unemployment rate hides misery. It always undercounts millions of jobless people

Not mentioned are the armies of street merchants who would rather have a steady job than stand for 10 or 12 hours a day in rain or snow. Nor does it include those not considered to be actively searching for work because of child care responsibilities. Also ignored are many disabled people.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 5.1 million "persons not in the labor force who currently want a job." Another 1.4 million persons are "marginally attached to the labor force."

So in February there were at least 12.4 million people in the United States without a job. That's nearly



as many people who live in Illinois.

Yet that's still not enough unemployment for the Federal Reserve banks and the capitalist class it serves.

Never counted are 2.2 million prisoners who are members of the working class, too. Their slave labor annually produces \$11 billion in goods and services.

Blackworkers are still "last hired, first fired." Their 5.7% unemployment rate is 78% higher than the 3.2% jobless rate for whites.

## Profits up, food stamps cut

Neither a rise in wages or lower rates of joblessness cause inflation. It's monopolies that are jacking up prices. Even the White House admitted this in a Jan. 3, 2022, statement:

"Four large meat-packing companies control 85% of the beef market. In poultry, the top four processing firms control 54% of the market. And in pork, the top four processing firms control about 70% of the market."

These dead animal capitalists were able to raise chicken prices by 16.4%, beef prices by 14.5% and pork prices by 13.7% between 2021 and 2022. Tyson Foods more than doubled its profits.

Meanwhile, egg prices have gone through the roof and the price of white bread rose by 21% over the last two years. The average price of all food rose by 11.4% last year, the sharpest increase since 1974.

The response of the U.S. government to these skyrocketing food prices was to slash SNAP (food stamp) benefits on March 1. Millions of families are seeing an average \$95 monthly cut in their food stamps.

The 81 million people who cast a ballot for Joe Biden didn't vote for this forced hunger program. The president and Congress can spend over \$100 billion on a war against the Russian Federation but they can't feed the people.

Antitrust laws have become a dead letter. The Surface Transportation Board approved the Canadian Pacific Railway taking over the Kansas City Southern in a \$31 billion deal. That leaves only six companies owning 90% of the railroad tracks in the United States.

Housing in the United States is one of the worst monopolies. Landlords have been raising rents at will. In New York City, 54% of low income tenants saw their rents rise in 2021. The average increase was 15%.

Behind the greedy landlords are the banks and insurance companies that own their mortgages.

A massive program to build more affordable public housing would force the landlords and the banksters to lower the rents. So would taking over the apartments that are deliberately kept empty.

## Roll back prices! A job is a right!

None of the judges on the U.S. Supreme Court or governors of the Federal Reserve banking system are elected.

Supreme Court judges stole the right to abortion. They routinely give the green light to executions. The Federal Reserve destroys jobs and deepens poverty.

The Fed and the central banks in other capitalist countries have been furiously raising interest rates. The result has been a series of bank failures, including Silicon Valley Bank and the second biggest Swiss bank, Credit Suisse.

Ever since the first worldwide capitalist economic crisis in 1825, there has been a business collapse every decade or so. Because capitalist competition prevents an overall economic plan, production outstrips consumption.

That doesn't mean people don't need the items that are left unsold. Eighteen million people in the U.S. can't afford needed medical prescriptions.

Fed chairperson Jerome Powell's role model is the late Paul Volcker, who as Fed chair in the 1980s presided over double-digit unemployment rates. Decades of stagnant wages and the loss of millions of union jobs followed.

The proposed merger of the Kroger and Albertsons supermarket chains guarantees more price increases. We need to fight for rolling back prices.

People forced President Reagan — an earlier version of Trump — to distribute free cheese. Over a billion pounds had been kept in warehouses to keep prices high.

The Federal Reserve banksters need to be told that a job is a right. Only the people can stop the billionaires from destroying jobs and making more millions poor. 📌

# The capitalist crisis is just beginning

By Gary Wilson

Worldwide there is a "cost-of-living" crisis. Inflation is raging. Food prices are out of reach. Access to housing is collapsing, with unsheltered homelessness up more than 30% in U.S. cities. New apartment sizes have dropped severely across the U.S., making Manhattan-style micro apartments the new affordable norm.

Oxfam reports that with the post-COVID-19 recession came the "largest increase in global poverty since World War II. ... Tens of millions more people are facing hunger. Hundreds of millions more face impossible rises in the cost of basic goods or heating their homes. Climate breakdown is crippling economies and seeing droughts, cyclones and floods force people from their homes."

Oxfam concludes: "Poverty has increased for the first time in 25 years. At the same time, these multiple crises all have winners. The

very richest have become dramatically richer and corporate profits have hit record highs, driving an explosion of inequality."

Capitalism has had economic crises every 10 years or so since 1825. Recessions are built into capitalism's cycle of boom and bust.

