

► Rafael Ithier, fundador del Gran Combo de Puerto Rico, ¡Presente!

STRUGGLE★LA LUCHA

for Socialism por el Socialismo

Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Vol. 8, No. 23 • Dec. 15, 2025

Suggested donation: \$1

Struggle for Socialism Party

Partido de la Lucha por el Socialismo

Trump pardons drug trafficker, declares war on Venezuela

By John Parker

Based on a talk given in Caracas, Venezuela, on Dec. 11 at the People's Assembly for Peace and Sovereignty in Our Americas, organized by the Simón Bolívar Institute.

The execution of defenseless survivors in the water is a blatant war crime. This deliberate killing of shipwrecked people – and the killing of over 80 people assassinated by drone, since none of them were a result of an armed conflict – the killing of defenseless civilians is murder under U.S. law.

This disregard for stated law is not new, especially today. The illegal kidnapping of Venezuelan immigrants, treated worse than dogs, tortured, deported to El Salvador, is also not new and reflects the treatment in the U.S. against Black and Brown and Indigenous people, including the kidnappings of children, with the added insult and horror of child abuse, sometimes ending in death in the detention centers. All of this is continuing at this very minute. This is the so-called land of freedom and democracy in the USA.

On Nov. 18, six Democratic members of Congress – each with backgrounds in the military or intelligence agencies – released a video reminding U.S. troops of their duty to refuse illegal orders. That level of division in the ruling class does not usually happen. But their long-overdue sudden courage against Trump's

Continued on page 12



John Parker with U.S. anti-war activists at the People's Assembly for Peace and Sovereignty in Caracas, Venezuela, Dec. 11.

Louisiana communities rapid response to ICE

White House garbage

Baltimore to DC march demands reparations

Main Street recession

2025 Pentagon budget

Historic 103-mile march for Mumia's freedom

TRUMP'S CULTURE WAR



Making trans people unemployable



'History is still absolving Fidel Castro'

Venezuelan commune resisting U.S. economic war

Trump's oil theft in the Caribbean

'Kill everybody': War crimes

Trump's illegal blockade stops U.S. solidarity delegation

LA teach-in exposes U.S. war lies

65 U.S. cities mobilize against war on Venezuela

International workers embargo Israel

NYC rises for Gaza on Day of Solidarity

China: Socialism in an imperialist world

Trump's war plan for Ukraine

Louisiana communities organize rapid response to ICE terror raids

By Gregory E. Williams

Metairie, Louisiana, Dec. 6 – A protest at a Metairie Home Depot demanded answers after ICE agents allegedly struck and possibly killed a pedestrian during a high-speed chase the previous night. While the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office claims the crash was unrelated to Border Patrol, officials have not released evidence. Community activists are calling for JPSO to make surveillance footage public.

Regardless of what JPSO releases, the ICE terror is real. People are living in fear of being snatched up by masked Nazi-like agents in unmarked vehicles.

Back in September, the U.S. Supreme Court greenlit racial and ethnic profiling by immigration agents, allowing roving patrols to stop people whom they suspect to be immigrants because of their appearance or the language they speak.

Jefferson Parish – where Metairie is located – is 20% Latine, with some neighborhoods being as high as 54%. Louisiana has also been made into an immigrant detention hub, further enriching the shareholders of the for-profit prison industry.

Speaking at the rally, Deborah with the New Orleans Party for Socialism and Liberation said:

"We're out here today because we see the violence that ICE – that Border Patrol – is injecting into our community. They're committing



SLL photo: Gregory E. Williams

Protesters gathered in front of a Home Depot in Metairie, Louisiana, where witnesses allege that an ICE vehicle injured or killed a pedestrian the night before.

acts of violence and terrorizing our neighbors.

"People are too afraid to leave their houses out of fear of being targeted, arrested, deported. People are afraid to go to work.

"We saw a few days ago images and videos of workers repairing someone's roof and had guns pointing at their faces. And they arrested these workers – people who were just showing up to do their job and contribute to society.

"We're hearing reports from all over the city – in New Orleans, and in Jefferson Parish, all

over Louisiana – of neighborhoods being terrorized. This is an invasion, a racist occupation of our city, and the majority of us reject it."

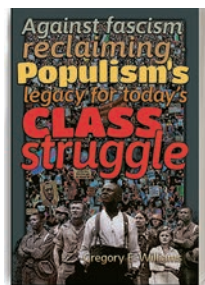
On the same day, two other anti-ICE protests happened in New Orleans. And the day before, people came out to confront ICE agents and Border Patrol chief Gregory Bovino in Metairie's Lafreniere Park, live-streaming everything that the agents were doing. Community members responded to calls posted on social media by Unión Migrante and other organizations, showing that real-time response networks are forming here, just as in other parts of the country.

The people of Louisiana – especially the workers – have the power to drive ICE out, just like they did in Charlotte, North Carolina. The South is not some place where the people passively accept every injustice inflicted on them by the racist ruling class. This is where the Civil Rights and other movements started. That can happen again. #

Against fascism ▶ Populism: progressive farmers' movement of 1890s
RECLAIMING ▶ Contemporary trans struggle
POPULISM'S ▶ The Silicon Valley-MAGA connection
legacy for today's ▶ Legacy of Jena Six
class struggle ▶ Abortion rights movement in the South
 ▶ Real motives of right-wing governors
 ▶ Fight against KKK leader David Duke

Gregory E. Williams

tinyurl.com/
Populism-book



Also: Vince Copeland's historic pamphlet
'SOUTHERN POPULISM AND BLACK LABOR'

Struggle-La Lucha

Subscribe
and/or
donate



www.struggle-la-lucha.org
 facebook.com/strugglelalucha
 twitter.com/StruggleLaLucha
 info@struggle-la-lucha.com

CONTACT STRUGGLE-LA LUCHA

ATLANTA
 Atlanta@struggle-la-lucha.org
BALTIMORE
 Baltimore@struggle-la-lucha.org
BOONVILLE, INDIANA
 Boonville@struggle-la-lucha.org
BOSTON
 Boston@struggle-la-lucha.org
DENVER
 Denver@struggle-la-lucha.org
DETROIT
 Detroit@struggle-la-lucha.org

LOS ANGELES
 LA@struggle-la-lucha.org
NEW ORLEANS
 NOLA@struggle-la-lucha.org
NEW YORK CITY
 NYC@struggle-la-lucha.org
ORLANDO, FLORIDA
 Orlando@struggle-la-lucha.org
SAN DIEGO
 SanDiego@struggle-la-lucha.org
WASHINGTON, D.C.
 DC@struggle-la-lucha.org

Historic 103-mile march demands freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal

By Lallan Schoenstein

Frackville, Pennsylvania, Dec. 9 – Mumia says it's about love. What else could have given 17 people the passion to hike 103 miles for 12 days across Pennsylvania, from Philadelphia to the Mahanoy prison in Frackville? They arrived on Dec. 9, marking 44 years since December 1981, when Black Panther journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal was framed for the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner.

The warmth in their hearts gave the Marchers4Mumia the stamina to endure a bone-chilling, bitter cold wave with the added danger of marching through Trump country. Bob Nash, an elder with Veterans for Peace, who is 82 years young, marched the entire route along with others, some nearly a quarter of his age.

Why else would they have chosen this holiday season when every TV and newspaper is blasting a daily distraction of "Black Friday" gift sales? A Black woman on the march noted that the hardship endured on the march was nothing compared to the brutal conditions that break down the health of prisoners. Mumia has been denied proper medical care in prison, permanently risking his eyesight.

A system of racist injustice

Of course, the marchers were motivated by hatred too, of a racist system that has locked Mumia Abu-Jamal in a "steel box" ever since he was shot in the abdomen by police after stopping the taxi he was driving to help his brother in the street. The march has been fueled by Mumia's prolific reports written from inside the walls about the privatized U.S. prison system that incarcerates a wildly disproportionate number of African Americans.

It's hatred for the flagrant injustice in the case of a Black journalist who truthfully reported the Philadelphia police attacks on the peaceful MOVE organization, which culminated in the 1985 bombing of a Black community. It's their outrage over the notoriously racist prosecution in Judge Sabo's court, which has been internationally protested by the international writers' organization PEN, the National Writers Union, and Amnesty International. A number of Marchers4Mumia have spent their lives building the movement for Mumia.

