

- ▶ Jubilados de la Industria Eléctrica de PR, en riesgo de perder sus pensiones
- ▶ Gobierno local arrodillado ante compañías de gas estadounidense



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LA's Community Self-Defense fights ICE fascism

By John Parker

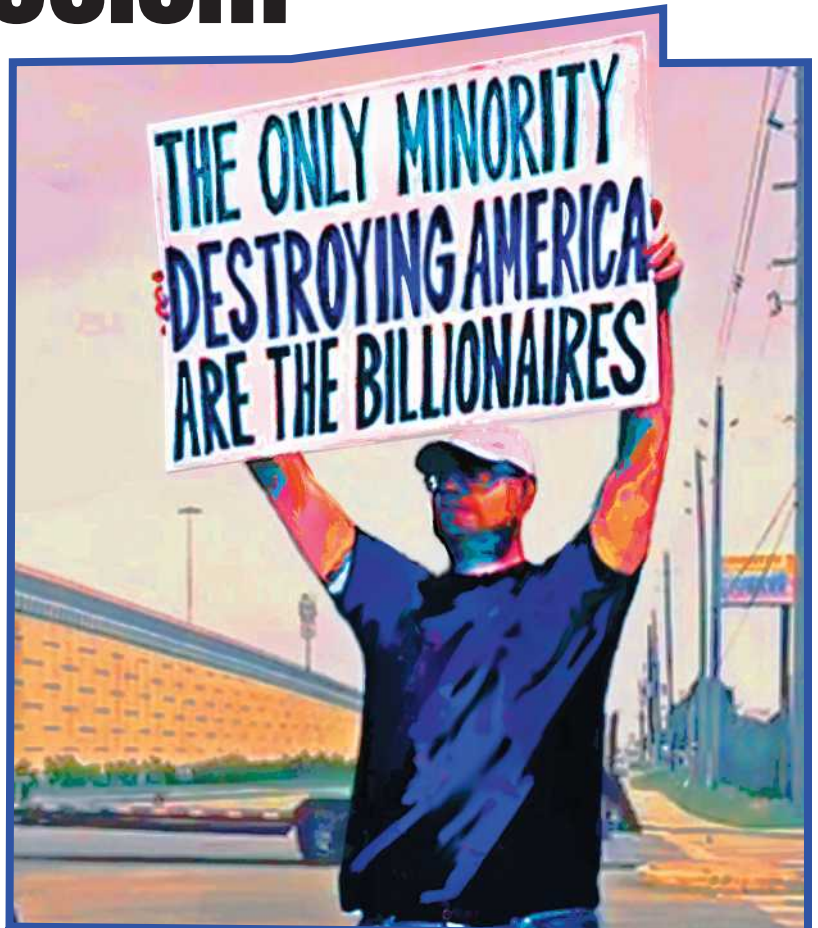
Los Angeles — There is an urgent need to build principled unity to confront the rising threat of fascism, a threat that spreads relentlessly like a virus, intensifying attacks on Black, Brown, and working-class communities at record levels.

While figures like Donald Trump and Elon Musk may be the loudest voices advancing this agenda, the Democratic Party under Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were complicit — funding and supporting Israeli genocide and deportations at home as tools of political control.

Barack Obama, despite his progressive reputation, oversaw more than 3 million formal deportations during his presidency — the highest number under any administration. That brutal legacy of “formal removals,” in which individuals are forcibly expelled from the U.S. under court order, set the stage. Biden and Harris continued down this path, even as they publicly claimed to support immigrant rights and racial justice.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass has likewise failed to live up to her rhetoric. Despite claims of prioritizing safety, she has remained silent on the LAPD's long-standing cooperation with ICE, which continues to terrorize immigrant and migrant communities. The label “sanctuary city” becomes a cruel oxymoron when families are ripped apart in

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Billionaires are the problem, not im/migrants

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Stopping the opioid crisis

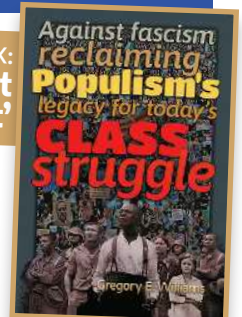
PALESTINE LAND DAY: 'Resistance is life'

Trump trade wars and military goals
 ▶ **Elon Musk's Pentagon**

European capitalists' war profits

Vietnam's struggle still inspires

NEW BOOK:
 'Trump not a populist'



Postal workers rally against privatization



By Sharon Black



SLL photo: Sharon Black

Hundreds of workers and their supporters rally in Baltimore City on March 23 at the main post office.

Postal workers across the United States held rallies on March 23 to speak out against ongoing proposals to privatize the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). Organized by branches of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), postal workers and their supporters protested the dismantling of postal services through privatization. “Hell No!” and

“Fight Like Hell!” were the main slogans. The protests were responding to the Trump administration’s threats to privatize the U.S. Postal Service when Postmaster General Louis DeJoy reached an agreement with Elon Musk and the De-

partment of Government Efficiency. The deal makes drastic cuts by weakening or even dismantling legal obligations regarding pension funding, service mandates, and other essential measures. At least 10,000 jobs are to be eliminated. #

LA’s Community Self-Defense fights ICE fascism

Continued from page 1

churches, schools, or their homes, while city leaders look the other way.

This hypocrisy has not gone unnoticed. The growing anger and disillusionment across the country is fueling the rise of grassroots resistance — nowhere more powerfully than in Los Angeles County, where the Community for Self-Defense Coalition (CSDC) is taking bold steps to protect vulnerable communities.

Community Self-Defense in action

Formed in February, the CSDC is already a force to be reckoned with. Over 60 organizations have joined this coalition, with the Steering Committee comprising Union del Barrio (which initiated the project), People’s Struggle – San Fernando Valley, the Association of Raza Educators, Santee MEChA, Centro CSO, Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, and the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice.

The coalition’s central mission is to inform the public of their rights during ICE

raids, conduct community patrols, and disrupt deportation operations through rapid response. Their outreach includes flyers, door-to-door engagement, and workplace visits, empowering residents to demand that agents produce signed warrants before entering homes or places of business.

These actions have made a difference. On February 23, in the city of Alhambra in Los Angeles County, 12 ICE vehicles were forced to leave empty-handed after

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Billionaires are the problem, not im/migrants

By Sharon Black

Here are the facts

'Im/migrants are taking our jobs' is a huge lie

Immigrants do not have the power to hire and fire. Bosses and billionaires are laying off workers. This year alone, bosses announced 497,052 cuts to workers' jobs.

This year has marked the highest number of job cuts since the first quarter of 2009, when 578,510 layoffs were announced. The lion's share of these losses — approximately 60,000 — has resulted from firings and layoffs within the public sector ordered by Elon Musk and Donald Trump.

As reported by the Challenger Report, "It is up 93% from the 257,254 cuts announced during the same period in 2024 and an increase of 227% from the 152,116 cuts announced in the previous quarter."

Not a single im/migrant is responsible for job or service cuts; they are not stripping and dismantling Social Security or Medicaid, or announcing mass layoffs in the high-tech and retail industries.

'Im/migrants don't pay taxes,' another lie

Every time any worker, regardless of their citizenship status, buys clothing, gas, and other necessities, they can be taxed. Every paycheck is taxed. Who doesn't pay taxes: the richest man on the

earth, Elon Musk, and a bunch of other crooks who depend on government handouts Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Silicon oligarch Peter Thiel, BlackRock's Larry Fink, the Waltons who own Walmart, and dozens of other billionaires.

Not a word is muttered about the war profiteers who have sucked tax payers dry or the bottomless giveaways of bombs and military equipment to Israel to commit genocide of the Palestinian people.

There are so many more lies and half-truths to debunk, like why does anyone leave their beloved home and familiar life behind to take a death-threatening trip to migrate? We will save that for another time, but let's get to the big question.

Why is Donald Trump, and for that matter, a lot of others, whipping up anti-immigrant fear?

The reason isn't that different from the reason that racism and anti-transgender bigotry are being pushed and trumpeted.

Of course, Donald Trump, his MAGA supporters, and most of the billionaires and bankers, even if it's behind closed doors, actually believe the most vehemently racist things about Black and Brown people. And this includes their personal views of immigrants.

However, the deeper reason, and the reason that none of their ultra-rich so-

called elite colleagues object, is that it is profitable for their bottom line. The game is to distract, shift the blame, and scapegoat groups with the least power.

By dividing and distracting workers, they can rob the entire working class, cut services, destroy our unions, and make it difficult to fight back. The end game is to create a pool of desperate and poor workers willing to work for the lowest possible wage, foregoing benefits.

This is profitable for big business and banks, especially during a recession, whether they are willing to declare a recession or not, and during a general capitalist contraction. The capitalist system and the capitalists themselves are driven to increase exploitation or toward destruction through war.

The result of the terror war on im/migrants is already apparent in Florida, where the legislature is proposing rolling back child labor laws to push younger workers into undocumented workers' jobs.

In the final analysis, all of us are im/migrants with the exception of Indigenous people whose land was stolen and Black people whose ancestors were ripped from Africa and enslaved. The antidote for hate and division is unity and solidarity. Reject the anti-immigrant propaganda and unite to stop capitalist robbery. Defend all of our lives. #

The camouflaged U.S. invasion of Panama

By Gary Wilson

Panama's opposition parties accused the U.S. of launching a "camouflaged invasion" amid escalating tensions over the U.S. military presence in the country. Following U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's recent visit, President Donald Trump confirmed troop deployments, stating, "We've moved a lot of troops to Panama."

Hegseth cited the need to "secure" the Panama Canal from Chinese influence, announcing increased U.S. military ac-



Demonstrators hold banner reading "Southern Command out of Panama." Panama City, April 8.

tivities at four former bases vacated in 1999 under the Torrijos-Carter treaties, which stipulated the canal's neutrality and prohibited foreign (i.e., U.S.) mili-

tary installations.

Opposition leader Ricardo Lombana condemned the U.S. actions as an invasion "without firing a shot."

The week before Hegseth's arrival, military forces from Panama and the United States began conducting the joint exercise Panamax 2025, with "protection" drills for the interoceanic canal "against possible threats."

The military exercise involves the arrival of members of the U.S. Armed Forc-

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Melinda Butterfield links trans justice to global struggles

By Struggle-La Lucha Los Angeles bureau

The Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles hosted national trans activist and leader Melinda Butterfield to mark International Women's Day.

The whirlwind weekend began with the screening of "I Saw the TV Glow," at the Harriet Tubman Center. The A24 film had an especially poignant impact among sectors of the trans community when it was released. "I Saw the TV Glow" (2024) is a psychological horror film that thoughtfully explores the transgender experience.

Then on March 15, Melinda Butterfield spoke at a rally in Long Beach, organized by Queer & Forever Here, SoCal Uprising & 50501.

"I'm here to talk to you about solidarity. As you know, trans people have been

marked for extermination by this regime, and if they succeed, other LGBTQ siblings will be next. But we aren't just part of the LGBTQIA community. We show up for the migrant community, we show up for Palestine. A few days ago in NYC I was in Federal Plaza, NYC, along with 10,000 other people — queer and straight — supporting Mahmoud Khalil, the Columbia University Palestinian student illegally being deported by the Trump regime.