Recent recessions have occurred in 1973, 1980, 1981, 1990, 2000, 2007, and 2020. That's a recession about every seven-to-ten years, with the exception of the back-to-back recessions of 1980 and 1981.

The Great Recession of 2007 lasted the longest (almost two years). The 2020 recession produced the most severe decline in GDP (down 19.2% in the U.S.).

Until capitalism is overturned worldwide, the boom-and-bust crises will return, again and again, each one destroying jobs, housing, and food while at the same time increasing the centralization of capital and expanding monopoly domination.

Capitalist overproduction always

causes these recessions. This is because of the laws of competition. The capitalists are in a permanent race to outproduce each other to gain the most profit. So capitalist production expands, but the market does not equally grow.

While production expands rapidly under capitalism during a boom period, the bosses eventually find that they cannot sell at a profit. So they shut down businesses and cut workers' hours; an unemployment crisis begins. Inventory must be reduced or destroyed.

This is the law of capitalism. It cannot operate in any other way. This is the boom-and-bust cycle.

The capitalist drive to expand is also the drive to war — the imperialist drive for big business to



control the raw materials such as oil and ores, the agricultural production, and most of all the labor in every part of the globe.

But that's never the way the talking heads on TV explain recessions. There's always some other explanation, usually blaming financial corruption, like Lehman Brothers lending practices for the 2008 recession.

Never is it said that capitalism or overproduction is responsible for the crisis. Yet that is the underlying cause.

Congress recognizes the capitalist roots of the crisis, of course, and its sole act (Democrats and Republicans together) in response to the looming recession was to pass a resolution denouncing socialism. 📌

# Angel Reese and the long legacy of racist hypocrisy in sports

By Lev Koufax

The days following LSU's victory in the women's NCAA basketball championship should have been the best of Angel Reese's young life. Those days should have been packed with praise, celebration, and love.

Instead, Angel Reese was mired in attacks from a racist media and political establishment hellbent on the degradation of Black athletic excellence and exaltation of white athletic proficiency.

In the wake of her command championship performance, Reese spoke out about the racist backlash and attacks she has faced from the basketball media sphere all season. Reese commented, "All year, I was critiqued about who I was. ... I don't fit in a box that y'all want me to be in. I'm too hood. I'm too ghetto. But when other people do it, y'all say nothing."

The most incredible thing about this powerful statement is that it preceded the most intense scrutiny and attack on Reese yet. In the wake of the championship game, sports media commentators attacked Reese as "classless" because of a gesture she made towards Iowa star player Caitlin Clark at the end of the championship game.

It is true that in the waning minutes of the final tournament game, Angel Reese made John Cena's signature "now you see now you don't" gesture in Clark's direction, which entails a person waving their hand in front of their face. Reese stood by her actions, as she should. The critiques of this proud young Black woman for living her life are nothing but hollow racist attacks barely shrouded in "sportsmanship."

The reality of this double standard became even more apparent as images and videos of Clark making the same gesture in the previous two NCAA tournament games circulated on social media. However, when Clark, who is white, made the same gesture to opponents throughout the tournament, there was no outrage. There were no accusations of classlessness. There was no great moral condemnation. That is reserved for Black athletes.

## The losers in the White House

Believe it or not, the hypocrisy of the situation had not yet reached its peak. Enter Jill Biden, First Lady of the United States, on April 3, not even 24 hours after LSU's victory.

Speaking at Colorado State University, Dr. Biden declared that Caitlin Clark and the Iowa team should join LSU in the White House visit, even though they lost. The losing team has never attended the White House ceremony ever in the past.

To justify the ludicrous invitation, Biden commented, "I'm going to tell Joe I think Iowa should come [to the WHITE House] too because they played such a good game." That is an interesting perspective considering Iowa lost by 17 points.

LSU shot nearly 20% better from the field than Iowa, outrebounded the Hawkeyes by 11, and registered more assists. The game was never particularly close.

For Dr. Jill Biden to speak as if Iowa played a game remotely comparable to the effort LSU gave on the floor can only be described as one thing, a joke. Angel Reese agrees.

The championship game was incredible, not because it was hotly contested but because Angel Reese and her teammates put on an absolute clinic. The Tigers scored the most points in championship game history. They dominated Clark, a player many consider the best in college basketball, thanks to the outstanding defensive play of senior and veteran leader Alexis Miller. This team is exemplified by incredible competitors and young Black women making their communities and family proud.

## The 'Great White Hope'

That should be the focus. But, instead, Jill Biden and the entire media establishment are resolved to coddle white athletes who lose and promote age-old racist "Great White Hope" mythology. The term "Great White Hope" originated in the 1910s as a rallying cry for a boxer to defeat Jack Johnson, a Black man and heavyweight champion of the world at the time. Johnson's marriages to white women and other personal relationships with white women were used to promote anti-Black race riots across the United States. Eventually, Johnson was prosecuted and convicted under the racist Mann Act, a law used commonly to prosecute Black men involved with white women, including Chuck Berry.