In 2019, a discovery of cartons of evidence proving that Mumia's guilt was intentionally manufactured by the police was found hidden in a closet. The court dismissed calls for a trial with a ruling that the evidence appeared "too late." The menacing, vain efforts of the Phil-

adelphia Fraternal Order of Police to silence all support for the freedom of Mumia have not buried suspicion of the police role in the death of their new recruit, officer Daniel Faulkner.

Grand plan with superb organization

Love for Mumia, who is a powerful advocate for health care for all the aging prisoners, was manifest in the superb organization that enabled the march. Steve Bernhaut initiated the idea for the march with a grand plan for how it could be done. The secure provision of housing, food and support vans along the route, as well as widespread solidarity, including donations made to the March4Mumia.org site, made it all possible. Frequently, along their route, the marchers managed to get calls directly from Mumia in prison.

Supporters from afar joined the beginning of the march in Philadelphia on Nov. 28 and again at the Dec. 9 press conference and rally at the prison. They came from Baltimore, New York and multiple towns in New Jersey. Two representatives from the French movement for Mumia, Libérons Mumia, visited him in prison and spoke at the rally.

On the last day, Dec. 9, over 50 supporters joined the march, chanting and singing protest songs, for the last three miles to the entrance of Mahanoy prison in Frackville. Mumia greeted them by phone. They stood in line to introduce themselves and tell Mumia where they were coming from. There was a lot of support along the highway, especially from truck drivers, with only a couple of hostile reactions.

Dozens more gathered together at the prison entrance for a rally and press conference featuring marchers Larry Hamm, Dr. Alvarez, and Jian White as well as Dr. Joseph Harris,

Mama Pam, Yahne Ndgo, Gabe Bryant, Cindy Lou Miller, Jacky Hortaut from France representing Libérons Mumia, and Rubina Tareen from Schuylkill County.

Speakers addressed the main demands of the long march, including ending medical neglect of incarcerated people, releasing elderly prisoners, and freeing Mumia Abu-Jamal. "Free them all" was a popular chant.

The protest march was organized by the March for Mumia coalition, which included the Mobilization4Mumia, People's Organization for Progress, International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal, The Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, Abolitionist Law Center, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition, Detroit Jericho Movement, Philly Muslim Freedom Fund, Workers World Party, le Collectif français LIBERONS MUMIA, amigos de Mumia, Prison Radio, The Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and Struggle-La Lucha.

After marching for 12 days, Zayid Muhammad reported on the Democracy Now! radio show: "We're taking that long walk, because the walk for freedom is a long walk. And we do it with an intense, extra-motivated passion, because we just lost a bold freedom fighter in Imam Jamil Abdullah al-Amin in the clutches of the state, and that should not have happened. So, under no circumstances can we allow the state to take any more of our freedom fighters. It's time to get Mumia all the healthcare he needs."

Larry Hamm said: "We are marching to draw attention to Mumia's medical problems, to demand that he get the surgery and medical treatment he needs. We are marching for the care of all prisoners in an aging prison population. We're marching today to demand free-

Continued on page 7



Mumia joined the march by phone from Mahanoy prison.

It's about making trans people

By Parker Molloy

By now, you may have seen the story making the rounds. It's about a University of Oklahoma student named Samantha Fulnecky who received a zero on a psychology essay, filed a discrimination complaint, and got her trans graduate instructor placed on administrative leave. Conservative media have framed this as religious persecution: a brave Christian student punished for citing the Bible. The governor of Oklahoma has weighed in. Libs of TikTok has amplified it to hundreds of thousands of people. Turning Point USA is demanding that the instructor be fired.

But if you actually read the essay – which TPUSA helpfully published – you'll find something different than what's being advertised.

The assignment asked students to write a 650-word reaction paper responding to an article about "Gender Typicality, Peer Relations, and Mental Health." The rubric was straightforward: 10 points for showing a clear tie to the assigned article, 10 points for providing a thoughtful reaction rather than a summary, and 5 points for clarity of writing. Students were given suggested approaches like discussing whether the topic was worthy of study, applying the findings to their own experiences, or offering alternate interpretations of the researchers' conclusions.

Fulnecky's essay mentions the article exactly once: "The article discussed peers using teasing as a way to enforce gender norms." That's it. The remaining words are a sermon about what God wants for gender roles, culminating in the claim that "society pushing the lie that there are multiple genders and everyone should be whatever they want to be is demonic and severely harms American youth."

She also calls her classmates "cowardly" for not sharing her views.

This is not a good essay. Not because of the religious content – you can absolutely bring religious perspectives into academic work – but because she just. ... didn't do the assignment. A reaction paper is supposed to react to something. Fulnecky barely acknowledged the source material existed before launching into a position statement that would have worked just as well (or poorly) for any article tangentially related to gender.

The graduate instructor, Mel Curth, gave remarkably patient feedback. "Please note that I am not deducting points because you have certain beliefs," Curth wrote, "but instead I am deducting point[s] for you posting a reaction paper that does not answer the questions for this assignment, contradicts itself, heavily uses personal ideology over empirical evidence in a scientific class, and is at times offensive."

Curth explicitly told Fulnecky that it's "perfectly fine to believe" normative gender roles are beneficial. The problem was the logical contradictions (arguing people aren't pressured into gender roles while simultaneously arguing religious pressure to conform is good), the lack of engagement with actual course material, and, yes, calling a group of people "demonic" in an academic paper.

"I encourage all students to question or challenge the course material with other empirical findings or testable hypotheses," Curth wrote, "but using your own personal beliefs to argue against the findings of not only this article, but the findings of countless articles across psychology, biology, sociology, etc. is not best practice."

Another instructor, Megan Waldron, who teaches a different section of the same course, backed the grade. She found it "concerning" that Fulnecky didn't view bullying or teasing as a bad thing, and noted that "your paper directly and harshly criticizes your peers and their opinions."

None of this matters to the people amplifying this story. The essay is a prop. The point is that Curth is trans.

The quiet part out loud

Fulnecky's mother, Kristi Fulnecky, a lawyer who defended a number of Jan. 6 rioters, has been busy on social media. She's been retweeting posts that say things like "If you claim to be a transgender – you should be banned from working in any school. Transgenderism is a mental illness," and "Individuals who identify as trans should be automatically disqualified from holding any position as teacher or professor."

To that last one – a post explicitly calling for employment discrimination against all trans people – Kristi Fulnecky replied: "Agreed! Proud of my daughter!"

This is the tell. The family isn't arguing that this particular grading decision was wrong. They're celebrating their daughter's role in a broader campaign to make trans people unemployable. The discrimination complaint, the media tour, the outrage – it's all in service of the goal stated plainly in the posts Kristi Fulnecky is boosting: Trans people should not be allowed to work in education.

Chloe Cole, a detransitioner who's built a lucrative career as an anti-trans activist, demanded that the university be defunded until Curth is fired. TPUSA's post about the incident included the line: "We should not be letting mentally ill professors around students."

The playbook here is familiar. Find a trans person in a position of minor institutional authority. Manufacture or amplify a confrontation. Blast it through the conservative media ecosystem until it becomes national news. Watch as institutions capitulate.

It works. Curth – who, by the way, had reportedly just received an Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award from OU's Department of

LOVE
IS THE
LAW

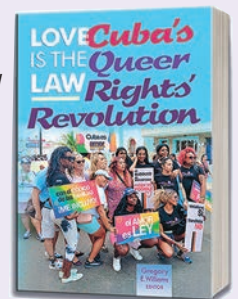
Cuba's
Queer Rights
Revolution

Gregory E. Williams

tinyurl.com/Cuba-LoveisLaw tinyurl.com/Read-LOVEisTheLAW

What you'll find in this book

- A chronicle of Trump's return, presenting the incredible danger of fascist rule. This is the government that cruelly keeps Cuba on the terrorist list and under economic blockade. Together with its Zionist appendage, it is committing genocide against the Palestinian people. Cuba doesn't bomb anybody. Cuba sends doctors.
- The process of winning approval of the Families Code referendum. Cuban writers are included and a webinar discussion on: "What We Can Learn from Cuba's 'Code of Freedom' for Families;
- Reports from the U.S. Friends Against Homophobia and Transphobia delegation to Cuba;
- Reports from Cenesex – the National Center for Sex Education / Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual director Mariela Castro Espín
- Cenesex has been at the center of gender and sexual liberation in the country, an international hub, facilitating exchanges between activists, academics, researchers and progressive religious groups.
- The full text of Leslie Feinberg's 'Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba' and more.



unemployable

Psychology – is now on administrative leave. The university’s statement emphasized its commitment to “protecting every student’s right to express sincerely held religious beliefs,” which is a fascinating way to describe giving a bad grade to a bad essay.