"We are part of every community, we are Black, immigrants, we are union members, Amazon workers, baristas, sex workers. We walk through fire to be ourselves; that ferocity, that determination is something we will all need to survive what is coming. The word is solidarity, an injury to one is an injury to all!" Butterfield was interrupted multiple times by the hundreds at the rally with



SLL photo: Preston

Melinda Butterfield in Los Angeles.

applause and shouts of Free Mahmoud! On March 16, Melinda Butterfield participated in the Our Solidarity is Our Strength forum at the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles. #

Honoring courageous women

By Gloria Verdieu

On March 15, African American Writers and Artists, San Diego (AAW&A) hosted a Women's History event at the Malcolm X Library honoring "Remarkable Courageous Women," whose shoulders we stand on. This was AAW&A's first event since the hiatus that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program highlighted Harriet Ross Tubman, and began with brief histories of International Women's Day, Women's History Month, and Harriet Tubman Day. A slide presentation, posters of women, and books by and about women were displayed throughout the Performance room.

Many in attendance, including this writer, were not aware that March 10 is the official Harriet Tubman Day holiday. Approved as Public Law 101-252 by the 101st Congress in a joint resolution on March 13, 1990, and signed by President George H.W. Bush.



The documentary "Harriet Tubman: They Call Her Moses" was previewed. AAW&A members and supporters read selections from "Scenes in the Life of Har-

riet Tubman" by Sarah H. Bradford. Overall, this women's program armed people in attendance with knowledge of many remarkable women they didn't know. #

LA activists rally for Palestine, trans rights, against ICE and fascism

By Women in Struggle-SoCal

“Our Solidarity is Our Strength” was the theme of the March 16 meeting in Los Angeles, organized by Women in Struggle and the Struggle for Socialism Party. The program brought together leaders from communities besieged by the Trump pack: immigrant, oppressed genders, Black, Brown, and Palestinian communities.

Gloria Verdieu, from Women in Struggle-San Diego and the Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, introduced Lydia Ponce for an Indigenous land acknowledgment. Ponce recognized the nations that lived in the L.A. area.

“We recognize and give thanks for these lands, we thank the Tonga and all the relatives in the four directions,” Ponce said. “I’m going to close with a word for the future, rematriation!”

Verdieu gave a short history of the socialist origins of International Women’s Day. Also, Harriet Tubman Day, March 10, which was recognized as a U.S. holiday by Congress on March 13, 1990.

The next speaker was Fatinah, co-founder of Unmute Humanity, a collective that exposes and combats the establishment media’s lies, distortions, and omissions. She spoke powerfully as a Palestinian, dedicated to a Free Palestine, from the river to the sea.

“I want to talk about this idea of ‘normal’ that we’ve been conditioned to accept — the notion of hypernormalization. This isn’t something new; it’s been the reality in Palestine for generations. It is what allows the genocide to continue. Genocide has become normalized, but it is not normal.

“This week alone, nine beautiful human beings were exterminated; they were aid workers, three were journalists. This is the world we live in, where nine lives ended in a split second, and it didn’t make headlines. The only coverage was on CNN. They framed them as terrorists, legitimate targets. Zionism means systematic targeting of children — every single day, a child is killed. They are trying to normalize killing children by dehumanization and criminalization



SLL photo: Revo Grafia

At the “Solidarity is Our Strength” meeting in Los Angeles, March 16.

of the victims. This is since the ceasefire!

“My people are living under a complete siege, and two million people are literally starving to death. The Zionists cut off the electricity. The only two water purification plants are shut down. We live in a world where our people aren’t entitled to clean water. We cannot normalize genocide; we must normalize the resistance.”

Lupe Carrasco Cardona, a leader in Unión del Barrio and the Association of Raza Educators, talked about the two main grassroots campaigns she is involved with: the Community Self-Defense Coalition (CSDC) and Ethnic Studies. Unión del Barrio initiated the CSDC. The Coalition is composed of dozens of local organizations. Its mission is to notify communities of possible ICE activity and empower communities to defend themselves from kidnapping and deportation.

“The Coalition has been really beautiful because it shows there is hope out there, and it moves people to act, not freeze in panic.

“As an educator I have been very active in fighting for Chicana/o studies, ethnic studies, Raza studies. There is a bill right now, drafted by the Jewish Legislative Caucus, AB1468. The bill essentially makes sure there is no classroom where you can mention Palestine. This is a so-called ethnic studies bill.” The ARE and other progressive educator organi-

zations have been organizing opposition to the bill; the bill as a whole is a denial of the right of diverse ethnicities to determine their own curriculum.

Melinda Butterfield began:

“Wow, hypernormalization is a great word from Fatinah, that is a word I’m going to keep in my mind for my community too, because there are parallels with what’s happening in the trans community now and what is happening in Palestine, including the determination of the powers that be to commit genocide.

“Besides pushing back against the anti-trans agenda, we need the left to think bigger. How to fight back against fascism. I hear many activists focusing on mutual aid and surviving. That is good, but if mutual aid work isn’t coupled with a larger fightback, one that sees mobilizing millions of people and building alternative forms of power, then all that amounts to is a slow death in the face of fascism.

“There is no more normal. What would it look like if we mobilized and occupied Washington, D.C.? We need people who are brave, our hope lies in the example of the Palestinian women and the Palestinian people in general. Like the people of Palestine, trans people will fight generation after generation until liberation. Trans Women are women, trans men are men, non-binary people

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Baltimore's Urban Reads Bookstore, activist faces white supremacist attacks

By Colby Byrd

Urban Reads Bookstore is a Black-owned shop in the heart of Baltimore. Recently, the store and its owner, Tia Hamilton, have been facing harassment and attacks by white supremacists and fascists. These attacks are due to Hamilton's involvement in the struggle for prisoner justice and liberation.

She is engaged at all levels: advocating for better conditions inside the prisons, fighting to get people released early, and supporting them once they are out. Hamilton is marching side by side with the people enslaved and entrapped by the state every day. It is this Black power that scares the racist core of this country, and the reactionaries come out in droves to suppress it.

When met with these vulgar attacks, the store did not back down. Hamilton took to the internet to expose the racists who were harassing her privately. They were sending her photos of lynchings and previous martyrs of police brutality, along with hate-filled messages and slurs. Not only did she bring their actions out into the open, but she also went on the attack.

The bookstore turned to the community for help, and the community responded immediately in lockstep. People were able to help pull the IP addresses of the attackers, and other information regarding where they worked and what groups they were affiliated with.

Community defense was set up around the store, with participation from members of the Tendea Family, UNIA-ACL, the Nation of Islam, the Struggle for Socialism Party, and others who were not affil-



Tia Hamilton, owner of Urban Reads Bookstore, in her Waverly business.

iated with any group. Online campaigns to raise awareness of what was going on in Baltimore led to the connection of this struggle to similar attacks happening all across the country, from California and Washington state to New York and Washington, D.C.

On March 13, Urban Reads Bookstore opened its doors for a community meeting. At the meeting, people and organizations came together. They exchanged ideas on next steps, not just to protect Urban Reads but on how to create a support network across the country, protecting Black educational centers.

A representative of the Baltimore City Council and her Baltimore City Police escort also attended the meeting. Other than explaining how the city was absolutely unable to protect the community

from racism, she also ironically claimed that no one in the city, not even she, could get security from the city.

Needless to say, the room rejected the pitying words from the councilmember and refocused the conversation on action and results.

These fascist assaults on the Black community will not succeed, but they will bring out an even stronger unity, bringing communities together to act swiftly and decisively, using every means necessary to protect and defend one another. #

LA activists rally

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are who they say they are, intersex people exist. Transition rights, reproductive rights, our bodies our choice, death before detransition!"

Frances from PUSO-West LA, Philippine/US Solidarity Organization closed the day's program with a beautiful song they wrote, "We will Win." They introduced the song: "I just want to reemphasize the strength and power we have when we come together to defend our people and fight back."

The March 16 "Solidarity is our Strength" program is watchable on IG @harriettubmancenter. #

The camouflaged U.S. invasion of Panama

Continued from page 3

es, who participate in joint tactical and operational training activities. This U.S. military operation evokes painful memories of the 1989 U.S. invasion, Operation Just Cause, causing widespread concern among Panamanians. A separate agreement granting preferential canal fee re-

imbursements to U.S. Navy vessels has raised further controversy, seemingly violating neutrality provisions.

Demonstrations across the country against both U.S. policies and Mulino's administration are expected on April 12, highlighting widespread discontent and the deepening crisis surrounding Panama's sovereignty. #

Baltimore's long history of racist redlining

By Colby Byrd

On May 15, 1911, Baltimore became the first city in the United States to codify urban racial segregation into law. This policy, enacted by Baltimore Mayor J. Barry Mahool, enforced segregation in Baltimore block by block according to racial lines.

Although this act was deemed unconstitutional, the practice continued with full support from the dominating white population and all levels of government. During the 1920s, the city government entrenched and expanded this practice by standing up the Committee on Segregation and appointing the city solicitor as its chair.

The Committee utilized building inspectors, health investigators, the city's real estate board, and community organizations to enforce this apartheid. As the Second World War came and went, the influx of European immigrants pushed the native Black population deeper and deeper into what are known as the red-lined zones. These zones had no access to capital and saw disinvestment from all levels of government, the banks, and industry. Also within these areas, due to the poor infrastructure, health defects like heart and lung disease, lead poisoning, asthma, and cancer were rampant.

In the 1930s, the map that marked areas in the city into Green, Blue, Yellow, and Red zones was created. And since its enactment, the city government and its wealthy backers have been enforcing this status quo through economic manipulation and brutal police occupation.

During the 1950s and '60s, the Federal Urban Renewal policy, joined by the city's own Urban Renewal plans, was responsible for uprooting over 10,000 Black households. This practice was designed to push out the remaining Black communities near downtown and the city's economic heart into the outskirts and redlined zones.

Utilizing the expansion of universities and hospitals along with the cre-



Protesters rally in Baltimore after the 2015 death of Freddie Gray, a Black man who died from a spinal cord injury after being brutalized by police.

ation of highways, the government uprooted and forcefully displaced Black communities, pushing them into areas that did not have enough housing to accommodate the sheer number of people who now had nowhere else to go. To quote the 1950 Analysis of Redevelopment projects 1-A and 3-A:

“1,671 Negro families will be displaced by the redevelopment projects and Housing authority. The city's known facility for rehousing is a 500 unit project to be built in Cherry Hill. The Redevelopment Commission and the Housing Authority of Baltimore will be building at the same time. Hence, each will be evicting tenants simultaneously. ... It is readily apparent that additional overcrowding in other blighted areas is the only solution. Also these two projects require the City Council to give official approval to segregation in the name of redevelopment.”

This forced concentration and uprooting of Black families continues. The communities around Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland (UMD) here in the city have been driven out to make way for wealthier, whiter communities. Looking at a map of the city marked with demographics of neighborhoods, you will find that the zones containing majority Black communities are still left with no access to capital or investment. These zones today make up the Black Butterfly and are systematically plagued by the same issues

from the 1900s. This Black Butterfly is juxtaposed by the “white L,” which contains areas ripe with fresh investments, access to capital, and more permanent infrastructure.

The Black connection to the land has been under constant attack, predating slavery. Black bodies were stolen from Mother Africa and had their entire ways of life from before the shackles beaten or burned out of them. Black bodies were put in cages on display at zoos, all for the entertainment of white people. Black bodies were used as science experiments. It was Black bodies that worked the fields and factories that produced the immense wealth of this nation, and it was Black bodies that built the seats of power that this country's ruling class uses to continue to oppress and kill us.