New York Times sports columnist William Rhoden characterized the Great White Hope phenomenon and racist double standard in a recent article discussing the attacks on Angel Reese:

"My other takeaway from the weekend is that Great White Hopeism is gender neutral. What I've observed over the years is that whenever you have a white star in a sport dominated by Black athletes, the white star is swathed in extra layers of praise and adulation. This could be Christian McCaffrey in the NFL or Luka Doncic and Nikola Jokic in the NBA. Now we see it, or rather hear it, with Clark."

The racist double standard isn't new. White athletes are competitive. Black athletes are classless. White athletes are passionate. Black athletes are angry. White athletes are skilled. Black athletes are brutish.

## Lionizing a racist bully

One only has to look at the incessant lionization of white NFL quarterback Tom Brady, even though his sideline outbursts, temper tantrums, and full-on meltdowns are infamous. Despite Brady's unquestioned status as a bully, the media and the NFL heap praise upon him, and not just in terms of his football prowess.



Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese.

Boston University even went as far as to say that Brady's greatest achievement was his leadership, not his hall-of-fame career on the field. That's right, a globally acclaimed university holding up a bully, racist Trump supporter, and cheater as a prime example of leadership.

Meanwhile, LSU Coach Kim Mulkey, ironically, accused the South Carolina women's basketball team and their coach Dawn Staley of winning because they play like the game is a bar fight. The racist undertones of that accusation against a prominent Black woman coach and a majority Black women's team are impossible to ignore. What better way to undermine Black achievement than to invoke eugenic race tropes regarding inherent Black physical brutality?

The historical and contemporary sports landscape is littered with examples of racist hypocrisy and all forms of discrimination. Tom Brady is lionized. Caitlin Clark is coddled. Brett Favre is honored as an all-time great, despite radical right-wing politics and theft of millions from federal welfare grants.

Athletes of color, as well as those in the LGBTQ+ community, face an entirely different situation. As of this day, Colin Kaepernick is unofficially banned from the NFL for his courageous 2016 protests against police brutality. Trans collegiate swimmer Lia Thomas won an NCAA title in the women's 500-meter freestyle yet was still openly derided by fascist demagogue Ron DeSantis and his right-wing mob. After Thomas won, DeSantis declared that the second-place contestant, Emma Weyant, was the true winner. DeSantis, frothing at the mouth with anti-trans panic, asserted that Thomas' win was an affront to all women athletes and that the NCAA was fraudulent in recognizing her victory. Insanity.

## Remembering Glenn Burke

Attacks on oppressed athletes can be brutal and unwavering. There is no better example of this than the story of Glenn Burke, a Black baseball player in the 1970s who was also the first openly gay person to play professional base-

ball. Burke spent significant time in the Los Angeles Dodgers minor league system before finally breaking into the big leagues in the spring of 1976. He scuffled at times but immediately became wildly popular in the clubhouse and among the Dodgers' fan base.

For these reasons, players and fans alike were shocked when after a career-best 1977 season, Burke was traded to the Oakland Athletics just 19 games into the 1978 season. The trade made little sense at the time from a baseball perspective. Burke was young, dynamic, a terror on the base paths, and improving every day.

However, Burke was gay, and this was unacceptable to Dodgers' upper management, including bigoted manager Tommy Lasorda Sr. The trade to Oakland was the beginning of the end of Burke's career. The A's hired manager Billy Martin, a known homophobe and racist, who introduced Burke to the team with a homophobic slur.

It later came to the surface that the real reason Burke was traded was Lasorda's homophobia. As manager, Lasorda Sr. wielded much influence within the Dodgers' organization. Lasorda Sr. was embarrassed by rumors that Burke was actually romantically involved with his close friend and fellow gay man, Tommy Lasorda Jr., the son of the Dodgers' manager. Later, both Lasorda Jr. and Glenn Burke died from the AIDS epidemic. Before passing, Burke fell out of baseball and struggled with addiction problems. A man destroyed simply for being Black, gay, and loving the game of baseball.

This is all to say the vicious racism and sexism on display in the attacks on Angel Reese and her LSU teammates are another brutal chapter in a long history of relentless smear campaigns against prominent Black athletes.

As a movement, we must not only remember Glenn Burke, Jack Johnson, and Colin Kaepernick but also fight for and support Angel Reese, Lia Thomas, and Britney Griner as they struggle against racist media narratives and political defamation.

Black Lives Matter! Trans Lives Matter! Stand with Angel Reese! 📌

# LOCK HIM UP!

By Stephen Millies

Should Donald Trump be prosecuted on charges filed by the Manhattan DA? When two million poor people are in prison, how can Trump not be put on trial?

Trump should have been jailed decades ago. He conspired with his daddy — Ku Klux Klan supporter Fred Trump — to keep Black people out of his family-owned apartment complexes.