The targeting system

The throughline in all of these cases is Libs of TikTok, an account run by Chaya Raichik that has become a kind of targeting system for the anti-trans movement. Raichik reposts content from LGBTQ people and their allies, often with mocking commentary, and her millions of followers do the rest.

Schools, children’s hospitals, and libraries featured on the account have reported receiving bomb threats. Teachers have resigned or been fired. Medical providers have faced death threats. The pattern is consistent enough that critics have called Raichik a “stochastic terrorist” – someone who publicly demonizes people in ways that predictably inspire supporters to commit violence, while maintaining plausible deniability about any specific act.

The case studies are piling up.

Remember Dylan Mulvaney? In April 2023, she posted a single sponsored Instagram video featuring a personalized Bud Light can. That was it. That was the whole controversy – a trans woman appeared in a beer ad. ... to her own audience. The resulting harassment campaign left her scared to leave her house, ridiculed in public, and followed. Kid Rock filmed himself shooting cases of Bud Light with a rifle. The company’s sales tanked, and Bud Light never publicly stood by her.

“For a company to hire a trans person and then not publicly stand by them is worse, in my opinion, than not hiring a trans person at all,” Mulvaney said. “It gives customers permission to be as transphobic and hateful as they want.”

Or take what happened at Texas A&M just a few months ago. In September, a Republican state representative named Brian Harrison posted a 23-part social media thread with the headline: “**caught on tape. Texas a&m student kicked out of class after objecting to transgender indoctrination.**” The post got millions of views. Within days, the professor – Melissa McCoul, who had taught the same children’s literature course at A&M at least 12 times since 2018 – was fired. The dean and department head were removed from their positions. And then the university president resigned.

A faculty committee later unanimously ruled that “the summary dismissal of Dr. McCoul was not justified” and that the university failed to follow proper procedures. But by then

the damage was done. The message had been sent.

This is Oklahoma

It’s worth noting that this is all happening in Oklahoma, a state that has become something of a laboratory for anti-trans policy. Governor Kevin Stitt has signed bills barring trans students from using bathrooms consistent with their gender identity, banning gender-affirming care for minors, prohibiting nonbinary gender markers on IDs, and blocking trans girls from girls’ sports.

In January 2024, the state’s then-Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ryan Walters, appointed Raichik, who has no connection to the state and does not live there, to the Oklahoma Department of Education’s Library Media Advisory Committee – giving the person behind Libs of TikTok an official role in deciding what books Oklahoma students can read.

A month later, a 16-year-old nonbinary student named Nex Benedict died. Just one day after being beaten in a school bathroom at Owasso High School – the same district where, in 2022, a teacher “greatly admired” by Nex had resigned after being targeted by a Libs of TikTok post. According to Nex’s mother, the bullying had started after Stitt signed the bathroom bill.

Nex’s death was ultimately ruled a suicide. The climate in which Nex lived – a climate shaped by the very people now celebrating Samantha Fulnecky as a “warrior of Christ” – is not incidental to this story.

What this is actually about

There’s a reason Riley Gaines, a middling college swimmer who once tied for fifth place in an NCAA championship, now has a full-time career as an anti-trans activist with a nonprofit, speaking fees, and congressional testimony.

In 2023, the Leadership Institute – a nearly 50-year-old nonprofit that trains conservative activists and counts Mitch McConnell and Mike Pence among its alumni – launched the Riley Gaines Center with the goal of “protecting women’s sports.” The organization is funded by the Charles Koch Foundation and serves as a member of Project 2025’s advisory board. The Dick & Betsy DeVos Family Foundation donated \$100,000 to the center in 2023. In the first five months of its existence, the Leadership Institute paid Gaines more than \$126,000 as director.

She now has a podcast on Fox Nation, a merchandise line, two book deals, and has testified in or appeared with politicians in at least 21



states. Ron DeSantis’s presidential campaign paid her nearly \$12,000 for travel and consulting. She stood next to Donald Trump when he signed his executive order banning trans women from sports. This is what a fifth-place finish buys you if you’re willing to make hating trans people your full-time job.

And it’s not just Gaines. The infrastructure is growing. The Independent Council on Women’s Sports (ICONS), a nonprofit that describes itself as “not political,” went from about \$100,000 in revenue in 2022 to over \$1 million by 2024. ICONS is now funding three major lawsuits against the NCAA, arguing that trans athletes should be banned from women’s sports entirely. Chloe Cole, the 20-year-old detransitioner who demanded OU defund itself over the Fulnecky essay, testified in court that she earns upwards of \$200,000 annually for opposing gender-affirming care – money that flows through speaking engagements, donations, and her employment with the far-right organization Do No Harm.

This is an industry now. There are jobs, salaries, speaker bureaus, and career tracks. The right is always looking for new faces to put on this movement – young, photogenic people who can be positioned as victims of trans overreach. The detransitioner who regrets her surgery. The swimmer who tied with a trans woman. The Christian student whose essay got a bad grade.

Samantha Fulnecky fits the profile. She’s a college student. She’s Christian. She wrote about her faith and got a bad grade from a trans instructor. It doesn’t matter that the essay was genuinely bad, that two instructors agreed on the assessment, that the feedback was professional and patient, or that the grading rubric supports the decision. The narrative writes itself: trans professor fails Christian student for quoting the Bible.

What Fulnecky’s mother is saying out loud – that trans people shouldn’t be allowed to teach at all – is what this movement actually wants. The individual controversies are just vehicles to get there. Each one is designed to make an example of a trans person, to signal to every

Continued on page 15

Garbage in the White House, Somali resistance in Minneapolis

By Gary Wilson

On Dec. 2, President Donald Trump used a White House Cabinet meeting to spit out a stream of racist abuse against Somali immigrants in Minnesota. He called Somalis “garbage,” claimed they “contribute nothing,” sneered that their country “stinks,” and said they should “go back to where they came from.”

This was not just another ugly performance for the cameras. The next day, Immigration and Customs Enforcement launched a major operation in the Twin Cities, sending teams of agents into Minneapolis–St. Paul to hunt undocumented Somalis. At the same time, the administration moved to strip Temporary Protected Status from Somalis and to freeze immigration and naturalization from Somalia and 18 other mostly African and Muslim-majority countries.

Trump’s rant was the political cover for a concrete state offensive. His words from the Cabinet table were connected by a straight line to the raid teams pounding on Somali families’ doors before dawn.

Scapegoating an oppressed nationality

Trump’s attack on Somalis is not just personal bigotry. It’s part of how the ruling class governs in a time of crisis.

Somalis in Minnesota are overwhelming working class. They drive cabs and trucks, work in warehouses and nursing homes, study in schools and colleges, and struggle with low wages, high rents, and debt like other workers. Many came as refugees from wars, invasions, and economic strangulation in which U.S. imperialism played a direct role.

Now, the same system that helped wreck their homeland brands them a “security threat” and a drain on public resources. Trump falsely links them to fraud scandals, crime, and “terrorism” – pure inventions used to justify raids, detentions, and deportations. The message to the rest of the working class is: Blame Somali immigrants, not Wall Street, not the Pentagon, not the billionaires.

National oppression under capitalism is not just a matter of prejudice. It is built into the way the state, the labor market, and the borders are organized. When the ruling class whips up hatred against an oppressed nationality, it is deflecting anger over unemployment and poverty, testing how far it can go in criminalizing a whole people, and refining methods of repression that can later be used against anyone who resists.



Dec. 3 – Demonstrators march behind a “Stop deporting our neighbors” banner, protesting Trump’s anti-Somali raids and deportations in the Twin Cities.

Trump’s racist tirade and ICE raids aim to terrorize an oppressed community – and send a warning to the whole working class.

The targeting of Somalis, Afghans, and immigrants from 19 countries lays bare the cynicism of imperialism. People fleeing wars, occupations, and sanctions created by Washington arrive here, only to find themselves treated as suspect, surveilled, and disposable.