Self-sustaining Black communities had their residents massacred and the locations bombed or burned off the map. All of the musical styles originating from Black communities along the Mississippi Delta were plundered by white musicians and repackaged to erase any connection to the Black population. Black families can never live comfortably due to the threats of kidnapping and locking away of Black parents and the murder of Black children by the police.

Colby Byrd is an organizer with the Baltimore People's Power Assembly and Struggle for Socialism Party.

New book challenges Trump's 'populist' label

By Gary Wilson

You might clench your teeth just like I do when someone calls Donald Trump a populist.

As the new book — “Against fascism: Reclaiming populism’s legacy for today’s class struggle” — points out, that’s using populism to mean making phony patriotic appeals to “the everyday person,” in the style of Mussolini and Hitler ... or Donald Trump.

Trump’s “populism” bears no resemblance to the populist movements organized by workers and farmers over a century ago.

Populism was progressive

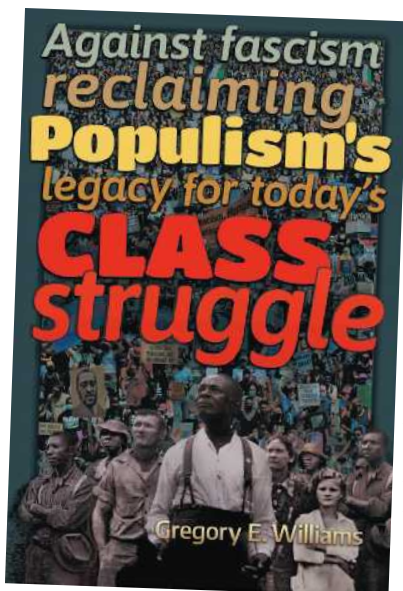
In the book’s introduction, author Gregory E. Williams writes:

“Populism was a progressive – that is, left-wing – movement of the late 19th Century, having farmers as its base, both Black and white. The movement fought big business and the big banks, and generally insisted that workers of different races share common interests, and ought to work together.

“This doesn’t sound like any of the politicians called populists except for Bernie Sanders. However, unlike Sanders, the populists in their heyday were an independent mass movement. They were a big coalition of labor and farm organizations, and founded a political party to challenge both the Republicans and Democrats. They were a real threat to the ruling class.

“This radical tradition influenced subsequent politics in the Progressive era and the New Deal, but was largely forgotten by the 1950s. ...

“In his 2020 book ‘The People, No: A Brief History of Anti-Populism,’



Thomas Frank presents evidence that the consensus historians used the language of the horrified ruling class during the 1890s and the 1930s to characterize populism. This is how populism came to mean any mass movement, right or left, as well as demagogic appeals to ‘the common man.’ ...

“So, in an era when we are told that there is no alternative to capitalism, or even the possibility of a liveable future for humanity, they are trying to take away our history. But our movements need to know. Learning from history makes our movements stronger and more capable of going on the offensive ...

“This book is about strategizing for the current fight against the billionaire oligarchs like Elon Musk and the fascist movement they’re backing in order to save the decaying capitalist system. This book is a call for a revolutionary socialist response – a communist response – to the situation.”

Resistance amid Jim Crow

Williams’ book covers the history of populism as a people’s movement. This includes Black populism, which is rarely found in U.S. history books.

From the “Reclaiming Populism” book:

“The [historical populist] movement was based especially among farmers in the South and West, but included alliances with industrial workers and even small shopkeepers.

“Although populism was overwhelmingly anti-racist, a fundamental weakness of the movement was that it remained mostly white. The populist movement was not able to create the big, multiracial alliance that was needed to take on the rich successfully.

“But to leave the story at that would be misleading. In fact, there was a significant Black populist movement that had its own dynamics. What they achieved was impressive, especially considering the extreme racist violence that characterized this period.

“When the populist movement was in full swing in the 1890s, the Southern ruling class’s shock troops were carrying out over 100 lynchings annually, rolling back the many political, economic, and social gains made by Black people after the Civil War.

“The Black populists organized and fought back during the height of this post-Reconstruction Klan terror, leaving a legacy that influenced movements going forward.”

Also included in this book is Vincent Copeland’s “Southern Populism & Black Labor,” which was written in 1972.

You’ll want to get this book now: tinyurl.com/ReclaimingPopulism



CHINA Celebrating 75 years of liberation

October 1, 2024, marked the 75th anniversary of China’s transformative revolution, which liberated the nation from feudal oppression and imperialist control. Today, China stands as a global scientific powerhouse, boasting achievements in pollution reduction, and space exploration. China has made significant strides in healthcare, education, and sports.

This book aims to illuminate the growing dangers posed by a potential U.S. war against China and to reveal the real enemies of the working class.

<https://tinyurl.com/USWarChina>

Put People First campaign launched in Louisiana with 'stop the cuts' rally



New Orleans, March 29 – Louisiana Workers Council launched the Put People First campaign with an emergency rally against Trump, Musk, and Governor Landry’s cuts. On the same day, voters in Louisiana came out and rejected four state constitutional amendments endorsed by Trump-backed Landry.

SLL photos

By Louisiana Workers Council

Join the Put the People First campaign, fight back against Trump, Musk, and Governor Landry’s war on the people

New Orleans, March 29 – Despite predicted storms, federal and postal workers, retirees, veterans, Medicaid and SNAP recipients, union members, employed and unemployed workers turned out for a strong rally at the corner of Elk and Canal St. to say “stop the billionaires’ war on the people.”

Members of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU), Teamsters, American Federation of Federal, State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and the National Labor Relations Board Union (NLRBU) all pledged to fight back against Trump, Musk, and Landry’s attempts to impoverish the working class through illegal union-busting, layoffs, and cuts to our survival programs like Medicaid, SNAP, VA benefits, WIC, CHIP, and Social Security.

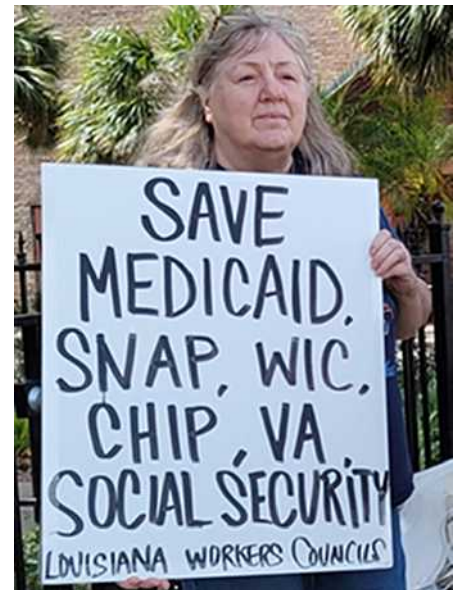
Workers denounced Trump and Landry’s attacks against and scapegoating of LGBT people and immigrants. The crowd chanted “feed the people, not the pentagon” and “the people united will never be defeated.”

Across the country, the movement to defend our right to health care, food, housing, jobs, and income is growing. Join the “Put the People First” campaign to help build this movement here in Louisiana.

Follow Louisiana Workers Councils on Instagram and Facebook.

Struggle-La Lucha note: On the same day, voters in Louisiana came out and rejected four state constitutional amendments endorsed by Landry. Almost two-thirds of the votes were against, with a 21% voter turnout that far surpassed the projected turnout of 12%. Louisiana said “no!” to all.

- Amendment 1 would have created special courts not accountable to local voters.
- Amendment 2 would have further cut taxes for the rich (Landry’s far-right legislature has already done this through special legislative sessions) while selling off education investments.
- Amendment 3 would have allowed Louisiana legislators to pass laws charging kids of any age as adults for any felony.
- Amendment 4 would have set judicial elections to the earliest dates possible, further limiting voter turnout. #



What actually reduced opioid deaths?

Methadone, Naloxone, & Medicaid – not militarized borders

By Gregory E. Williams

Public health measures drive down opioid deaths

U.S. opioid deaths are finally going down. In January, a CDC report showed an almost 24% decrease in drug overdose deaths from September 2023 to September 2024. This was a drop from 114,000 deaths to 87,000. That's 27,000 fewer deaths.

Demonizing immigrants and militarization of the border had nothing to do with it. Tax cuts for billionaires didn't do it. Improved public health measures are what saved lives, even as systemic factors driving addiction continued to deepen: low wages, lack of opportunity for youth, unaffordable housing, capitalist-driven alienation, and despair.

The CDC report states:

“Multiple factors contribute to the drop in overdose deaths, including widespread, data-driven distribution of naloxone, which is a life-saving medication that can reverse an overdose; better access to evidence-based treatment for substance use disorders; shifts in the illegal drug supply; a resumption of prevention and response after pandemic-related disruptions; and continued investments in prevention and response programs like CDC's flagship Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) program.”

Trump and Musk's cuts threaten all this progress. Trump talks a big game about stopping the opioid epidemic. But if he were serious – if he actually cared about saving lives – he would be pushing to expand public health institutions and advocate health care for all. Trump has never helped the communities devastated by the opioid epidemic and never will.

To shed light on the real lives of people struggling with opioid addiction, *Struggle - La Lucha* is beginning a series on the epidemic. First is an interview with Kaitlin R., a 29-year-old south Louisiana woman currently enrolled in methadone therapy.

Working-class mom opens up about opioid addiction

Kaitlin R.: I've been on 120 mg for 4 years now, but I just recently, within the last month, have begun to taper down. I'm at 118 mg and will go down by 2 mg every two weeks.

It honestly saved me. It truly has saved me. It has its side effects, but honestly, I'll take craving sugar over craving dope any day.

Gregory E. Williams: Do you receive treatment through Medicaid?

KR: Yes, fully paid for by Medicaid. If you have to pay out of pocket, it's 90 bucks a week. I know that seems like a lot, but it's nothing compared to what you spend on dope to not be sick.

Some people have a habit of at least \$120 a day.

GEW: It sounds like Medicaid is a lifeline. Medicaid expansion probably saved a lot of lives, in terms of addiction treatment alone. Governor

Landry tried to get thousands of Louisiana residents kicked off Medicaid when he was Attorney General. Now, Trump and Musk are working at the federal level to gut it. What do you think would happen if they go through with that?

KR: Oh man, if they go through with that, the addicts will be forced to go back to street drugs. Especially if they have to cold turkey methadone. That is literally harder and more painful to come off of than fentanyl.

GEW: That would be horrible. It would not only be cruel, but would reverse so much of the progress made. Overdose deaths are finally going down, and it's because of public health measures like methadone programs. Do you have any experience with Narcan?

KR: I have never been given Narcan. Thankfully, I've never overdosed, but I have had to administer some.

GEW: You have a young child with special needs, right? Can I ask about the importance of having support for recovery when it comes to parenting and employment?

KR: I think it's very important for parents – single parents especially – to have support during recovery. In my case, especially, if I didn't get clean, my son Nicky would have nobody. His dad damn sure wasn't gonna get clean for Nicky.

While methadone is very helpful, there is still a stigma surrounding it. Some employers will not even give you a second look if they find out you're on methadone.

GEW: Considering that stigma, is there anything you wish people knew about opioid addiction?

KR: Yeah, I wish people knew that, yes, in the beginning of the addiction, it was a choice. But it very quickly can become no longer a choice. You need it to not be sick. Hell, you need it to be normal. It's the only thing you can think about if you withdraw. It very quickly stops being fun and starts being absolute hell on earth. You get stuck in a constant cycle of being sick, getting money, getting well, to then need more money to do it all over again. I wish people would realize that no addict wakes up every day wanting to be an addict. Nobody wants to be an addict, I promise.