In 1980, Donald Trump hired Polish immigrants to demolish the building on Manhattan's posh Fifth Avenue that became the site of his flagship skyscraper, Trump Tower. They were given almost no safety equipment to remove deadly asbestos and paid just \$5 per hour while working 12-hour shifts. Some must have died later of mesothelioma, a deadly lung cancer.

In 1989, Trump ran full-page newspaper ads demanding the return of the death penalty in New York state. This was in response to the arrest of Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Yusef Salaam, Raymond Santana and Korey Wise on charges of raping and beating a woman jogging in New York City's Central Park.

False confessions were coerced by police from these five Black and Latinx youth. They spent years in prison for crimes they did not commit before being exonerated. Trump's racist campaign helped frame them.

When he announced his presidential campaign on June 16, 2015, Trump denounced Mexican people as "rapists." One day later a white fascist murdered nine Black people in a Charleston, South Carolina, church.

Trump's racist rhetoric promotes fascist violence. White anti-racist Heather Heyer was murdered by a Trump supporter during the 2017 neo-Nazi mobilization in Charlottesville, Virginia. Trump's response to Heather's death was to claim there were "fine people on both sides," meaning both the Nazis and their opponents.

Trump bombed and killed thousands in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. As president he helped starve children in Yemen while keeping immigrant children in cages in the United States.

By refusing to take absolutely necessary public health measures — as was done in the socialist People's Republic of China, socialist



A Trump campaign billboard in Houston was corrected by anonymous artists in 2020.

Cuba and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam — Trump condemned hundreds of thousands to die of COVID-19. At the same time, he promoted anti-Asian hate that led to the 2021 Atlanta spa murders.

Trump wanted to declare martial law to suppress the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. Every killer cop knows Trump is on their side.

The Jan. 6, 2021, fascist insurrection in the U.S. Capitol that attempted to overturn the presidential election was instigated by Trump.

None of these crimes will be covered in the New York indictment. They should be. It should be remembered, however, that the gangster Al Capone wasn't convicted of murder but of not paying his income tax.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a Black man, has been

the target of racist attacks from Trump supporters. The only reason Trump was charged with anything was because of the deep, justified hostility of millions of poor and working people.

This is particularly so in the Asian, Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities. Trump supporters are now targeting transgender people.

Some may question whether indicting Trump will drive more Republican voters to the polls. Trial or no trial, only by mobilizing the power of the people can all the Trumps be defeated.

Never forget that Kalief Browder, a Black youth, spent over two years in New York City's notorious Rikers Island prison simply because he couldn't make bail. After being released, without being convicted, he was driven by the cruelty in Rikers to hang himself.

If Kalief Browder can be jailed, so can the super-rich racist pig Donald Trump.

Jail Trump! 📌

## Christynne Lilly Wood:

## Trans women are a threat to no one

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is all about who I am. My daughter and granddaughter are happy that I am fully transitioned.

After my mother died, I had no reason to go to the state of Ohio, and I don't plan to go there ever again.

**SLL:** Do you have times when you think back on who you were before?

**CLW:** Everything from my life in Ohio is dead, including the person I was. I have moved on. It's dead and buried. I feel liberated — free to be who I am.

**SLL:** Were you working when you transitioned? If so, how did your job react when you completed the surgery and changed your name?

**CLW:** I was employed by the San Diego County Health and Human Services Association (HHSA) for 29 years, retiring on June 30, 2018.

I chose to actively report to my supervisor, who was supportive. When it came to using the bathroom, there was resistance from some of my co-workers as to which bathroom I was to use. My supervisor told me that it is company policy that it is my right to use the female bathroom, but she did offer a suggestion. She could arrange for me to speak to all my co-workers about my gender identity and name change if I chose to do so. I agreed to talk to my co-workers, and even though there was still some resistance, I gained a lot of support.

**SLL:** What about the cost of your transition? Was it difficult getting a doctor using your health insurance plan?

**CLW:** My PCP doctor referred me to have a psychological examination, which confirmed that there

is no doubt that I was a candidate for and should get the hormone medications, and I was cleared to prepare for full transition surgery if that was my choice.

Not every transgender person wants to get bottom surgery. It is up to the individual. In my case, I knew I had to have a full-depth vaginoplasty, and it had to be with Dr. Bowers.

Everything was covered through my insurance, and my co-pay was within my budget.

When it was time for my name change, a lawyer at the San Diego LGBT center took my case pro-bono, and I got my name changed along with all my papers. So, I am fully transitioned and ready to move forward with my life.

**SLL:** I've seen the word women with an X or Y replacing the E. What do you think about that spelling when it comes to trans or gender-neutral women?

**CLW:** I can understand this generation's usage of the spelling as a means of expanding the word "women" to be more inclusive, but as for me, I don't want to be characterized or given a category. I am a woman.