Toward second-class citizenship by nationality

What makes this moment especially dangerous is the way Trump’s campaign reaches beyond raids and deportations to the question of citizenship itself.

The administration is talking openly about “reverse migration,” mass removals, and re-examining the status of people who already have papers. Agencies are ordered to comb through applications, green cards, and naturalizations from people born in the targeted countries. At the same time, Trump threatens a “denaturalization campaign” that would strip citizenship from those the government decides should never have become citizens in the first place.

In practice, this means building a system in which some people’s citizenship is permanent and others’ is conditional. A white immigrant from an imperialist ally is treated as a full “American.” A Black Muslim from Somalia or a refugee from Afghanistan is treated as always on probation, always one accusation away from being thrown out.

On paper, this country has seen formal citizenship rights expand over time. In reality, Black people, Indigenous people, migrants and refugees have always faced second-class sta-

tus enforced by police, prisons, and the border regime. What Trump is doing now is trying to codify that inequality into new laws and procedures that divide the population into tiers, with oppressed nationalities forced to live under the constant threat of losing everything.

This is a warning. A state that claims the power to strip Somalis of their status today will claim the power to strip others tomorrow, as the crisis of the system deepens and resistance grows.

Omar and the community push back

The Somali community in Minnesota has not met this campaign with silence.

Rep. Ilhan Omar, herself a Somali refugee who became one of the most visible progressive figures in Congress, has called Trump’s language racist and Islamophobic and has made it clear that this is not a “personal feud.” She insists that his words are meant to pave the way for raids and deportations, and she has demanded investigations into the political use of ICE as a weapon against her community.

On the ground, Somali-led organizations, mosque networks, and youth groups in Minneapolis–St. Paul have moved into emergency defense. They are holding know-your-rights trainings, setting up hotlines so families can report ICE activity, and organizing legal teams to respond rapidly when people are detained. Community leaders stress that most Somalis in the Twin Cities are citizens or legal residents, and they warn that Trump’s blanket

Continued on page 7

Garbage in White House

Continued from page 6

portrayal of them as criminal outsiders invites vigilante violence as well as state repression.

Neighbors are urged to document ICE raids, refuse cooperation with “voluntary” searches, and spread the word that people do not have to open their doors without a warrant signed by a judge. This is community self-defense in embryo: the first steps toward making it practically impossible for agents to operate in silence and secrecy.

Local and state officials have been forced, by pressure from below, to take a stand. Officials in Minneapolis and St. Paul have reaffirmed policies limiting local cooperation with ICE. The governor and attorney general have spoken publicly in defense of the Somali community and against discriminatory targeting. Schools, clinics, and social service agencies are being pushed to adopt “safe space” protocols so that ICE cannot freely turn everyday places into hunting grounds for deportations.

These measures are limited, and they are fragile. But they show that when a community organizes itself and fights back, it can force concessions even from officials who would otherwise stand aside.

From defense to street-level resistance

Alongside legal work and policy fights, people are turning to the streets.

In Somali neighborhoods and in downtown Minneapolis, multiracial crowds have gathered for rallies and vigils. Somali youth, Black community organizers, Latine immigrant groups, students, and faith leaders have come together to denounce the raids and the racist campaign behind them. They connect Trump’s slurs against Somalis to the broader system of police terror, border violence, and mass incarceration that targets oppressed peoples across the country.

At Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport, demonstrators have confronted deportation flights head on. Protesters have marched to the terminals used by charter companies that service ICE, demanding that airlines and contractors cancel removal flights. Union members have joined these actions, raising the question that goes to the heart of the matter: Will workers use their power to refuse to fuel, maintain, or handle planes used to haul families away in chains?

Here we see the beginnings of a front that can make the state think twice: organized labor linked to the self-defense of an oppressed community. When workers at airports, warehouses, rail yards, or docks say, “We will not move deportation cargo, we will not help ICE,” they begin to turn abstract solidarity into concrete power. #

Through snow and racist threats: Baltimore to DC march demands reparations

By Colby Byrd

Baltimore – On Dec. 5, Reverend Dr. Robert Turner of Empowerment Temple led his 39th monthly March for Reparations. The march, which Rev. Turner calls “40 for 40,” covered more than 40 miles, symbolizing the 40 acres promised to Black people through the famous Field Order 15 of 1865.

The December march was in memory of Isabel Wall, who in 1910 was denied the ability to attend a school because she was 1/16th Black.

Marchers stepped off from Carroll Park, the site of a former plantation in Baltimore City, and walked down Washington Boulevard all the way to Washington, D.C. The march took place in cold, windy conditions, with snow, sleet and freezing rain falling most of the time. However, the weather was only one obstacle participants faced. As marchers made their way to D.C., passing motorists shouted racist threats and insults. Police stopped and questioned the support vehicle that accompanied marchers for safety along the roadside.

Upon reaching D.C., Rev. Turner laid a wreath of 400 roses symbolizing 400 years of racist oppression of Black people in the United States. The roses were dyed black to symbolize that Black people remain in a period of mourning and loss, and will continue to mourn until reparations are provided to Black people and communities across the United States.

Malcolm X said, “If you stick a knife in my back nine inches and pull it out six inches,



Photo: presidentrashad/Instagram

es, that’s not progress. Progress is healing the wound that the blow made. They haven’t pulled the knife out; they won’t even admit that it’s there.”

The fight for reparations is ultimately one that is part of a greater fight for self-determination. The fascist U.S. government is actively erasing Black history, shrinking or displacing Black communities and filling its prison plantations with Black bodies.

Reparations are more than just money; they are more than saying you’re sorry and acknowledging the past. Since capitalism and white supremacy drove that knife into Black experience, reparations encompass not only the healing of the Black community and its liberation from these oppressive and racist systems. It is also the end of white supremacy. Reparations include the destruction of the systems and state of capitalism that continue to kill and enslave Black people. #

March demands freedom for Mumia

Continued from page 3

dom for Mumia and all political prisoners.”

Speaking to a Struggle-La Lucha reporter in Philadelphia on the first day of the march, Lisa Davis, the vice chair of the Black is Back Coalition for Social Justice, Peace, and Reparations, and a member of the Uhuru Movement!, told how “they tried to put three leaders of the Uhuru Movement! in prison for 10 to 15 years, just for speaking out and condemning the U.S. proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, but also against colonialism and the whole damn system of imperialism. They specifically came after Uhuru leader Omali Yeshitela.

“And this case was under the Democrats. They also came after me in South Orange, New

Jersey, where I was at a weekly pro-Palestine protest. A Zionist came running up after me, yelling and screaming. When I attempted to defend myself from this extremely racist guy, the police picked on me. I happen to be the only Black person in the protest and the one they went after.

“The police fabricated what happened, even though it was on video. The judge ruled that whether or not I organized the protest, I was responsible. He fined me \$300 with an additional \$66 for court fees. And then \$10 more to pay the damn thing online with only 20 calendar days to appeal. Then I had to pay for the court transcripts, including those for the prosecutor. Yeah. So they’re not for poor people at all. They’re certainly not for Black people.” #

The Main Street recession

How monopoly capital makes workers pay

By Gary Wilson

Small businesses are collapsing at the fastest rate since the pandemic. In November alone, small firms eliminated 120,000 jobs – the steepest drop in years. Bankruptcy filings are at their highest level since 2019.

At the same time, the corporations that dominate the U.S. economy are thriving. Tech giants are pouring billions into artificial intelligence, data centers and chip production. The stock market surges while workers face layoffs, shrinking paychecks and rising costs.

Politicians call this a strange “divergence.” But nothing unusual is happening.

Capitalism churns out far more goods and services than can be sold at a profit, and when capital can no longer realize profit on the goods it produces, the system restores itself by destroying the weakest parts of the economy. The collapse of smaller competitors and the tightening grip of the ruling class aren’t accidents – they’re built into how capitalism works.

Monopoly is not an accident – it’s the system

When a neighborhood restaurant shuts down, or an independent hardware store goes under, it is not simply a personal tragedy. It is capitalism moving in its usual direction. Larger firms negotiate lower prices, shift production across borders, ride out downturns that sink smaller rivals and use their political connections to shape government decisions.

A corporate economist admitted it plainly: “They have more tools in the toolbox.” He was only echoing what Marx showed long ago – competition drives capital into fewer, larger hands.