I can't tell you how many times I've told myself I'm gonna get clean, just to wake up the next morning being sick and just wanting to die. Literally wanting to stay away from this drug but then being so sick you have to do it, then you hate yourself even more because you failed again. And it just happens over and over.

At least until the addict is ready to get clean, and it took me a long time to realize that, just because I need help getting clean doesn't take away from the fact that I am clean, on methadone or suboxone or completely abstinent. I am clean. #



Trump's tax breaks vs. public health: HHS layoffs could deepen opioid crisis

By Gregory E. Williams

These cuts kill

On March 27, Trump's billionaire-controlled administration announced the firing of another 10,000 full-time workers at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). That brings the total to 20,000 people forced out of HHS so far – almost 25% of the agency's workforce.

Imagine eating at a restaurant that just fired 25% of its staff (or better yet, working at one). The experience would likely be unpleasant. But when cuts are made to medical care and research, people die. In recent years, hundreds of thousands have died from drug overdoses in the U.S. annually. The workers at HHS and affiliated programs have helped reduce those numbers with evidence-based treatment and prevention programs.

The HHS umbrella includes the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and more. Some 67.3 million people are enrolled in Medicare, and almost 90% are older than 65. More than 37.6 million U.S. children are enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides health coverage for children in families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private insurance. Trump's policies show he doesn't care about older people or kids.

In 2022, the NIH launched the Harm Reduction Research Network, a national initiative to lower opioid overdose deaths. Its research addresses the many disparities affecting communities due to class, race, and even geographic factors. A Dec. 16, 2022, news release said:

"Novel forms of harm reduction services may prove helpful in rural areas of the country, where people may need to travel long distances to receive care and services. According to 2020 CDC data, rural counties experienced 26.2 overdose deaths per 100,000 people, which was only slightly lower than the rates in urban counties (28.6 deaths per 100,000 people); overdose deaths involving psy-



Moon Soselo is currently taking naltrexone to treat opioid addiction.

chostimulants were higher in rural counties than in urban counties from 2012 to 2020. Additionally, several projects will be aimed at populations disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of drug use, including Black and Latino/Latina communities, and women."

This is the type of research that helped drive down opioid deaths by 24% between September 2023 and September 2024. The fate of such research – and medical care for those suffering with addiction – is now in jeopardy, while Trump promises more tax breaks for billionaires.

To shed light on the real lives of people struggling with opioid addiction, *Struggle-La Lucha* has begun a series on the epidemic. The following is an interview with Moon Soselo, a young woman who is currently taking naltrexone to treat opioid addiction.

'Focus on harm-reduction based treatment'

Moon Soselo: I grew up in Seattle, Washington, and have moved around the country a lot, but always find myself back in Washington. I've mostly worked in the food service industry, though I have pipe dreams about finishing school and becoming a journalist. And I'm a big ol' lesbian.

Gregory E. Williams: God bless the lesbians who fight so we're all free! So you were prescribed Suboxone? Are you still taking it?

MS: I'm not. I actually only took Suboxone for a few months. I'd moved and lost my Medicaid for a while, and of course, ended up relapsing in that

period, but never fully fell back into addiction. Six months after I got my first Suboxone prescription, I used heroin for the last time.

Now I take naltrexone. It's normally given as a monthly shot, but I take it orally once a day because no pharmacies here stock the shot. Anyway, it basically blocks opioids from sticking to your receptors. It's really great for people who have gone through full detox and want to, like, "lock in" their sobriety. It's not really right for people who are still in a chaotic use period, though, because it is theoretically possible to break through the block and get high, but you can die trying.

GEW: So you were getting Suboxone through Medicaid?

MS: Yup! I didn't have to pay a cent, which was a relief. I went to the Seattle STEP Clinic. They actually helped me get on Medicaid, too. I didn't have it before. I don't think I would have been able to achieve sobriety without Medicaid!

GEW: Have you ever used Narcan to reverse an overdose?

MS: I've never had it used on me. I have used it on others twice, both times were very scary situations. It worked both times, though! I definitely encourage people to carry it, and take a quick training course if they can.

GEW: Absolutely. I think they should be giving it out in schools, along with condoms and Plan B (which would be illegal where I am in Louisiana).

How do you access naltrexone?

MS: I have Medicaid again, and I see a psychiatric nurse practitioner at the local clinic who prescribes it in addition to my other psych meds. We only have one addiction program out here, and they focus on folks who have court orders, and the program uses an AA model, so it's not for me. I know the AA model has worked for people before, but both statistically and anecdotally, harm-reduction-focused treatment is more successful.

GEW: Do you have any thoughts on Trump's rhetoric around the opioid epidemic?

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‘Netanyahu bombs Gaza hospitals, Musk shuts them down’

NYC LAND DAY RALLY

Corporate greed and genocide slammed

By Struggle - La Lucha
New York bureau

Five thousand people marched in New York City on March 30 to protest the U.S./Zionist genocide against the Palestinian people. Along with protesters all over the world, they were commemorating Palestine Land Day.

In 1976, the Zionist apartheid regime announced plans to steal nearly eight square miles of Palestinian land in the Galilee region. A general strike was declared on March 30, 1976, to stop this land theft.

Tens of thousands protested all over occupied Palestine. At least six Palestinians were killed, many more were injured, and hundreds were arrested. Since that time 49 years ago, Palestinians and their supporters have marked Land Day by protesting the Zionist occupation of their homeland.

In New York City this year, the Shut It Down 4 Palestine Coalition called for people to gather in Manhattan’s Union Square. Among the organizations building the action were the Palestinian Youth Movement; PAL-AWDA, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition; Neturei Karta (anti-Zionist Orthodox Jews); the Party for Socialism and Liberation; and The People’s Forum.



Among the speakers were Taher Dahleh from the Palestinian Youth Movement; Layan Fuleihan from The People’s Forum; Claudia De La Cruz, the PSL presidential candidate last year; and Bill Dores representing PAL-AWDA.

Dores said, “It is to keep the wealth of the world pouring into the coffers of the 1% here” that the U.S. finances and supplies the Zionist war machine. “They are looting our communities here to pay for their bombs, while Elon Musk is shutting down hospitals,” he said.

Dores pointed out that while the U.S. bombed a cancer hospital in Yemen, Netanyahu bombed the last remaining cancer hospital in Gaza.

People marched out of Union Square and into the street, going uptown. “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be

free!” and other chants echoed against skyscrapers.

Supporters of Nodutdol for Korean Community Development carried a banner saying, “Korea for Palestine.” An even longer banner read “Staten Island 4 Palestine.”

People showed their support along the side of the march. Drivers honked their horns in support.

The march ended with a brief rally in Times Square. People were reminded of the massive march planned for Washington, D.C., on April 5.

Land back from South Dakota’s Black Hills to Palestine! #

Opiod crisis

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MS: He’s basically been blaming it all on China and Mexico, right? My understanding is that curbing undocumented immigration won’t change anything because it’s mostly smuggled during legal crossings, and that India has also been a producer of precursor chemicals for fentanyl, so illicit drug manufacturers would probably just change suppliers.

I have major doubts that tariffs and border control will have any positive impact whatsoever. Further, it’s pretty likely these policies are going to raise the prices of regular goods people need, putting more people into poverty, and poverty is a major risk factor for addiction. I would not be surprised if these policies actually worsen the opiod epidemic. The best way to actually curb opiate addiction is to focus on harm-reduction-based treatment.

GEW: Do you feel like it’s dehumanizing when these politicians talk about the opiod epidemic in order to get support for the policies they’re pushing without actually talking to and meeting with people dealing with addiction? I mean,

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Speaking in NYC’s Union Square, Bill Dores said: “They are looting our communities to pay for bombs, while Elon Musk is shutting down U.S. hospitals the U.S. bombed a hospital in Yemen, Netanyahu bombed a cancer hospital in Gaza.”

Protest in Los Angeles commemorates Palestinian Land Day

'RESISTANCE IS LIFE'

By Struggle-La Lucha
Los Angeles Bureau

On March 29, Los Angeles saw a significant gathering to commemorate Palestinian Land Day, as protesters rallied against the ongoing genocide in Gaza and escalating violence by U.S.-armed Zionist forces.

The march and demonstration channeled the growing global outrage over the U.S.-backed Zionist entity's systemic efforts to erase Palestinian sovereignty and identity.

Amid chants and banners, participants underscored the urgency of international solidarity.

Initiated by the Palestinian Youth Movement, and endorsed by Unmute Humanity, Unión del Barrio, ANSWER Coalition, Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, and other organizations, the demonstration saw more than a thousand Palestinians and supporters begin at LAPD headquarters and then take over two lanes of traffic winding through busy downtown streets to hold a closing rally in Pershing Square.



From the back of a flatbed truck, Fatinah of Unmute Humanity said: “We are in constant contact with our people in Palestine and this means so much to them. This is the moment — we speak, we write, we fight ... Refusing extermination is resistance! We are living proof that resistance is life. Long live our martyrs! Long live our people! Free Palestine!”

SLL photo

Humanity thanked PYM for “always being organized.” She said that no one should think that protests don’t matter, because “we are in constant contact with our people in Palestine and this means so much to them.”

Fatinah went on to list some examples of the circumstances around the deaths of many martyrs, with the crowd shouting “Shame!” after each case. She concluded, “This is the moment — we speak, we write, we fight ... Refusing extermination is resistance! We are living proof that resistance is life. Long live our martyrs! Long live our people! Free Palestine!” #

In their coverage of this important demonstration, corporate media marched in lockstep with the Trump administration’s campaign to stamp out the U.S. Palestine solidarity movement. Fox-affiliated radio and TV stations in Los Angeles gave a crowd estimate of “dozens,” while the Los Angeles Times did not report on the event.

From the back of the flatbed truck that led the march, Fatinah of Unmute

Trump layoffs could deepen opioid crisis

Continued from page 12

they could actually go to clinics and talk with people and learn what their actual needs and struggles are.

MS: Oh, absolutely. It feels like we’re just a rhetorical tool, an excuse to implement policies that won’t help us and don’t actually have anything to do with us.

They don’t really care if tariffs curb fentanyl manufacturing, but if it hurts China, great!

GEW: If anything, I would think that all this sensationalist talk about the opioid epidemic (as opposed to conversations about things that actually help) is further stigmatizing people affected by addiction. Is there anything we haven’t talked about that you wish people knew about opioid addiction?

MS: Unless you have a lot of money and resources, there is a kind of catch-22

issue with opiate addiction. It gets expensive quick, so when you’re deep in it you’re usually walking a tightrope just keeping up with rent and feeding yourself. I was, on average, \$300 in debt to my dealers at any given time.

Opioid detox usually takes about one to two weeks to get out of the acute stage, depending on how much/long you were using and which opioid you were using. And working through it would be like trying to work through having the flu, food poisoning, a back injury, and Fight Club-level insomnia, all simultaneously.

But getting a full, straight week off can be tough to do even at decent jobs, let alone two weeks. And if you don’t have paid sick leave or vacation, then you probably can’t afford the paycheck hit. So, you try to maintain the balance

of getting high to avoid withdrawal, so you can go to work, so you can eat and pay rent. It’s an awful trap that just keeps getting worse and worse.

This is honestly where medications like methadone and Suboxone really, really can make a huge difference because you can be in treatment while maintaining your day-to-day life. With Suboxone, you only have to go through roughly 24 hours of withdrawal before it’s safe to take, so it can be started on a weekend. And with methadone, you don’t have to wait any time at all to start taking it, though there are usually pretty strict rules for methadone prescriptions, so you do have to work around a clinic schedule. Both medications really are game changers.