Christynne Wood praises the compassion, courage, and love of the Cameron Family YMCA in Santee, her Aqua Sisters, and the faith leaders who openly support her.

Wood was named Transperson of the Year at the Transgender Empowerment Day at the SD LGBTQ Center in San Diego — April 7, 2023.

She received the Bayard Rustin Award in February 2023.

She is actively speaking out against banning books, especially those that teach about love, acceptance, and understanding. 📌

## Los Angeles-area strikes

Continued from page 3

even more potent.

Polls showed support by parents and there was vibrant, active support from a group called "Students Deserve," a group of high school students from Dorsey High School who fight for students' rights, including opposition to armed police being placed in public schools.

The community-based organizations Unión del Barrio and Association of Raza Educators called a news conference in support of the strike that was swamped by local media and attended by 40 or more participants.

The workers that struck are a microcosm of Los Angeles' multinational population. Their wages and work conditions are lopsided and unfair when compared to their white counterparts. Their average pay was a poverty wage of \$25,000 a year. Staffing shortages and lack of health insurance for part-timers were also issues.

Up until the strike, negotiators from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) were using a familiar refrain — no money. But a proposed settlement was announced on the third day of the strike, and there were no longer any claims by LAUSD that the money wasn't available.

Voting on the settlement by the full membership will take place between April 3-7. If agreed on, it won't solve every problem. The average wages will be bumped to \$32,500 — a 30% increase. Health care will now be provided for part-

time workers and for their dependents. So much of the tentative settlement appears favorable for the workers.

In Los Angeles, the proposed wages still fall far short of what can be considered good pay, especially given the high cost of housing. But anecdotal reports of union members' satisfaction, the significance of a quick settlement, the lack of major concessions and the provision of health care for part-time workers seem to be important steps forward.

Like previous strikes in recent years in Southern California, the results of the strike seem like a welcome change for anyone organizing for economic justice.

### Unfair labor practices

Another labor battle in nearby Santa Clarita is ongoing. Seven hundred workers at Henry Mayo Woodhall Hospital struck for one day, and are still negotiating. In addition to many similarities between the two workforces, these battles share another important feature in common.

In each of them, there were claims by the bosses before the workers walked out that any strike should be prevented in the courtroom because an economic strike is barred by labor law when negotiations are ongoing. In both cases the bosses failed because the strikes were in fact over unfair labor practice and it is legal to call such a strike at any time.

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# While Biden unleashes climate bomb in Alaska Cyclone Freddy ravages eastern Africa

By Scott Scheffer

The U.S. corporate-controlled media are concealing the climate crisis's severity and breadth. Coverage of extremely destructive weather is so slanted, biased, and Eurocentric that people in the United States and Europe may not even realize how calamitous the situation is for the Global South.

Weeks of rain and snowstorms, a cyclone, and a tornado that slammed the West Coast of the U.S. were all over the headlines. The damage was horrific. There was extreme flooding from breached levees near Sacramento. Flooding and debris flow throughout the state.

A rare double-eyed cyclone attacked the Bay Area. Snow in the San Bernardino and Sierra Nevada mountains left 10-foot drifts. A tornado hit the Los Angeles area, leaving thousands without power and trapped in their homes. Dozens died.

## Earth's longest-lived tropical storm ever

There was no way to downplay what happened to the West Coast. But during March, the deadly tropical Cyclone Freddy slammed Malawi, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, and Mozambique. Most U.S. media did not cover the immense death toll and damage to eastern Africa.

As of March 27, the Institute for African Studies reports, more than 700 people died, and almost an equal number are reported missing. Most of the deaths occurred in Malawi. Nearly 700,000 people in the region have been displaced. Floods have destroyed power structures, washed away infrastructure, and contaminated community wells. Mozambique and Malawi were already dealing with a cholera outbreak, and the case numbers are rising.

## LA strikes

Continued from page 8

In spite of all the rosy post-strike statements about “working together” and finding “solutions that benefit everyone,” LAUSD is still disputing the legality of the Local 99 strike in an effort to keep a weapon in its arsenal for the future.

Bosses across the economy feel confident that they can break labor laws, prevent workers from talking to each other about their issues and grievances, and ignore union power. But the strikes by Henry Mayo Hospital workers, LAUSD workers and others across the country have shown how workers' confidence is growing everywhere.

From the hallways of higher education institutions like Temple University, UCLA and USC, to the factory floors of John Deere, to Starbucks coffee counters and Amazon warehouses, the ugly days of wage cuts, mandatory overtime and the general bombardment against workers' rights are coming to an end! 📌

Cyclone Freddy was the longest-lasting storm ever and traveled a greater distance than any before. The energy equaled an average entire hurricane season in the North Atlantic. Winds blew for ten minutes straight at 140 mph. Its peak wind was 168 mph, mowing down wood-frame buildings as it moved. It hit Madagascar after crossing the entire Indian Ocean, then Mozambique and Zimbabwe a few days later. It headed out over the water and regained strength, only to return to land and carry out more destruction, then repeated that two more times.