Every collapse on Main Street strengthens the corporations that already dominate retail, logistics, technology and finance. Capital doesn’t just expand – it concentrates. And when profits tighten in glutted markets, the system clears space for the monopolies by wiping out smaller firms.

The capitalist state picks winners – and it isn’t small business

The Trump administration’s response makes the class character of state policy unmistakable. Commerce Secretary and billionaire financier Howard Lutnick blamed small business failures on immigration restrictions, claiming firms can’t survive without hyper-exploited undocumented labor. When data showed that falling consumer demand – workers not earning enough to sustain small firms – was the real driver, the administration simply ignored it.



What Washington calls “growth” looks very different on Main Street, where shops shutter and jobs disappear.

The capitalist state does not protect “business in general.” It serves the monopolies, the banks, the tech giants and the energy corporations. It funnels government-funded research and development into private hands, turning collective resources into corporate profit. Trump’s tariffs, tax cuts and attacks on social programs all move wealth upward while claiming to help workers and small business owners.

Tariffs marketed as “protective” act as taxes on workers. The corporations best positioned to gain are those that can reorganize supply chains, push costs onto workers and their communities, and secure special carve-outs.

Small manufacturers and independent contractors are left to fend for themselves in a system stacked against them.

The AI boom exposes capitalism’s priorities

The artificial intelligence boom shows the system’s direction clearly. Tech monopolies are investing staggering sums into chips, cloud platforms and sprawling data centers. Stock prices rise. Corporate profits climb.

But these projects create remarkably few jobs. A data center costing billions to build and operate may employ only about a hundred people. Capital pours into machinery and infrastructure while less and less is spent on living labor.

For corporations, this is ideal: Fewer workers mean fewer wages and fewer rights to contend with. But stripping labor out of production sharpens capitalism’s basic contradiction.

Output and productive capacity grow much faster than profitable markets can absorb them. This deepens the crisis of overproduction inherent in the system. Machines cannot create new value; they only transfer the value previously created by workers.

That is why AI’s immediate impact is job elimination. Automation sweeps through retail, logistics, office work, customer service, transportation and media. These jobs do not return in the tech sector. They simply vanish.

Wall Street’s boom has nothing to do with workers’ well-being

The soaring stock market is advertised as proof of economic strength. But the gains flow overwhelmingly to the ruling class.

Working-class life tells a different story. Rents and home prices push families out of their communities. Health care premiums climb. Electricity bills rise as data centers devour power. Food assistance is cut. These hardships are not accidental. They are how corporations turn every human need into a source of profit – and force workers to cover the cost. By driving down wages to raise profits, corporations intensify the imbalance that fuels crisis: production outrunning what can be sold for a profit. This is not inflation driven by “labor shortages.” It is a deliberate upward transfer of wealth.

Instability as a method of rule

Trump’s unpredictable trade policies are often dismissed as incompetence. In reality, they function as political pressure. Tariffs appear, vanish and change without warning. This uncertainty disciplines foreign competitors and unsettles domestic firms.

Businesses hesitate to hire or invest when economic rules shift week to week. Workers brace for layoffs and price hikes. Trump’s interference in federal agencies worsens the instability. When he fired the head of the Bureau of Labor Statistics for releasing accurate but politically inconvenient data, he signaled that economic information must follow political dictates – a hallmark of crisis and reaction.

Crisis and its meaning

The “Main Street recession” is not an exception. It is capitalism in motion. Capital concentrates ownership, sheds workers and reorganizes society around the demands of the ruling class, not those who produce the wealth.

Small business owners occupy an in-between class position. They employ workers but are squeezed by banks, landlords, debt and the monopolies that dominate every sector. Their collapse is one more expression of monopoly capital tightening its grip.

Workers are being told to carry the cost. Layoffs, stagnant wages, rising prices and cuts to social programs are treated as unavoidable, even as corporate profits and stock buybacks hit new highs. The ruling class’s message is simple: The crisis belongs to you; the gains belong to us.

This is the classic pattern of capitalist crisis: production and productive capacity outrunning what can be sold at a profit, and a ruling class that restores itself by wiping out smaller capitals and pushing the burden onto workers. #

Feeding the Pentagon, starving the poor: Class politics of the 2025 U.S. budget

By Gary Wilson

In late 2025, after the long federal shutdown, the new federal budget said more about the real priorities of the billionaire class and the politicians who serve them than any campaign speech or press conference.

On one side, the Pentagon's budget now tops \$1 trillion, with tens of billions more handed to war contractors for ships, missiles and the F-35 fighter jet. On the other side, food assistance and health care for tens of millions of poor and working-class people are being cut or threatened. This is not a mistake or bad planning. It is class policy.

A "K-shaped" economy means up for the rich, down for the poor

Economists have given today's economy a polite name: "K-shaped." In plain language, that means the line goes up for the rich and down for the poor.

The numbers make the divide plain. Over the last year, retailers in low-income neighborhoods saw their sales grow by only 0.2%, which is basically standing still. Stores in middle- and high-income areas saw sales grow by 2.5% over the same period. When businesses that serve poor communities are barely hanging on while those in wealthier areas keep expanding, that is a map of class inequality.

Surveys of business owners tell a similar story. Stores that serve low-income communities report deep pessimism about the future. Owners who serve wealthier customers are much more hopeful.

Yet on Dec. 2, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent went on TV to promise "substantial tax refunds" to the wealthy and "real wage increases" for the upper layers in 2026. At the same time, Goldman Sachs predicts "continued underperformance in low-end spending" – in other words, continued weakness in the parts of the economy where poor and working-class people live.

These are not just mixed signals. This is how the system talks to us. Officials and experts are brought out to say that things are getting better even when their own data shows that life is getting harder for working people.

A budget written for the rich and for war

The clearest picture of class priorities is in the budget itself.

During the recent government shutdown crisis, the Senate voted 77–20 to approve a \$32 billion increase for the Pentagon. That came on top of an already approved \$156 billion in-



EBT at the checkout and the Pentagon on the skyline: the U.S. feeds its war budget while pushing poor and working-class people deeper into hunger.

crease. Together, these hikes pushed U.S. military spending past \$1 trillion a year.

Much of this money will flow straight into the coffers of a handful of giant corporations that build weapons and military equipment. Many of these contracts are "cost-plus," which means the companies are guaranteed a profit. The more they spend, the more they make.

At the same time, Congress refused to extend subsidies under the Affordable Care Act that would cost around \$35 billion for a year – a small fraction of the Pentagon increase. Without those subsidies, health insurance premiums for millions of people will double or worse. In combination with cuts to Medicaid, as many as 17 million people are expected to lose health coverage altogether.

When a government can easily find hundreds of billions of dollars for war but claims it cannot afford basic health care, that is not hypocrisy. It is a clear sign of whose interests it serves. The Pentagon budget acts as a massive public support system for the biggest banks and corporations. It guarantees profits for military contractors, pumps government money into private hands, backs up U.S. corporate power around the world, and finances research that later becomes private technology and private profit.

Programs that help poor and working-class people do not enrich the wealthy in the same way. That is why they are always on the chopping block.

Turning hunger into a weapon

The Trump administration has escalated its attack on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which helps more than 42 million people buy food.

Officials are now threatening to withhold federal SNAP administrative funds from 22 states led by Democratic governors. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins claims these states are refusing to share data needed to fight "rampant fraud," and says that \$24 million per day is supposedly being lost to fraud and errors – about \$9 billion a year.

But federal data undercuts this scare campaign. A 2023 report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that only 0.1% of households on SNAP were even referred for fraud review. Policy expert Katie Bergh of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has said clearly that intentional fraud by recipients is rare.

So the question becomes: If fraud is rare, why the loud campaign about "rampant abuse"?

The answer is political. Accusations of fraud are used to demonize poor people, justify cuts to lifesaving programs, and distract from the real transfer of wealth. While officials wag their fingers at a tiny number of supposed cheaters on SNAP, billions of dollars flow without question to Pentagon contractors and the corporations behind them.

This is not the first time hunger has been used as leverage. During the recent six-week government shutdown, the administration carried out an unprecedented 13-day halt in SNAP benefit distribution. Families went without money for food while the government defended the stoppage in court all the way to the Supreme Court.