Gregory E. Williams is a public health worker in New Orleans.

Massive D.C. protest targets U.S. role in Gaza genocide

By Stephen Millies

April 5 — Tens of thousands came to the U.S. empire's capital in the Black colony of Washington, D.C., today to stop the genocide in Gaza. They marched on the headquarters of ICE to demand an end to the kidnapping of political activists and immigrant workers.

People gathered on Constitution Avenue with the U.S. Capitol in the distance. A huge banner reading "Let Gaza Live!" was a backdrop on the stage.

The banner also carried the names of Mahmoud Khalil, Rumeysa Ozturk, and Badar Khan Suri — two students and a professor who were seized by ICE for simply speaking out against genocide.

This important action was initiated by the Palestinian Youth Movement; American Muslims for Palestine; U.S. Palestinian Community Network; Palestine Feminist Collective; U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights; Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition; Jewish Voices for Peace; and the ANSWER Coalition. Hundreds of organizations endorsed it. Organizers estimated that at least 30,000 participated in the demonstration.

Eugene Puryear of Breakthrough News chaired the event. He paid tribute



SLL photos: Stephen Millies

to the hundreds of journalists whom the Zionist apartheid state has assassinated.

Among the speakers were Iman Abid of the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights; Nihad Awad of the Council on American-Islamic Relations; Imam Omar Suleiman; Taher Dahleh of the Palestinian Youth Movement; Gabby Ballard of the Party for Socialism and Liberation; and Layan Fuleihan of The People's Forum.

Also speaking was Grant Miner, president of UAW Local 2710, Student Workers of Columbia University. (Most of the actual teaching in universities is done by "adjuncts," low-paid graduate students.) Miner was expelled and fired by Colombia for his solidarity with Palestine.

There was a labor contingent that included members of UE (United Electrical workers) and SEIU. Union activists

carried a banner reading "Free Mahmoud, Rumeysa and Badar! Stop the repression! Free speech is a union issue!"

Activists from the People's Power Assembly and Struggle-La Lucha came from Baltimore.

People marched to the headquarters of ICE. A long scroll, 200 feet long, with the names of over 40,000 people murdered by the U.S. and "Israel" was carried by demonstrators.

Thousands of colorful signs and banners were carried.

Three tall, narrow banners were carried that said: "Israel bombs / USA pays / Maersk delivers genocide." This referred to the criminal role of the Danish shipping giant that carries U.S.-made bombs and shells to the Zionist military.

Doctors Against Genocide carried an extended red banner reading "End Genocide."

A woman carried a sign saying "Thank you South Africa for your voice!" Trump is punishing South Africa for daring to bring genocide charges against Netanyahu.

At the ICE headquarters, people turned around and marched toward the White House before dispersing. The struggle to stop the genocide in Palestine will continue. #

Gaza solidarity clinic defies crackdown at Wayne State University

By Cheryl LaBash

Sick from Genocide? A Pop Up Clinic prescribed by Doctors Against Genocide and Health Care Workers for Palestine to help "end this genocide and alleviate the stress the horrors of genocide have put on our community," exercised its right April 4 to speak out about the harm in Gaza and Palestine and its repression reverberating across the streets and campuses of the U.S.

According to an article in The Metro Times the initial bi-weekly gathering on

a sidewalk at Wayne State University, which began on Jan. 17 near the Medical School, was suppressed by the Wayne State University officials.

Although several weeks ago, WSU administration officially recognized that university guidelines permitted such gatherings, they called police to rout and potentially arrest participants on March 21. It took a signed contract binding the university to respect the right of faculty, students and community to call out the ongoing genocide in Gaza for the event to take place on April 4 without incident. #



50501 rallies vs. Trump but not Democrats or imperialism

By John Parker

Los Angeles — 50501 is a relatively new organization, having emerged only a few months ago, yet it claims to have already organized 50 protests across all 50 states. Its mission, as stated on its website, is to confront what it sees as the Trump administration's ongoing attacks on constitutional rights and the expansion of executive power at the expense of legislative democracy.

In Los Angeles County, the group has gained traction, drawing significant crowds. On April 5, thousands joined a march from Pershing Square to City Hall, signaling a growing base of support.

Looking ahead, 50501 is planning further actions that include appearances by prominent Democratic politicians, with particular focus on figures like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who are expected to arrive in Los Angeles in mid-April.

However, the enthusiastic participation of the Democratic Party in these events raises important questions. While it's true that Trump-era policies incited widespread anger, the Democratic Party itself has long-standing contradictions that complicate its role in any genuine anti-war or anti-imperialist movement. Historically, both Democratic and Republican administrations have supported the expansion of NATO and U.S. military interventions abroad. Under President Obama, for example, the United States carried out mass deportations — more than any other administration — and participated in NATO-led operations that devastated countries like Libya.

These contradictions were apparent on April 5 in Los Angeles. The Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice had endorsed the protest and planned to send a speaker, this writer. However, the center's representative was removed from the speakers list after refusing to support continued U.S. military aid to Ukraine and voicing opposition to NATO.

And the exclusion came as a surprise. But then a flyer was circulated with the event's materials that included “Hands



John Parker traveled to the Ukraine in 2022

Off NATO” as one of the rallying demands. Had the Harriet Tubman Center been aware of this, it might not have endorsed the event at all. Given that the disinvented speaker was Black and representing an organization named after a person embodying the fight against slavery, the irony was difficult to ignore. NATO, after all, played a key role in the 2011 destruction of Libya — once Africa's most prosperous nation — leading to mass poverty and even the return of open-air slave markets.

When questioned, organizers claimed they could not platform a speaker who wasn't in solidarity with Ukrainian refugees. Yet this narrow definition of solidarity excluded the Russian-speaking population of the Donbass region, many of whom opposed the 2014 U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine.

Fact finding trip to Ukraine

In 2022, as a Senate candidate and writer for Struggle-La Lucha, I traveled to Ukraine and Russia between May 1 and May 12 on a fact-finding mission organized by what is now known as the Struggle for Socialism Party and the Harriet Tubman Center. We sought to uncover stories suppressed by Western media — stories that challenged the prevailing NATO narrative of the war in Ukraine.

In the Lugansk People's Republic, I was guided by Alexey Albu, a leader of the socialist organization Borotba (Struggle) and a survivor of the May 2014 massacre in Odessa. During the Maidan coup, which installed a far-right regime aligned with Western imperialist inter-

ests, violence erupted across the country. In Odessa, neo-Nazi mobs firebombed the House of Trade Unions, killing nearly 50 anti-fascists — some burned alive, others beaten or shot while fleeing the flames. Alexey narrowly escaped and later fled to Crimea for safety.

In March 2024, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Ukraine was responsible in this massacre, yet Western media barely covered the verdict. The court's findings confirmed the Ukrainian government's complicity, through inaction, in enabling these atrocities.

While in Lugansk, I visited the Rubizhne shelter and the villages of Sokilnyky and Krymske, where recent fighting had driven out extremist militias like the Right Sector and Azov Battalion. Swastikas scrawled across walls, shell fragments, and testimonies from civilians painted a grim picture of life under these ultra-nationalist forces.

The people of Donbass responded to the 2014 coup by declaring independence, forming the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. In referenda, 89% of Donetsk and 96% of Lugansk residents voted for self-rule. Rather than honoring this, the Ukrainian government, backed by the U.S., labeled them terrorists and launched brutal military operations.

By early 2022, 150,000 Ukrainian troops were massed on the Donbass border. The death toll since 2014 had already reached 14,000. In desperation, the breakaway republics called for Russian assistance to protect their people.

If we want to understand what could have happened without that intervention, we need only look at Gaza. With U.S. support, Israel's military continues to devastate the region, killing or injuring 100 children per day. That same U.S. military-industrial complex fuels Ukraine's war machine.

Consider Andriy Biletsky, the founder of the Azov Battalion and current commander of Ukraine's 3rd Army Corps. In 2010, Biletsky infamously stated that Ukraine's mission was to lead the “white

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Pentagon downplays Elon Musk visit for secret China war plans

By Gary Wilson

In a rare public denial from the highest levels of government, the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, and President Donald Trump all swiftly responded to reports that tech billionaire Elon Musk was scheduled to receive a classified briefing on U.S. war plans for China.

On March 20, both the New York Times and Wall Street Journal independently reported that Elon Musk, CEO of SpaceX and leader of the Trump administration's DOGE (Department of Government Executions ... of Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, Education and so on), was set to receive a top-secret briefing on operational plans for potential conflict with China at the Pentagon. According to these reports, the briefing was scheduled for March 21 in the Pentagon's secure conference room known as "the Tank," typically reserved for high-level military discussions.

The reports triggered immediate responses from multiple government officials. President Donald Trump took to his Truth Social platform to declare, "Elon is NOT BEING BRIEFED ON ANYTHING CHINA BY THE DEPARTMENT OF WAR!!!" The emphatic denial, complete with all capital letters, underscored the issue's sensitivity.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth contradicted the reports on social media platform X, writing: "This is NOT a meeting about 'top secret China war plans.' It's an informal meeting about innovation, efficiencies, and smarter production." This characterization attempted to reframe the meeting as focused on Musk's expertise in technological innovation rather than military strategy.

Adding to these denials, Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell issued a statement describing Musk's Pentagon visit simply as "just visiting," a characterization that seemed deliberately vague given that the visitor was Elon Musk, owner of SpaceX, the most valuable (on Wall Street) defense contractor in the world.



Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth meets with top Pentagon contractor, SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, at the Pentagon, March 21. Musk, who appears to be in charge of the meeting, is wearing a blue space jacket he received on a 2022 visit to the U.S. Air Force Academy. Photo by Senior Airman Spencer Perkins was posed and sanitized by the Department of Defense.

According to Reuters, Musk did indeed visit the Pentagon. He reportedly met with Secretary Hegseth in his office rather than in the secure "Tank" facility mentioned in the original reporting.

Media coverage has primarily focused on the controversy surrounding Musk's access to classified information rather than the detailed operational war plans against China being developed at the Pentagon. The real issue here is the existence of such advanced military planning rather than who might be briefed on it.

The Pentagon's possible sharing of its most sensitive and closely guarded operational war plans regarding China with Musk underscores how advanced war preparations have become.

The Trump administration has publicly stated, through Defense Secretary Hegseth, its intention to shift from the conflict in Ukraine to China.

In February, Hegseth articulated this position by explaining that "stark strategic realities prevent the United States of America from being primarily focused on the security of Europe." He emphasized that the administration is instead prioritizing possible war with China in the Pacific.

This strategic reorientation is not new. It began in 2011 with Barack Obama's

Pivot to Asia, a Cold War-style containment policy. The Pivot to Asia was primarily a military operation.

The military component of the Pivot began with the Obama administration reorienting U.S. military power toward Asia, moving Naval assets to the Pacific. This included stationing a full Marine task force in Australia, deploying combat ships to Singapore, and positioning MV-22 Ospreys in Japan.

However, by 2022, the United States still had more troops in Europe than it did in 2011, and high-end military systems continued to be routinely deployed to the Middle East and Ukraine rather than Asia.

SpaceX: A critical military contractor

Billionaire Elon Musk is both Donald Trump's co-executive through DOGE and the owner of SpaceX, a company deeply integrated into U.S. military and intelligence operations.