Industrial capitalism has been the driver of global warming. The biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere today are the United States and Great Britain. Today on a per-capita basis, the United States is still the worst.

Global South nations are responsible for only a tiny fraction of carbon emissions. But after more than a century of wars, trade sanctions, and the theft of their natural resources at the hands of U.S., British, and French imperialism, they are far less able to recover.

## 'A litany of broken climate promises'

Deep poverty, debt to the giant banks in the U.S., and the IMF's debt-trap aid have left much of the world extremely vulnerable. At the most recent conference that took place in Egypt – COP27 – representatives from the Global South took a

united stand. Finally, they forced the imperialist countries into an agreement for a “loss and damage fund” after decades of the U.S. and other imperialist countries resisting. But predictably, there are already delays in nominating members to a committee to carry it forward.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reacted to the latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued on March 20, which followed the pattern of not naming the U.S. directly. In an April 4 Op-Ed in the Washington Post, Guterres described the report as “a litany of broken climate promises,” revealing a “yawning gap between climate pledges, and reality.”

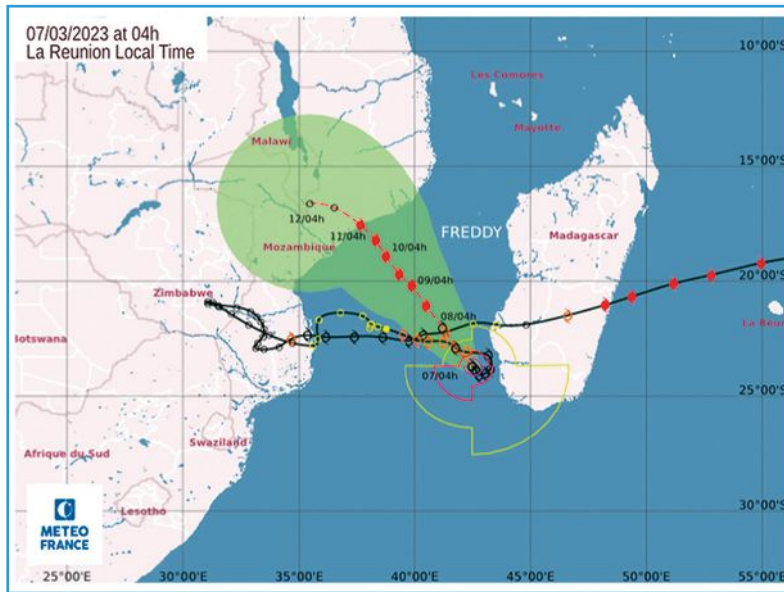
Guterres wrote that high-emitting governments and corporations “are adding fuel to the flames by continuing to invest in climate-choking industries. Scientists warn that we are already perilously close to tipping points that could lead to cascading and irreversible climate effects.”

Since Biden's whittled-down legislation that was supposed to be

a big step toward mitigating global warming was finally passed, and promises were made to curtail fossil fuel production, the administration has done an about-face. Instead, their proxy war against Russia has escalated the lucrative exploitation of fossil fuels. The Willow project in Alaska – a gift to Conoco Phillips and a climate change bomb – is only the latest in a series of betrayals of the goals set at international conferences.

In this era of the “New World Order,” imperialist wars and punishing sanctions are not fought for victory alone. Even if U.S. troops pull out from a war as they did in Afghanistan, the destruction they leave behind continues the process of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of mega-corporations and banks. It strengthens them against workers at home. The climate crisis is a by-product of capitalism that adds to that process.

Contributing to a full-blown, cooperative, international effort to deal with climate change, fulfilling the “loss and damage fund,” helping the Global South recover as fast as possible, and ending the destructive exploitation of fossil fuels are simply not on the agenda of the U.S. ruling class. The climate crisis won't be whittled away with a few reforms here and there. It has never been more evident than now. A militant and international workers' movement for socialism and the end of imperialism is the only solution to keeping the planet habitable for the future. 📌



# Organize & fight for trans rights

Continued from page 1

Post reported: “The Biden administration on Thursday proposed new regulations that would allow schools to bar transgender athletes from participating in competitive high school and college sports but disallow blanket bans on the athletes that have been approved across the country.”

A few state legislators like Nebraska State Senators Machaela Cavanaugh and Megan Hunt, both parents of trans children, and Montana State Representative Zooney Zephyr, who is trans herself, have used their platforms to fight for trans rights relentlessly.

But Biden and the national Democratic Party leadership have done nothing to counter the onslaught of anti-trans hate that has engulfed the country since he entered office. Instead, the first significant act of the administration on this issue concedes trans rights.