Shifting the burden onto states and working people

New rules in the budget shift the cost of SNAP away from the federal government and dump it onto the states. Beginning Oct. 1, 2026, states will be required to pay 75% of SNAP administrative costs, up from the current 50–50 split. States will also have to pay part of the benefits themselves if their "administrative error rate" is judged too high.

In practice, this means that poorer states will be squeezed the hardest. State officials will claim they "have no choice" but to restrict access, reduce benefits, or limit eligibility. Some states may threaten to pull out of SNAP entirely.

This is a familiar pattern. When capitalism runs into crisis, those at the top use every tool available to push the costs downward onto workers, poor people and local governments, while keeping profits flowing upward.

The human impact is enormous. SNAP serves about 42 million people. That includes around 14 million children and large numbers

Continued on page 12

‘Kill everybody’: War crimes in the Caribbean expose imperialism in crisis

By Gary Wilson

The execution of defenseless survivors in the water – an act that meets every definition of a war crime – exposes the real thrust of U.S. actions in the Caribbean. This is not about drug trafficking. It is open aggression undertaken by an imperialist system in crisis, relying ever more on force as its authority erodes.

Extrajudicial killings at sea and threats against Venezuela’s sovereignty are not isolated outrages. Taken together, they show a system losing control and turning to force, illegality, and war crimes.

The United States is not acting from a position of strength. It is responding to the decline of U.S. imperialism in the world economy and a shrinking ability to impose its will abroad. History shows that imperialism becomes most dangerous in crisis, turning to open force when it can no longer get its way through economic dominance or political manipulation.

A criminal order that strips away the mask

On Sept. 2, a U.S. aircraft spotted a small boat near Trinidad and the Trump administration quickly declared it was “suspected” of carrying drugs. A missile destroyed the vessel. Two survivors, wounded and unarmed, clung to debris in the water.

According to a detailed Washington Post investigation, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth issued a verbal instruction: “Kill everybody.” A second strike was ordered. The survivors were killed where they floated.

This was no battlefield confusion. It was the deliberate killing of shipwrecked people – an act explicitly condemned in the Pentagon’s own Law of War Manual. Former Judge Advocates General warned that if the U.S. claims this was an armed conflict, the order amounted to a prohibited “no-quarter” command, a war crime. If it were not an armed conflict, the killing of defenseless civilians would be murder under U.S. law.



War criminal Pete Hegseth, shown at the War Department, ordered the unlawful killing of defenseless survivors in Caribbean waters.

Trump brushed the matter aside, calling the mission “lethal kinetic” and labeling the dead “narco-terrorists.” The terminology changes from era to era, but the purpose is the same: to strip human beings of rights and to justify violence without restraint. This is how imperialist power behaves when its legal façade collapses.

Growing fractures inside the state

The effects of these unlawful killings don’t stop in the Caribbean. They’re also creating tension and divisions inside the U.S. government and the military.

On Nov. 18, six Democratic members of Congress – each with backgrounds in the military or intelligence agencies – released a video reminding U.S. troops of their duty to refuse illegal orders. Their intervention brought into the open a conflict that had been simmering for months.

Trump’s response was immediate and extreme: He accused the six of treason and suggested they should face execution. His tirade only brought more attention to the video.

The six did not call for disobedience in general. They stated a basic legal fact: Troops cannot defend themselves later by claiming they were “only following orders” if they carry out war crimes. The significance lies elsewhere. Their intervention signals growing concern within parts of the ruling class and

the state apparatus that Trump is steering the military toward confrontation with the population – and speeding up the decline of U.S. imperialism in the process.

These tensions have been visible for months. National Guard units deployed in Los Angeles to support ICE raids reported discontent and refusals to serve. Members of Congress say they have received increasing calls from active-duty troops and Guard members questioning the legality of the missions they are being sent on. Whatever their motives, the six lawmakers’ video has made the question of refusing illegal orders impossible to ignore.

That question applies as much to the Caribbean as it does to the streets of U.S. cities. Troops have the same duty to refuse orders to fire on civilian boats near Venezuela as they do to refuse orders to fire on people at home. The killings carried out by the U.S. fleet since August – more than 100 people blown apart in the water under the pretext of drug enforcement – are crimes. Those who carry them out are responsible for those crimes, even if the officials giving the orders bear the greater guilt.

The removal of Adm. Alvin Holsey, who reportedly objected to the attacks and instructed that survivors be rescued, underscores the depth of the internal conflict.

Trump’s threat against the six lawmakers exposed a division inside the government that had been simmering for months. Some now respond to any criticism as if it were a criminal act, while others worry that Trump’s use of military force – at home and abroad – is damaging the state they depend on. The clash reflects the deepening instability of the imperialist state amid its global decline.

For anti-imperialists, there is now space to speak directly to U.S. troops and the National Guard: They must refuse illegal orders, whether those orders call for firing on migrants, protesters, or civilians in the Caribbean. Rejecting criminal directives is not merely permitted – it is required. #



CHINA Celebrating 75 years of liberation Sharon Black

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>

Inside a Venezuelan commune resisting U.S. economic war

By John Parker

Caracas, Venezuela, Dec. 12 – Yesterday, President Nicolás Maduro visited the Amalivaca Socialist Commune, one of the communal projects of the Bolivarian Revolution, which are part of the process providing participation and self-determination for communities in Venezuela.

The Commune committees work directly with the government, which provides resources for collective production. These are not private businesses: workers run them collectively and decide how what they produce is used for the benefit of the Commune and society as a whole.

Walking through the commune, you can see how the members, the families, the children are provided for under difficult conditions, how dignity and resistance to U.S. terror and theft of vital resources are maintained.

The U.S. government and the enabling corporate media repeat ad nauseam about the dictatorship and poverty of the Venezuelan people.

President Maduro moved freely among the people, without the heavy security cordons typical of U.S. or European leaders. The security seemed to come only from the people who surrounded him as he walked around the Commune; our U.S. delegation was visiting.

At a crowded, open-air gathering, people approached the president directly. I was able to shake his hand and express solidarity. Without knowing me or my intentions, Presi-



dent Maduro handed me a microphone, showing no fear of what I might say. It was an interaction that reflected confidence in the people, not distance from them.

After walking through the commune, the president sat down for an extended discussion. He spoke at length about the impact of U.S. sanctions, the illegal seizure of Venezuelan resources abroad, and the constant threats directed at the country. He emphasized the need to push for peace and rejected the drive

toward what he called “crazy war.”

Maduro also focused on the determination of the people, the concrete work of the commune itself – the challenges it faces, the progress it has made, and the importance of expanding production under collective control. He reaffirmed the government’s commitment to supporting projects identified by the community as necessary, particularly those that strengthen food security and local self-sufficiency. #

History is still absolving Fidel Castro

Continued from page 24

people of formerly colonized countries of the Global South, like Cuba, start to run their own affairs.

The problem, from the oligarchs’ point of view, is that if Global South countries are independent, the working-class and oppressed majority there could get hold of the reins of power and actually help the people. When that happens, it threatens corporate profits (the same corporations keeping us down here).

That’s why the U.S. and Britain backed a coup in Iran in 1953, inaugurating decades of bloody dictatorship. The Iranian government had nationalized the oil industry and wanted to use the country’s resources to raise living

standards. That meant stopping U.S. and British capitalists from stealing everything.

Venezuela’s crime

There are similarities between Iran and Venezuela, which happens to have the largest proven oil reserves in the world. Venezuela nationalized its oil in 1976, and when Hugo Chávez was elected in 1998, bringing the Bolivarian revolution to power in 1999, the government used the country’s wealth to undertake massive efforts to uplift the people, expanding access to housing, education, health care, etc. Washington has been trying to destroy Venezuela’s Bolivarian government, essentially from day one, long before

the bogus narco-state accusations.

Venezuela’s crime is threatening foreign capitalist profits. That was the crime of Iran, and it’s the crime of Cuba. The imperialists can’t accept anything that looks like self-determination. That’s why the Palestinian people’s resolve makes them crazy. That’s why Trump vilifies the Black majority government of South Africa.

There are many things we can learn from Fidel Castro’s life as we contemplate his centennial. But one is that the imperialist system will never accommodate itself to us – to oppressed people, to workers. So, we should not accommodate ourselves to it. Instead, we have to fight it. #

Trump pardons drug trafficker declares war on Venezuela

Continued from page 1

fascism does not represent a turn by the Democratic Party away from collaboration in genocide and past and present war crimes.