SpaceX has emerged as one of the Pentagon's most critical contractors, particularly in two key areas. First, its Starlink satellite network provides global high-speed data communications that military personnel rely on for worldwide operations. According to the New York Times, the company "has been paid hundreds of millions of dollars by the Pentagon that now relies heavily on SpaceX's Starlink satellite communications network for military personnel to transmit data worldwide."

Second, SpaceX has established near-monopoly status in orbital launch capabilities, accounting for approximately 90% of mass launched into orbit in 2024. This dominant position makes the company indispensable for military and intelligence satellite deployment. The New York Times reported that "in 2024, SpaceX was granted about \$1.6 billion in Air Force contracts," not including classified spending by intelligence agencies like the National Reconnaissance Office, which has contracted SpaceX to build "a new constellation of low-earth orbit satellites to spy on China, Russia, and other threats."

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Profit over peace: European capitalists push for war

By Lev Koufax

In the wake of his election, incoming German Chancellor Frederick Merz proclaimed on Jan. 22 that Europe's defense would be his highest priority. Merz moved quickly, securing a deal in the German legislature on March 5 to spend hundreds of billions on "defense" and loosen the limit on German borrowing for military spending. Merz's Christian Democratic Union and the opposition Social Democratic Party of Germany joined forces to ensure the war budget spike.

Merz followed this with another deal on March 14. This time, Merz allied with the Green Party to ensure that Merz's government could change the German constitution to allow the government to take endless loans to increase military expenditure. The message is clear: Germany is back on its war horse. Upon this supposed triumph, Merz proclaimed, "Germany is back!" This proclamation has eerie echoes of the last time Germany rearmed in 1935, upon the order of Chancellor Adolf Hitler.

This momentous political shift in Germany was quickly followed by action from another prominent German politician: European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen, a fellow Christian Democrat and Ukraine hawk, along with Merz. Von Der Leyen proposed a broader "ReArm Europe Plan" on March 3. The plan aims to "help member states quickly and significantly increase expenditures in defence capabilities." On March 21, top EU officials announced a deal to secure the funding for Von Der Leyen's rearmament plan. Again, the message is clear: European capitalism is in a full drive towards war.

So, why this spike in German and European military spending? Merz and Von Der Leyen would have the public believe that this shift towards war is a response to Trump's move away from Ukraine.

The European leaders have maintained this line even as the Trump administration has restored full military funding and assistance to fascist Ukraine.

Trump has even begun to threaten more sanctions against Russia based on allegations of sabotaging peace talks. Yet, Europe continues to push for war.

The answer can at least be partially found in the absurd profits that the German arms industry has reaped since the beginning of NATO's proxy war in Ukraine against Russia. Since the beginning of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, German arms manufacturers have experienced a boon unseen since World War II. The largest German benefactor of NATO's proxy war against Russia so far has been Rheinmetall AG, an automobile and arms manufacturer.

Rheinmetall has experienced a 1000% increase in stock price since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in Feb-



German battle tanks in Ukraine.

ruary of 2022. While Europe had not taken steps towards complete rearmament until now, Germany and many other European countries had already increased military spending to support Ukraine's fascist military.

This increase in military expenditure alone created a massive boon for Rheinmetall, driving the company to 9.8 billion euros in profit in 2024. These numbers represent billions upon billions of dollars and euros being pocketed by German and American war financiers. And to think, all this profit was before Merz's election and the move towards complete rearmament in Europe.

Rheinmetall is not the only German defense magnate that has profited handsomely from the war in Ukraine or who would profit further from a complete European rearmament. The KNDS

Group, a defense conglomerate of German and French arms manufacturers, has recorded 11.2 billion euros in profit selling tanks, artillery, and armored vehicles to various European governments, who have then sent the equipment to Ukraine as military aid. That is billions upon billions made off the suffering of the Russian and Ukrainian people.

If capitalism has taught the world anything, it's that its wealthiest individuals will never stop in their dogged pursuit of profit. Given their record profits from the war in Ukraine, it makes sense these German and European defense magnates would want to escalate the war climate to increase profits. Enter the rearmament of Germany and Europe more broadly.

In fact, the rearmament of Europe, led by Germany, has little to do with Trump "abandoning" Europe and everything to do with European war capitalists expanding their profit base. And when Europe makes money, wealthy U.S. investors almost always make money.

Germany's rearmament has not come without a heap of fascist symbolism. It began with cat-named (Leopard) tanks rolling into Eastern Europe to fight the Russian military. Now, Rheinmetall seeks to acquire a closing Volkswagen plant to convert it for arms production. This almost feels cosmic, as Volkswagen itself would not have existed without German fascism. As if icing on the cake, Donald Trump's connection with electric car magnate Elon Musk conjures images of a similar alliance between Adolf Hitler and Henry Ford.

Europe's move towards military investment signals a dangerous escalation towards Russia and should be broadly condemned. The money of the working class does not need to be plundered to fuel the profits of blood sucking arms manufacturers like Rheinmetall and the NDS Group. All workers need jobs, health care, and self-determination – not capitalist war. #

Trump's escalating trade wars and

By Gary Wilson

Tariffs spike to 125% on China amidst market chaos

On April 9, President Donald Trump escalated his trade war with new reciprocal tariffs but then, within hours, announced a reversal, suspending the new tariffs for 90 days for all but China, while raising tariffs on China to 125%. The crashing stock market experienced a rollercoaster swing upwards, yet the prospects look harrowing. The stock market had similar swings entering the recession known as the dot-com crash.

Just two days before, on April 7, Trump announced plans for a \$1 trillion defense budget next year, a massive increase reflecting the escalation of war plans.

Tariffs as a tool for military funding, not economic revival

During a press event with the Zionist war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump outlined the expanded defense spending as part of his larger plans for U.S. military aggression.

"We're going to be approving a budget, and I'm proud to say, actually, the biggest one we've ever done for the military," he said. "\$1 trillion. Nobody has seen anything like it." A \$1 trillion war budget would represent an increase of nearly 12% from current spending levels.

Trump's trade war is partially designed to fund this significant rise in military spending.



President Trump announcing the F-47 6th generation fighter jet in the Oval Office of the White House on March 21.

The hollow promise of tariffs in a service-dominated economy

A close look at Trump's tariffs shows that they aren't about creating new jobs or increasing wages for workers in the U.S. or eliminating deficits — they're focused on restoring corporate profitability and enhancing military production. Remember that Elon Musk is one of the leading military contractors who has already made billions in new government contracts since he started DOGE.

Trump's tariffs apply exclusively to manufactured goods, excluding services.

The United States holds the world's largest trade surplus in services, dominating sectors such as technology, software, and other so-called "intellectual property," as well as finance, education, and entertainment. This surplus —

where the U.S. earns more from exporting services than it spends on importing them — offsets the deficit in goods trade (e.g., imported electronics or vehicles).

Global trade's shifting landscape: services surge, manufacturing stalls

In 2024, global trade reached a historic \$33 trillion, growing by 3.7% (\$1.2 trillion). However, this expansion was not fueled by traditional manufacturing or physical goods, which experienced only a 2% rise (\$500 billion). Instead, services accounted for 60% of the growth, soaring by 9% (\$700 billion), highlighting the shift in the global economy toward high-tech industries.

However, services still represent only 20% of total world trade. And overall trade growth has been declining since the end of the Great Recession of 2007-09. The era of globalization is coming to an end.

The illusion of manufacturing revival in an automated age

Trump's tariff strategy to "make America great again" does nothing to address the underlying stagnation of the U.S. domestic economy; in fact, it makes it worse.

For the past 40 to 50 years, industrial workers have seen their wages stagnate. Data shows that since 1973, wages for workers without college degrees have either declined or remained flat. When manufacturing jobs vanished, they were too often replaced by precarious service work — low wages, no job security, and no union representation.

But Trump's tariffs won't turn back the clock. The main reason? Rising productivity and automation — today's factories simply need fewer workers to produce more goods.

Even if Trump were able to completely eliminate the non-services trade deficit (which won't happen), manufacturing employment would only increase about 1%, rising from 8% to 9% of the workforce.

From post-war dominance to Bretton Woods' collapse

The manufacturing boom of the 1950s, which Trump idealizes, arose from distinctive historical circumstances.

Pentagon downplays Elon Musk visit

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The nature of Pentagon war plans

The alleged briefing would have involved highly classified operational plans, known in military terminology as "O-plans." The New York Times described these as "among the military's most closely guarded secrets," explaining that the specific briefing prepared for the China war plan consists of "about 20 to 30 slides that lay out how the United States would fight such a conflict."

Such plans typically cover the full spectrum of potential conflict, "beginning with the indications and warning of a threat from China to various options

on what Chinese targets to hit, over what time period, that would be presented to Mr. Trump for decisions."

According to the initial reports, senior military leadership including Defense Secretary Hegseth, Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Christopher W. Grady, and Indo-Pacific Command head Admiral Samuel J. Paparo were set to present these details to Musk.

The underlying significance of this incident extends beyond the immediate question of whether Musk received classified information. The controversy highlights the dominant role of the military-tech-industrial complex and the high-tech billionaires. #

military ambitions

Following World War II, the U.S. industrial base remained intact while other nations lay in ruins, providing the U.S. with temporary dominance.

The Bretton Woods system, created in 1944, was the final version of a global gold standard. Unlike earlier systems where people and businesses could exchange money for gold coins or bars, Bretton Woods allowed only governments and central banks to swap U.S. dollars for gold bars (not coins). The U.S. dollar became the world's main currency, backed by gold at a fixed rate of \$35 per ounce. But this system had a critical flaw: It relied on the U.S. having enough gold to back all the dollars other countries held.

Nixon devalues the dollar, unleashing stagflation

As the U.S. printed more dollars for spending (like on the Vietnam War), foreign governments lost confidence and began demanding gold in exchange. By 1971, the U.S. couldn't meet these demands, so President Nixon ended dollar-gold convertibility, collapsing Bretton Woods. This marked the end of the gold standard era.

Nixon's move changed the dollar from being credit money (convertible into a fixed amount of gold) into token money (a variable amount of gold). By separating the dollar from a fixed gold standard, the U.S. was able to devalue the dollar, making exports less expensive and reducing its trade deficit. The Vietnam War debts were paid with devalued dollars.

Removing the dollar from the gold standard did not change the status of the dollar as the world's main currency. Prices on the world market continued to be set in dollars, not in gold.

While Nixon secured the dollar's dominance, he also set the stage for further declines in U.S. manufacturing industries throughout the 1970s.

Volcker's Shock and the neoliberal turn

Since prices in terms of the depreciating dollar were rising faster than the central banks were printing it, interest rates soared and credit froze. Credit-sensitive industries such as construction and automobiles fell into sharp recession. But there were also big movements into oil and many other primary commodities as the capitalists sought to rid themselves of dollar — and other currency — denominated assets.

The overall result was that demand was stagnant, real wages were rapidly declining, and interest rates were rising sharply. Stagflation had arrived.

Finally, in 1979, Federal Reserve Chair Paul Volcker raised interest rates to a historic peak of 19%, known as the Volcker Shock. While this succeeded in curbing price surges, it triggered a severe recession in the U.S. and reverberated globally, crippling economies dependent on dollar-denominated debt.

The policy also caused the dollar's value to skyrocket, rendering U.S. exports prohibitively expensive and accelerating the offshoring of manufacturing to lower-wage countries. This marked the

rise of neoliberalism — an era prioritizing free-market deregulation, globalization, and financial sector dominance over domestic industrial production.