This shouldn't come as a surprise. Biden rode to victory in 2020 on the back of the Black Lives Matter movement and the fight for

reproductive freedom – then immediately oversaw a huge shift of funds to police while refusing to take the necessary action to codify abortion rights in law before the Supreme Court struck down Roe v. Wade.

Now, as Democrats gear up for the 2024 elections, where Biden's likely Republican opponents are notorious bigots Donald Trump and Ron DeSantis, Biden is preparing to throw trans people – and the whole LGBTQ+ community – under the bus.

Whatever the good intentions of some individual Democrats, the Democratic Party ultimately answers to the same capitalist class that has decided to double down on anti-trans hate as a divide-and-conquer strategy to protect their system as people's suffering grows.

Biden's lack of action to protect trans lives, now exacerbated by his concession on sports participation, will encourage more legal attacks and more violence like the attempted church firebombing in

Ohio and the armed threats to civil rights protesters in Washington.

When I spoke to participants in the March 31 march for Queer and Trans Youth Autonomy in the capital, I found enthusiasm and desire for bold action to protect trans youth and fight for trans liberation.

I heard young and older people eager to link the struggle for trans rights with the fight for Black and Indigenous lives, solidarity with migrants, defense of reproductive rights, union organizing, and climate justice.

It's time for bold, independent action, like the National March to Protect Trans Youth proposed by Women in Struggle-Mujeres en Lucha. It's time to organize for self-defense and take to the streets to push back the violent anti-trans attacks.

It's time to change the political climate of the U.S. from one where oppressed peoples live in fear to one where politicians and the super-rich behind them fear the people. 📌

# Cómo el gobierno cubano y su pueblo colaboraron en el Código de Familia

Por Natalia Marques

El 25 de septiembre de 2022, Cuba aprobó uno de los códigos de familia más progresistas del mundo. De una sola vez, la pequeña nación insular legalizó el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo, definió y defendió los derechos de las niñas y los niños, las personas discapacitadas, las personas cuidadoras y los ancianos y ancianas, además de redefinir el concepto de “familia” en función de lazos de afinidad y no de sangre. Esto abre el concepto de “familia” para incluir formas no tradicionales de relaciones familiares, que existen fuera del modelo de la familia nuclear heterosexual.

Aclamado como “revolucionario” por muchas personas en Cuba, el código ayudará a proporcionar protección a quienes de otro modo se habrían enfrentado a la discriminación social, garantizando al mismo tiempo que, en la isla, las personas homosexuales que deseen casarse tengan ahora el derecho legal de hacerlo.

Según jóvenes cubanos y líderes de movimientos sociales – con quienes hablé sobre el Código de Familia durante la conferencia “Construyendo nuestro futuro” realizada en La Habana en noviembre de 2022 – el código es el reflejo de un diálogo entre el pueblo cubano y su Gobierno.

En el tiempo transcurrido desde la aprobación del código, el Gobierno cubano sigue dialogando con el pueblo. El Ministerio de Justicia sigue celebrando seminarios en provincias de toda Cuba para personas que buscan respuestas a las preguntas que han surgido durante el proceso de aplicación. El Código de Familia ha incidido en todos los ámbitos, desde el deporte hasta las relaciones de propiedad. En particular, sólo en los dos primeros meses tras la aprobación de la ley, se registraron 112 matrimonios entre personas del mismo sexo.

## Un código revolucionario

“Es un código revolucionario que cambiará el pensamiento y la visión que tienen los cubanos sobre... las discriminaciones que pueden darse en la sociedad”, afirma José Luiz, estudiante de tercer curso de Relaciones Internacionales en el Instituto Superior de Relaciones Internacionales Raúl Roa García. El Código de Familia legaliza y amplía la definición de “familia” mucho más allá de la definición tradicional. El código “traerá nuevas protecciones a las personas que, de una manera u otra, han sido discriminadas”, me dijo Luiz.

Cuba ratificó una nueva Constitución en 2019. La constitución fue escrita a través de “consultas populares” con el pueblo cubano. A través de este proceso, los cubanos participaron en discusiones comunitarias con funcionarios del Gobierno, tanto para discutir como para enmendar la constitución. El artículo 68 (que pedía definir el matrimonio como una unión entre dos personas, legalizando así el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo) se mencionó en el 66%



La pareja Liuba y Lisset se casaron en octubre de 2022, poco después de la aprobación del Código de Familia.

FOTO: BELLY OF THE BEAST CUBA

de las reuniones de consulta popular. La mayoría de los y las cubanas que participaron en estos procesos apoyaron el mantenimiento de la definición del matrimonio como la unión entre un hombre y una mujer. Esto se debe en parte a los prejuicios históricos contra las personas LGBTQ+ que prevalecen en todo el continente americano, y en parte, al creciente movimiento evangélico conservador de Cuba, que se opone a reformas sociales progresistas como el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo.