Where were those so-called democrats when the Israeli murder of Palestinians is on a scale that goes way beyond the killings of the most deranged serial killers, using U.S.-supplied bombs, dismembering and killing almost 186,000, with over 2 million now facing starvation in Gaza? Where were they when the U.S. bombed Sudan, and now continue contributing to the starvation in Sudan? These are crimes that go beyond the killings by drug cartels and even the made-up drug cartels in the made-up stories of the fascist Trump administration.

Former U.S. presidents Obama and Biden, whose policies enabled Trump's fascism, make the collaboration with genocide by both parties more clear – they are a continuing blueprint by imperialism against humanity in the so-called United States of America.

Extrajudicial killings at sea and threats against Venezuela's sovereignty are not an example of strength; it's a component of the decline of U.S. imperialism in the world economy. And history shows that imperialism becomes most dangerous in crisis, when its ability to manipulate through economic dominance is fading, which also explains the increasing threats against China, a country that challenges the U.S. domination of the global economy and allows the Global South less dependence on the IMF, while allowing the production of self-owned infrastructure with less debilitating debt.

The IMF – the International Monetary Fund – was created at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944. And the primary architects of Britain and the United States ensured that African, Latin American, and Asian self-determination would be denied in the service of the maximization of profits of the financial and industrial monopolies of the United States and Britain.

But the IMF sits in Washington, D.C., which guarantees that the U.S. Treasury exerts the greatest influence.

African scholar Walter Rodney exposed in 1968 the imperialist tactic of sabotaging development in his book "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa." He wrote: "In the first place. The wealth created by African labor, and from African resources, was grabbed by the capitalist countries in Europe and in the second place restrictions were placed upon African capacity to make the maximum use of its economic potential, which is what development is all about."

So, the war on China is also not justified.

Trump justifies the war against Venezuela as the so-called fight against drug cartels that are killing people in the U.S. – but there is no evidence for Venezuela's part in that, but plenty on the plate of the drug leader he just pardoned.

Former Honduran President Juan Orlando

Continued on 13

Feeding the Pentagon, starving the poor: Class politics of the 2025 U.S. budget

Continued from page 9

of older adults and disabled people. Households that include at least one disabled person experience food insecurity at about twice the rate of those without. For them, delays and cuts are not abstract policy questions. They are a question of whether there will be enough to eat.

Economic warfare on working-class

SNAP is not only a lifeline for families. It also supports local economies.

Every dollar in SNAP benefits generates about \$1.80 in economic activity. When people use SNAP at grocery stores, that money circulates in the community. It helps pay workers' wages, covers rent and utilities for local businesses, and supports farms and food suppliers.

In some rural communities, SNAP purchases can make up 20% of a store's sales. If those benefits are cut back or interrupted, small

grocery stores in these areas may be forced to close. When that happens, entire communities can lose their only nearby place to buy food.

While this program that supports poor and working-class communities is being choked off, the Pentagon budget – which concentrates money in a small circle of giant military corporations – is expanding rapidly. That is not a sign of economic confusion. It is a sign of deliberate class policy.

Crystal FitzSimons of the Food Research and Action Center summed up the reality: "The problem isn't that we have 42 million people on SNAP. The problem is that we have 42 million people who live in poverty."

The system is doing what it was built to do

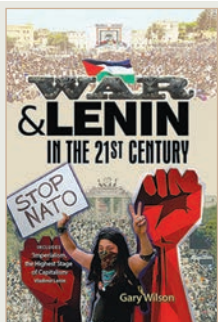
A \$1 trillion Pentagon budget and 42 million people relying on food assistance are not separate, accidental problems. They come

from the same system.

On one side, the U.S. state pours money into weapons, war and corporate profits to keep a crisis-ridden capitalist order afloat. On the other side, that order produces mass poverty, hunger and insecurity, then blames the victims and cuts the programs that keep them alive.

The question is not whether this is sustainable. It is not. The real question is whether working-class resistance – from food justice campaigns and union struggles to antiwar organizing – can come together as a political force that challenges not only each round of cuts, but the whole system that makes those cuts "necessary."

That is the choice in front of us: a future of permanent war and permanent hunger, or a fight for a society where budgets are written to meet human needs, not to guarantee profits for war corporations and the rich. #



WAR & LENIN in the 21st Century

Gary Wilson

Updated to include U.S. complicity in the Gaza genocide and military profiteering. Included is V.I. Lenin's pamphlet 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,' written in 1916. Vladimir Lenin, revolutionary leader and later head of the Soviet Union, was a key contributor to Marxist theory. His pamphlet remains an influential critique of imperialism. As in Lenin's time, the book concludes that socialist revolution will end imperialist war, enabling workers to meet their needs.



Paperback or kindle
at tinyurl.com/LeninAndWar

Continued from page 12

Hernández was extradited in 2022 and sentenced to 45 years in prison in 2024. At that time, U.S. authorities said he had played a central role in “one of the largest and most violent drug-trafficking conspiracies in the world.” Yet on Dec. 1, Trump gave him a full pardon and released him from federal prison.

Why? Because Trump is more flagrant in ending any moves prioritizing humanity. By pardoning a convicted narco-state leader, Trump aimed to boost his right-wing National Party ally in Honduras’ election and undermine the government of President Xiomara Castro and former president Manuel Zelaya – mortal enemies because they represent the Global South’s push toward socialism.

Well, now Trump is, like Obama before him, trying to steal another election in Honduras. And in Venezuela, the U.S. government is putting its hopes on puppet María Machado, hoping for another attempt at a coup – a puppet who idolized the fascist Netanyahu’s holocaust in Gaza. The U.S. war on Venezuela is not about drugs – it’s a lie in service of imperialism.

Trump, convicted of 34 felonies, justifies the war on immigrants as targeting only criminals, but they are workers targeted – they are the people who are the means to the creation of wealth going to the capitalist class. And, while we are talking about exploitation and means to the imperialist wealth, we must mention the attempt to hide the exploitation and slavery of our oppressed nationalities and the general working class.

The U.S. is built on cotton, and shows the need for racism – an ideological justification for kidnapping African people into slavery and justifying the following generations that continue to be exploited, vilified and killed today by lack of health care and fascist repression by the state and police. That’s why we African Americans and Africans in general can always be counted on to be in solidarity with the people of Venezuela. There is history here.

For example, Hugo Chávez said Haitian people were owed a debt since Alexandre Pétion, president of the Republic of Haiti, provided warriors and training to help ensure the success of Simón Bolívar’s liberation of Latin America. Pétion’s leadership and the Republic of Haiti were only possible after the successful slave revolution that led to Haitian independence in 1804. All peoples of the African diaspora have a history and ongoing mission of international solidarity and self-determination.

And while I’m on the subject of my ancestors – who were taken to the United States in chains from Africa – I want to talk more about cotton and its relation to the financial behemoths and even the IMF.

The great wealth that was used to catapult



From Dec. 9-11, Venezuela hosted the Assembly of the Peoples for Sovereignty and Peace of Our America.

capitalism in the U.S. was from cotton, thanks to the invention of the cotton gin and other advances in technology that increased production by enslaved people. Annual cotton exports reached four million bales by 1860. The cotton traveled north and through New York, bound for England and other destinations – allowing the fortunes of the industries that facilitated that movement to grow exponentially. And who were those beneficiaries? The Vanderbilts’ railroads. J.P. Morgan’s banking empire and steel consolidation. The Manhattan Bank that became Chase Manhattan. And the capital for Rockefeller’s Standard Oil and the Mellon fortune. All thanks to African slaves who were producing for them and for the world – for free.

That’s where this insane wealth of the ruling class originated, and also some of the wealth of the English ruling class and even made the IMF possible. That is the origin of the strongest financial and industrial monopolies in the U.S., which created U.S. imperialism. Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. said the world’s most dangerous, violent entity was U.S. imperialism, and we also know that U.S. imperialism is the most anti-human entity this earth has seen. This threatens not only you, but the entire working class in the U.S.

Vladimir Lenin said the most likely origins of revolution in the imperialist stage of capitalism would come from the states we now call

the Global South. That prediction was made because the conditions those nations are forced to endure, they are also forced to overcome.