Plaza Accord and deindustrialization

By 1985, the U.S. sought to recalibrate trade imbalances through the Plaza Accord, a pact with Japan, Germany, and other major economies to devalue the dollar by strengthening their own currencies. While the agreement succeeded in weakening the dollar, it dealt a devastating blow to Japan's industrial powerhouse, which had thrived since the 1960s through sectors like automobiles and electronics. However, the Accord failed to revive U.S. manufacturing; instead, production shifted to emerging economies like South Korea and, later, China. The U.S. increasingly pivoted toward a service- and finance-driven economy, leaving its industrial base hollowed out — a legacy of deindustrialization that persists today.

Trump's tariffs, somewhat like Nixon's policies, are designed to offset the massive war debts that have built up over the last two decades, with Pentagon budgets exceeding record levels every year. And they are meant to finance an increase in military expansion.

The threat of war is escalating, with Trump aiming particularly at China. #

50501 rallies vs. Trump

Continued from page 15

race" in a crusade against "Semite-led Untermenschen." Untermenschen is an unscientific term used by Nazi Germany, implying an ethnic designation. They are supposedly inferior people who fall into a category of basically anyone not "accepted" by the German Nazis.

White supremacy morphs to serve the interests of U.S. imperialism. NATO and U.S. wars are never about democracy or freedom. They are about maintaining global dominance, fascism, poverty, and the subjugation of our international working class — starting with the Global South, Black and Brown, Palestinian, and anyone getting in the way of U.S. imperialism and its IMF and World Bank.

We must be wary of progressives who sidestep these issues, especially those who avoid discussing Palestine, minimize police brutality, or demonize countries like Iran, Cuba, China, Venezuela, Nicaragua, the DPRK, and Russia. Of course, no state is without contradictions — but we must focus on the largest contradiction of all: the unchecked violence of U.S. imperialism.

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own government." To vilify nations resisting U.S. hegemony while ignoring our own country's war crimes is not just hypocritical — it's dangerous and the greatest contradiction. That cannot be tolerated. #

'WAR & LENIN

in the 21st Century'

Includes U.S. complicity in the Gaza genocide and military profiteering.

Published on the centenary of Vladimir Lenin's death. The revolutionary leader of the Soviet Union and key contributor to Marxist theory, wrote "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" in 1916. It remains an influential critique of imperialism.

tinyurl.com/LeninAndWar



LA's Community Self-Defense fights ICE fascism

Continued from page 2

community defense patrols showed up. In another instance, as Ron Gochez of Union del Barrio described it to the LA Times, multiple LAPD vehicles were seen alongside federal agents during a raid in South Central. Using a megaphone, Gochez warned residents not to engage, not to open doors, and not to sign anything.

Such patrols are a form of organized resistance, not just against ICE but against the systemic violence carried out by both Democratic and Republican administrations. The U.S. is home to over 50 million immigrants, most of whom are workers contributing significantly to the economy. And yet, they are repaid with fear, detention, dehumanization and deportation — sometimes in countries they've never lived in.

A recent "60 Minutes" report on the torture of deported immigrants highlighted just how far this system has rotted. While Trump intensified the cruelty, the roots go much deeper. California politicians like Gavin Newsom and Karen Bass have prioritized police budgets over housing, healthcare, and community safety. LAPD funding now tops \$1 billion, even as the death toll from police violence continues to climb — disproportionately affecting Black and Brown residents.

Naming the violence: this is genocide

What we are witnessing must be named for what it is: genocide. According to the United Nations Convention on Genocide, the term includes not only mass killings, but also actions intended to cause serious harm, impose life-threatening conditions, and destroy families and cultures. By these standards, the U.S. government's actions — at home and abroad — meet the definition.

This is not a new argument. On December 17, 1951, legendary figures Paul Robeson and William Patterson submitted a historic petition to the United Nations: "We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government Against the Negro People." Nearly a century later, the conditions they described persist and in many ways have worsened.

Police killings of Black and Brown youth continue to break records annually. Immigrant children are separated from their families, deported, or left to

languish in detention centers. In Gaza, over 100 children are now killed or injured by U.S.-supplied weapons every day in a genocidal war enabled by U.S. foreign policy. The silence of mainstream politicians and media is deafening — and damning.

The legacy of self-defense

In the face of such violence, the right to self-defense becomes not just moral but essential. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, inspired by Malcolm X and rooted in the struggles of oppressed peoples worldwide, offers a historic model.

On the Black Panther Party*:

"The practices of the late Malcolm X were deeply rooted in the theoretical foundations of the Black Panther Party. Malcolm had represented both a militant revolutionary, with the dignity and self-respect to stand up and fight to win equality for all oppressed minorities; while also being an outstanding role model, someone who sought to bring about positive social services; something the Black Panthers would take to new heights. The Panthers followed Malcolm's belief of international working class unity across the spectrum of color and gender ... From the tenets of Maoism they set the role of their Party as the vanguard of the revolution and worked to establish a united front, while from Marxism they addressed the capitalist economic system, embraced the theory of dialectical materialism, and represented the need for all workers to forcefully take over the means of production."

Their 10-point program of Panthers remains deeply relevant today — especially these demands:

Point 5: We Want Education for Our People That Exposes the True Nature of This Decadent American Society.

Education must teach true history, not sanitized narratives. Ethnic studies are under attack for a reason—they awaken resistance.

Point 6: We Want All Black Men To Be Exempt From Military Service.

We believe that Black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like Black people, are

being victimized by the White racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military by whatever means necessary.

The Trump Administration and the Democratic Party would like us to fall in line with U.S. wars and proxy wars. Imperialist wars rob us of basic social services and push austerity and the killing of our international community, even those that share our ethnicity. Self-defense means protecting our international multi-national community.

Point 7: We Want An Immediate End to Police Brutality and the Murder of Black People.

We believe we can end police brutality in our Black community by organizing Black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our Black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all Black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

Last Monday, the Supreme Court greenlit the Trump administration's plan to resume mass deportations of Venezuelan migrants, using 1798-era war powers. In dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor warned that the decision allows for people to be "taken off the streets, forced on to planes and confined to foreign prisons with no opportunity for redress."

This is the legal foundation of fascism — and it is here.

We may not yet be ready to meet this threat with armed resistance. But we can begin by building movements strong enough to dismantle the institutions that enable it. We must continue organizing for police and ICE to be disarmed and replaced.

Right now the Community Self-Defense Coalition is the primary opponent of fascism here in Los Angeles. On May 1, it will take to the streets again, with even more strength, in defiance of state terror and in defense of the people.

John Parker is a leader of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles and the Struggle for Socialism Party.

* <http://tinyurl.com/bpphistory>

Trump wants a super bigot to be ambassador to South Africa

By Stephen Millies

Stop the war on Black people!

Donald Trump has nominated L. Brent Bozell III — who defended the white supremacist apartheid system — to be U.S. envoy to South Africa, whose people overthrew apartheid in 1994. Meanwhile, the apartheid nepo baby Elon Musk — whose daddy owned an emerald mine in Northern Rhodesia (now independent Zambia) — posted on X, “The legacy media never mentions white genocide in South Africa.”

There is no genocide of any kind in South Africa right now. White landowners, who comprise 7% of South Africa’s population, still own 70% of the land.

South Africa has introduced provisions allowing for the expropriation of land without compensation. The Expropriation Act of 2025 was signed into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Jan. 23. To Elon Musk, South Africa’s land reforms are what he means by “white genocide.”

Trump is offering refuge to white farmland owners, mostly descendants of the Afrikaner settlers who stole the land and exploited African workers for generations, while here in the U.S., Trump is jailing immigrant farm workers and activists like Mahmoud Khalil.

These “persecuted” white landowners include Matthew Benson, who shot Tebogo Ndlovu in 2017 for allegedly stealing oranges and then threw him to crocodiles.

Bozell’s nomination came a week after South Africa’s ambassador to the United States, Ebrahim Rasool, was kicked out of the U.S. The December 12th Movement held a demonstration at the U.S. mission to the United Nations on March 21 — the 65th anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre — to protest Rasool’s expulsion.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio called Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool a “race-baiting politician who hates America.”

Brent Bozell is no diplomat, but he’s certainly a race-baiter. He told Fox News in 2011 that President Barack Obama “looked like a skinny, ghetto crackhead.”

Rasool, the representative of 60 million Africans, was declared “persona non grata” and given 72 hours to “get out



of Dodge.” That’s the treatment given to a diplomat whose country has had war declared upon it.

Trump’s racist war

Donald Trump has waged war against Black people for decades. Trump and his daddy, Fred Trump — who was arrested while participating in a 1927 Ku Klux Klan riot in Queens, New York — refused to rent to Black families.

Trump took out full-page newspaper ads in 1989 demanding the return of the death penalty in New York. This was after five Black and Latinx youth were arrested and framed for committing a near-fatal assault in Central Park.

The Exonerated Five were later given \$41 million in compensation for years of being unjustly incarcerated. One of the Five, Yusef Salaam, has been elected to the New York City Council. Yet Trump refuses to apologize.

During last year’s election, Trump and his sidekick J.D. Vance claimed Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, were eating their neighbors’ cats and dogs; so bogus that even the Republican governor of Ohio denounced this claim.

Trump is now trying to take over the National Museum of African American History and Culture and censor its exhibits.

Trump has cut off medicines to combat HIV in Africa, threatening the lives of people throughout Africa.

Down with apartheid!

Trump kicked Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool out of the United States, but it wasn’t the first time Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool was expelled. When he was nine years old, Rasool and his family were evicted from their Cape Town home by the apartheid authorities.

The future ambassador joined the African National Congress, which, together with the South African unions and the South African Communist Party, overthrew the apartheid regime. People around the world demanded freedom for ANC leader Nelson Mandela, who was jailed for 27 years. He was arrested and imprisoned in 1962 in an apartheid secret police operation assisted by the CIA.

A massive anti-apartheid movement swept the United States and the world in the 1980s. The same campuses where people are today demanding an end to the U.S. / Zionist genocide in Gaza were the sites of protests against the apartheid fascist regime.

Brent Bozell III wasn’t one of these anti-apartheid protesters. As president of the National Conservative Political Action Committee, he declared his organization was “proud to become a member of the Coalition Against ANC Terrorism.”

This coalition of bigots tried unsuccessfully to prevent a 1987 meeting between Secretary of State George Shultz and ANC president Oliver Tambo. Bozell never said anything about the real terrorism of the apartheid army and police, who murdered 700 African youth in the 1976 Soweto massacre.

Racism runs in Bozell’s family. His father, L. Brent Bozell, Jr., was a co-founder of the reactionary National Review magazine along with William F. Buckley, Jr. In a 1985 newspaper column, Buckley wrote that Nelson Mandela should remain in jail.

Bozell’s son, L. Brent Bozell IV, was one of the fascists arrested for storming the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, in an effort to overturn the 2024 election.

South Africa is also a target of Trump because the country courageously brought charges of genocide against Benjamin Netanyahu and other Zionist leaders before the International Criminal Court.

Trump and his fellow billionaires want to turn back the clock in Africa and around the world. Trump’s nomination of the bigot Bozell is an insult to working and oppressed people everywhere.

U.S. hands off Africa! #

Fifty years after reunification,

By Colby Byrd

On April 30, 1975, the People's Army of Vietnam broke down the gate of the U.S. Embassy in what is now Ho Chi Minh City. Formerly Saigon, this city was the last stronghold of the U.S.-backed puppet government in the South.

April 30 marks not only the official defeat of U.S. imperialism in the country. It marks the defeat of all Western imperialism that occupied and terrorized the Vietnamese people for generations.