Tras un intenso debate sobre el artículo 68 entre el pueblo cubano, la comisión constitucional decidió no incluir el lenguaje propuesto a favor del matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo y, en su lugar, impulsó la decisión de abordar el asunto a través de una futura legislación del “código de familia”. Esta legislación se convirtió en el Código de Familia de 2022.

## “Consulta popular”: Un Gobierno en diálogo con su pueblo

Para superar el conservadurismo social y aprobar uno de los Códigos de Familia más progresistas del mundo, Cuba se sometió a un meticuloso proceso de consulta popular, desde el 1 de febrero de 2022 hasta el 30 de abril de 2022. La Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular subrayó la importancia de que los cubanos se familiarizaran con el código, para evitar sentimientos de incertidumbre. A través de este proceso, el pueblo cubano hizo más de 400.000 propuestas, muchas de las cuales fueron incluidas en el código finalizado. El Ministro de Justicia, Oscar Manuel Silvera Martínez, dijo que la 25ª versión del código, presentada a la Asamblea Nacional y aprobada por ésta, “era más sólida porque estaba impregnada de la sabiduría del pueblo”.

Los jóvenes desempeñaron un papel central en el proceso que condujo a la aprobación del Código de la Familia. “La juventud cubana... participa en todas las tareas que despliega la revolución cubana”, dijo Luiz. “También participamos en el referéndum por nuestra Constitución en 2019. Estuvimos en comités populares, discutiendo la constitución y contribuimos a eso”.

En 2019, Cuba celebró un referéndum sobre una nueva constitución.

El referéndum fue aprobado con una mayoría de votos del 86,85 %, lo que equivale a alrededor del 73,3% del electorado total. El referéndum fue precedido por un proceso de consulta popular, en el que se debatió un proyecto de constitución en 133.000 reuniones públicas en todo el país, donde el pueblo de Cuba presentó 783.000 propuestas de cambio. Las autoridades cubanas declararon que casi el 60% del proyecto de Constitución se modificó sobre la base de las propuestas presentadas por el público durante el proceso de consulta popular.

“Recuerdo que en mi universidad tuvimos reuniones para explicar el Código de Familia y para que nosotros, como estudiantes, diéramos nuestra perspectiva del Código y propusiéramos algo para el mismo”, me dijo Neisser Liban Calderón García, también estudiante cubana de Relaciones Internacionales. “Pero después de hacer eso en la universidad, hicimos lo mismo en nuestra comunidad, con una perspectiva diferente porque en la universidad estamos con nuestros amigos, con [otros] estudiantes; pero en la comunidad, estamos con personas de todas las edades y de diferentes familias”. García, que tiene novio, me dijo que se alegra de tener ahora la oportunidad de casarse en el futuro.

Los resultados de este proceso popular hablan por sí solos: Con la participación del 74,01% de los votantes con derecho a voto, el Código de Familia se aprobó en una aplastante victoria con el 66,87% de los votos a favor.

“El día que... [el pueblo cubano] votó por el Código de Familia en el referéndum popular, yo también participé directamente en el colegio electoral”, dijo Luiz. “Pude ver la alta participación del pueblo en el proceso, y la alta aceptación y afán por la aprobación del código”.

Como mencionó Luiz, algunos jóvenes tuvieron la oportunidad de participar de forma aún más directa. “A través de la Federación Es-

tudiantil Universitaria [FEU], tenemos reuniones con los dirigentes del país. Por ejemplo, mi instituto tuvo una reunión con el presidente. Y en esa reunión, describimos la visión que tenemos como jóvenes revolucionarios y comunistas, la visión que tenemos del cambio que debe producirse con respecto a la base y los dirigentes del país”, dijo Luiz. “Tenemos voz [como jóvenes] en todos los espacios que tenemos, incluso la presidenta de la FEU [que en aquel momento era la estudiante de Derecho Karla Santana] forma parte de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular en Cuba. Y ella comparte su perspectiva con el Gobierno cubano sobre el pensamiento de la juventud y su tradición en la revolución cubana”.

Gretel Marante Roset, responsable de relaciones internacionales de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas, me dijo que las mujeres de Cuba desempeñaron un papel especial en el proceso de creación del Código de Familia. “Nuestro comandante en jefe [Fidel Castro] dijo que la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas es una revolución dentro de otra revolución. Las mujeres en Cuba somos beneficiarias y protagonistas de nuestro propio desarrollo”. Las mujeres ocupan la mitad de los escaños parlamentarios nacionales en Cuba.

“La Federación de Mujeres Cubanas formó parte de la comisión que redactó el borrador del Código de Familia para proponer el texto y la interpretación de la igualdad de género”, me dijo Marante Roset.

“Sobre el Código de Familia, creo que el documento es para el futuro. Está basado en el amor... reconociendo otros tipos de familias, derechos humanos conjuntos... Creo que este es el futuro para Cuba”, dijo Marante Roset.

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