A long history of resistance

The liberation struggle in Vietnam dates back to the 1800s when French colonists sought to claim the country for themselves. The people of Vietnam wasted no time in organizing resistance to this foreign invader who not only disrespected and destroyed the land of the native population, but actively enslaved or erased the natives themselves.

This struggle was not won by weapons, or technology, or by having individual great leaders; it was won through a unified commitment by every man, woman, and child, and an unyielding dedication to see liberation through by any means necessary, for however long it took. Imperial Japan occupied Vietnam from 1940 to 1945. Immediately afterwards, the French attempted to regain control of their former colony, and this kicked off the First Indochina War, which ended after the glorious Vietnamese victory at Dien Bien Phu and subsequent French withdrawal.

Following this withdrawal, the Vietnamese people were betrayed by the Western imperialist powers yet again. This time it was the U.S. who split the country in half and occupied the southern portion below the 17th parallel, installing a puppet government and immediately began attacking and burning the North. However, this brutality was nothing new to the people of Vietnam, who have survived decades upon decades of bombing and massacres.

As Washington attempted to bomb the North off of the map, these very same bombs were then turned around and used as booby traps and ordinance that would claim the lives and limbs of plenty of U.S. ground forces. As more and more

U.S. weapons and ammo were sent into the country to squash the resistance, the U.S. and ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) forces found themselves on the receiving end of the hot lead and weapons, which found their way into the hands of the Vietnamese guerrilla fighters.

'We won't fight another rich man's war'

That was a popular slogan of the anti-war movement because it was mostly the children of the working class who were thrown into the meat grinder to protect imperialist profits in Vietnam. Young men with rich parents, like Donald Trump, could often dodge the draft.

The working-class soldiers resisted, however, joining up with the Black power and other movements of the day. The war in Vietnam reflected race oppression back home. Some 300,000 Black people served in the war. In 1965, they comprised 31% of ground forces but only 12% of the U.S. population. Eighty thousand Latinx people served, along with 42,000 Native Peoples. None of these groups had full rights in the U.S., and yet Washington lied and said that they were being sent to fight for the rights of the Vietnamese people.

Inspired by the labor struggle, troops also organized on the basis of class, for example with the American Servicemen's Union (ASU), which brought together rank-and-file soldiers to resist their officers. In addition, countless soldiers deserted or went AWOL. And from 1969-1972, there were 900 documented incidents of U.S. troops killing their officers or sergeants, sometimes by throwing grenades into their tents. This was called "fragging." All this resistance shook Washington, and the capitalists profiting from the destruction to their cores.

The Vietnamese people overcame every obstacle

Washington not only sought to destroy the will of resistance but also the land that the people were fighting so hard to protect. But Agent Orange, Napalm, and Rolling Thunder bombing runs all failed to subdue the people or destroy their subterranean tunnels and defenses. Every claim of nearing victory against commu-

nism was shattered. The Tet Offensive, Easter Offensive, and Ho Chi Minh Offensives all washed away the idea of a weak or faltering North Vietnam.

The victory over the U.S. occupation was inevitable because the Vietnamese people kicked out everyone before them. And whether the imperialists like it or not, there is no such thing as "American exceptionalism," especially when the will to fight is involved. The Vietnamese people overcame every obstacle blocking them from achieving reunification and self-determination. They dismantled the dividing line of the 17th Parallel and kicked out the exploiters.

After reunification, they had to overcome massive destruction just like their counterparts in Cambodia and Laos. Just like what the U.S. and Zionist forces are doing to Gaza today, towns and villages were flattened. Homes and infrastructure were destroyed. Agricultural lands were poisoned. Over 20 years, the U.S. had carried out more than a million bombing raids, dropping about 5 million tons of bombs. Tens of thousands of unexploded bombs are still found each year, with some exploding to maim and kill.

Socialism raises 40 million out of poverty

The U.S. put a crushing embargo on the country in an attempt to make the revolutionary government collapse. These sanctions were not lifted until 1994. Isolated and struggling economically, the revolutionary government nevertheless persevered in building socialism, but had to make accommodations to the capitalist world market, especially after counterrevolution swept through the USSR and Eastern Europe, depriving Vietnam of trade and socialist aid. In the early 1990s, the majority of Vietnamese people lived in extreme poverty.

Despite implementing market reforms, the Communist Party of Vietnam has held on, maintaining state ownership of heavy industry and resources like oil, while continuing to expand the cooperative agricultural economy. Even with an increase in especially small and medium-sized private enterprises, Vietnam's socialist-oriented development continues. A 2018 IMF report estimates

Vietnam's struggle still inspires

that Vietnam lifted 40 million people out of poverty, and of course attributed this success wholly to capitalist reforms. But this remarkable poverty reduction is not a capitalist goal; it is a socialist one. Because of that orientation, they continue to advance equity for women and ethnic minorities, while expanding access to housing, health care, and education. Vietnam's achievements are the result of its revolution.

Vietnamese struggle an inspiration to oppressed everywhere

Here in Baltimore, the oppressed population is not divided North/South, but instead East/West. This division of communities has allowed for the ruling class in the city to attack each side differently. Over East, Johns Hopkins buys up and gentrifies city blocks with the aim of clearing out longstanding Black communities to make way for an exploiting class to move in and reinforce the racist exploitation. Over West, communities left without aid or investment are terrorized by police occupation, corralling the people into smaller neighborhoods, all while limiting the movement and growth of the communities in the area.

Finally, the dividing line in Baltimore is not a DMZ lined with barbed wire between these two areas, but instead it is the center of the city where a majority of the wealth and capital reside. Just like the Vietnamese who committed to struggle for generations, the oppressed people of Baltimore have committed to remain in this city against the wishes of the ruling capitalist class that would rather see them gone.

The story of the Vietnamese struggle for true freedom culminating in Reunification Day is a lesson to all oppressed people here in the U.S. and abroad that no matter how daunting things may seem or how long it takes, the unshakable drive of a people to achieve their goals can never be beaten.

Happy Reunification Day to our blood brothers in Vietnam and around the world, and long live international solidarity!

Colby Byrd is an organizer with the Baltimore People's Power Assembly and Struggle for Socialism Party.



April 30, 2023 – people celebrate Victory Day in Quang Tri province, central Vietnam.

Gobierno local arrodillado ante compañías de gas estadounidense

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rápido para aprobar proyectos de reconstrucción de la infraestructura basados en combustibles fósiles. Esta orden va en contra de nuestra Ley Número 17 que establece como objetivo hacer a Puerto Rico 100% sostenible en energía solar para el año 2050 y que abarataría el costo de la energía además de proteger el ambiente y la salud del pueblo.

Sin embargo, estas iniciativas impulsadas por la gobernadora, incluyen el extender por más de treinta años la generación por quema de carbón a una firma en el sur, prolongando el ya deteriorado estado de la salud de los habitantes de esa zona. Además, y sobre todo, para favorecer a sus benefactores gringos del sector del gas metano, ordena la activación de procesos expeditos para la reparación y construcción de plantas generadoras basadas en gas, exigiendo que se ignore cualquier requerimiento de permiso de Recursos Naturales, de Salud, del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, de cualquier entidad que vele

por la seguridad del país y su gente.

Para traer el gas se han roto las leyes de puerto, se han obviado los requerimientos de tamaño de barcos, y peor aún, se ha puesto en peligro las vidas de quienes habitan en las costas.

En fin, no importa el daño que se le haga al ambiente, a las personas, o a cualquier hallazgo arqueológico de nuestra historia, porque según ella misma dice: “lo importante es que cuando en su casa presione el botón del enchufe, la luz se encienda”. No importa si renglón seguido las 100 x 35 millas que mide nuestra isla grande, también se prendan, exploten y dejemos de existir.

Hace unos años, nuestro pueblo combatió y venció la propuesta de un gasoducto desde el sur de la isla, ahora nos toca volver a las calles y frenar de una vez por todas estas órdenes abusivas.

Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les hablé, Berta Joubert-Ceci



Jubilados de la Industria Eléctrica de PR, en riesgo de perder sus pensiones

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

En Puerto Rico, hay varios sindicatos valientes y combativos que no están aliados a sindicatos estadounidenses que muchas veces vienen aquí solo para ampliar su matrícula e imponer sus intereses a los nuestros a expensas de las exigencias locales. Uno de éstos, el que ha sido más militante y fuerte, ha sido la UTIER. La Unión de las y los Trabajadores de la Industria Eléctrica y Riego de Puerto Rico.

Sin embargo, por haber sido tan enérgico y exitoso en la defensa de los derechos de su matrícula y también en la solidaridad con las luchas del pueblo, ha sido objeto de campañas de difamación por parte de las diferentes administraciones del gobierno local y sus aliados que tienen una agenda neoliberal y anti sindical.

Trabajadores jubilados ya, que construyeron y mantuvieron nuestro siste-



ma de energía, muchos a costo de sus vidas, ahora están a punto de perder sus pensiones porque los gobiernos de turno dejaron de aportar a su Sistema de Retiro. Un sistema que era robusto y bien administrado, ahora está quebrado a propósito como parte de la corrupción del gobierno y su campaña en contra de la unión.

Y esta semana, la Junta de Control Fiscal impuesta por el Congreso estadounidense, quien realmente gobierna aquí, ha ordenado que se aumente la tarifa básica de la luz para pagar sus pen-

siones. Una afrenta al pueblo que ya ni puede pagar los 8 aumentos de luz desde que fue privatizada. También una maléfica maniobra, parte de su campaña antisindical para poner al pueblo en contra de los pensionados.

A pesar de que la unión ha presentado propuestas para atajar la situación, la gobernadora ni siquiera les ha recibido para dialogar. Pero esta semana se sabrá cuál será la decisión del gobierno y mientras tanto, los y las jubiladas seguirán marchando, algunos hasta con sus tanques de oxígeno, con muletas o andadores, cada miércoles de 10 a 12 del día para exigir que se cumpla su contrato de jubilación.

Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les habló, Berta Joubert-Ceci



Gobierno local arrodillado ante compañías de gas estadounidense

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

En esta colonia, los poderes emanan del Congreso estadounidense. Ha sido así desde la invasión yanqui y será hasta que logremos nuestra soberanía con la independencia. Sin embargo, hasta hace poco, Puerto Rico había tenido una pequeña autonomía en cuestión de la política local y se redactaban algunas leyes para beneficiar al pueblo. Como la Ley que prohíbe la Pena de Muerte, a diferencia del gobierno Federal estadounidense que la permite. Pero ahora, los gobiernos locales, especialmente las administraciones del Partido Nuevo Progresista que de nuevo no tiene nada y menos aún de progresivismo, y que su intento es forzar la integración

de Puerto Rico al imperio gringo como un estado más, han abandonado totalmente su obligación de velar por el bien del pueblo.

El ejemplo más reciente de esta falta y que constituye un verdadero crimen ambiental y contra la salud del pueblo por parte de la nueva gobernadora trumpista Jenniffer González, ha sido la firma, al estilo de su amo gringo, de una orden ejecutiva declarando un estado de emergencia de la infraestructura energética donde establece un proceso



Hace unos años, nuestro pueblo combatió y venció la propuesta de un gasoducto desde el sur de la isla, ahora nos toca volver a las calles y frenar de una vez por todas estas órdenes abusivas. Manifestantes marchan durante una protesta el 1 de mayo de 2011 contra la propuesta de construcción de un gasoducto de 92 millas en Adjuntas, Puerto Rico.

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