The evidence of that is so clear in the Bolivarian Revolution we see here in the eyes of the people, we see the advancing empowerment of women, of all sexual orientations, of Indigenous and African people, of the poor, of the general working class, all of whom raised their power in Venezuela when the U.S. tried to orchestrate a coup against our beloved Hugo Chávez – and the power of the people is heard around the world today – inspiring a quickening pace toward socialism. That’s the inspiration that especially Venezuela and Cuba gave to us.

As revolutionary leaders from Vladimir Lenin to Amílcar Cabral to Mao to Frantz Fanon, to Clara Zetkin, Nelson and Winnie Mandela, to Fidel Castro and Assata Shakur, and Hugo Chávez and Simón Bolívar – as they all explained – and now the explanation is heard by President Maduro – that the role of the revolutionary is to expose the contradictions of the ruling class and unite a movement, not for capitalism, not for profits and exploitation – but for socialism – did I mention socialism?

And we must all continue to prepare for the rule of the agents of human progress – that is, our international working class.

La lucha continúa

WE – WILL – BE – VICTORIOUS

TRUMP'S CULTURE WAR IS CLASS WAR

By Gregory E. Williams

Trump and the Kennedy Center Honors

With all the other crises going on, it may seem silly to even pause and think about President Donald Trump hosting the Kennedy Center Honors on Dec. 2. But the fact that this happened tells us a few things.

One is that the U.S. government's authoritarianism is deepening: The executive branch – Trump – is trying to directly interfere in popular culture, even in a capricious and personal way (though *always* in the service of rich elites). The second is that there is a real assault on our very memory of the past, on who and what gets remembered, as well as *how* they are remembered. This is an escalation of the so-called “culture war,” using political power to intervene on the side of reaction.

Culture is important. As SLL writer John Parker reported this week from Venezuela, “Fidel Castro and many African liberation and Indigenous leaders recognized culture as the ruling class's primary tool of ideological control – denying the oppressed and working class the ability to think independently, distracting them and directing them toward their own disempowerment.”

Trump's authoritarian interventions in the media are glaring. For example, as with other legally independent government agencies, Trump has placed loyalists in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). That agency regulates communications, including the internet and television. He also called for the firing of late-night TV host Jimmy Kimmel, who was fired by ABC but then rehired following public outrage.

As soon as his second term started, Trump began remaking the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He fired the board members, and the replacements he brought in immediately put him in charge of the institute. This is unprecedented. At a Kennedy Center press conference back in August, Trump boasted that he was “very involved” in selecting the honorees and that he said no to “a couple of wokesters.” Hosting the awards was the final touch.

These awards are given to artists and entertainers for lifetime contributions. It's about legacy. It's another question why specific people made the list: disco artist Gloria Gaynor, action star Sylvester Stallone, or the rock band KISS. But based on Trump's press conference statement, we can assume that someone like television maverick Norman Lear, an honoree in 2019, would not have made the cut in 2025.

So classic TV was ‘woke’?

Lear, who died at 101 in December 2023, wrote for, produced, or developed over 100 shows. He is primarily known for introducing political and social themes to sitcoms in the 1970s.

There's a decent chance that if you ask someone who grew up in the U.S. to name a few '70s sitcoms, at least one of them will be Norman Lear's. There's a good chance that they'll name more than one. The list includes some of the most popular shows of the period: “All in the Family,” “Maude,” “Sanford and Son,” “One Day at a Time,” “The Jeffersons,” and “Good Times.”

These shows tackled subjects like hate crimes against the queer community, drag, abortion, and many more, decades before the manufactured furor over drag story hour and beer commercials. Some shows featured interracial relationships. Hell, just the fact that several of these shows centered on Black families was groundbreaking. That wouldn't have happened just a few years earlier.

These developments didn't just stem from Lear's genius. They were part of the zeitgeist. The 1960s-70s were a progressive era when people's struggles were making gains. Culture – including pop culture – reflected that. The struggles made these shows possible.

Of course, none of this was perfect. Some Black writers and actors involved in these shows say that they were sidelined and have not received the full credit that they are due. Black screenwriter Eric Monte was a co-creator of multiple of these shows, such as “Good Times” along with “Good Times” actor Mike Evans. (Evans is best known for playing Lionel on that show.)

Likewise, the white actress Sally Struthers – who was 24 when she began playing Gloria in “All in the Family” – recently claimed that Lear did not take her seriously and was often rude to her, and that the mostly older male writers did not know how to write for her character; when they didn't know what to do with her, they gave her lines like “I'll set the table, ma” and “I'm going upstairs to wash my hair.” The contradictions in society play out in cultural production.

But again, looking beyond Lear, another indicator of the zeitgeist was “Sesame Street,” which first aired in 1969. The radical underpinnings of the show may be lost on many today. It was an ambitious experiment: Make children's education available to the masses through public television. (The federal Head Start program to help poor and working-class

preschoolers began in 1965. “Sesame Street” aimed to do the same thing through a different medium.) The show featured Black, Latine, white, and other characters in an inner city environment. In the beginning, Mississippi officials refused to air the show because of its multiracial cast!

Archie Bunker not a MAGA prototype

One of my social media pet peeves are the rightwing memes depicting the dads Archie Bunker and George Jefferson (of “All in the Family” and “The Jeffersons,” respectively), with captions like, “TV back when people weren't offended by everything.” This fundamentally misrepresents what these shows were about.

Archie Bunker is not the prototype of the MAGA culture warrior. The latter always digs in and is actively helping to push back the progress of people's struggles. Archie Bunker, a loading dock worker who also worked part-time as a cab driver to make extra money, is a working-class character from a different era. Projecting MAGA values onto him is wrong.

Yes, he is an older white man with oppressive social baggage. He is bullheaded. But he does not have the sociopathic cruelty celebrated by MAGA. When confronted with situations he doesn't understand, like Black neighbors moving in (the Jeffersons), he eventually starts to come around.

That is the comedy – the exasperated look on his face when he has to accept something new. He's the butt of the joke. But at the end of the day, he cares about other people. He learns. Without that human core, the show would hardly have been compelling. This has nothing in common with today's comedians who intentionally try to offend by punching down at trans people or other oppressed groups.

Archie was part of a *world* that was progressing. He was along for the ride whether he liked it or not. The present was far from perfect, but movements throughout the country were making strides: women's power, Black power, Indigenous power, LGBTQ+ power, union power.

And it wasn't just the U.S. People's movements all over the world were racking up victories, like when the Vietnamese people drove out the U.S. invaders and reunified their country.

The fictional world of “All in the Family” mirrored society in the real world. And the changes happening in the real world – the high tide of people's struggles through the 1960s and '70s – made such a show possible.

Continued on page 15

Continued from page 14

The right wing wants us to forget

Right now, Trump is leading a colossal attack on the working class, helping to transfer more and more wealth to the top. His movement, which is controlling the government, is especially lashing out against immigrants and trans people, trying to divide people up so they can't fight back.

If there is a "culture war," we must be clear that this war is not just about ideas. It is a manifestation of the class struggle. The assault on progressive culture – representation in pop culture, the teaching of history, and more – is part of the broader assault on people's movements; it is about reversing real gains made by those struggles.

They want us to forget past cultural representations reflecting those struggles because they want us to forget the struggles themselves, and to stop fighting today.

When the right wing promulgates the false idea that all of the pop culture of the past was



Archie Bunker gets a surprise visit from wife Edith's friend, Beverly Lasalle, a drag queen whose life Archie saved in an earlier episode when she fell unconscious in his cab.

simply reflective of reactionary values, and that only recently have TV series and films begun to explore social problems from a progressive angle, they are reinforcing the false

idea that things never changed, and never will change. But the fact that these shows were so popular more than 50 years ago argues to the contrary. #

Making trans people unemployable

Continued from page 5

other trans person in education or health care or any public-facing role: This could happen to you. Keep your head down. Better yet, leave.

The next one

Here's what's going to happen next.

Somewhere, right now, a trans person is teaching a class, or coaching a team, or working at a library, or providing health care. They're doing their job. They're probably good at it. And at some point, someone is going to have a problem with them. Maybe a parent, maybe a student, maybe a coworker. The problem won't really be about job performance. The problem will be that they're trans.

That person, or someone connected to them, will take their grievance to social media. If they're lucky, Libs of TikTok will pick it up. Or Turning Point. Or one of the other accounts that have built massive followings by turning trans people into content. The post will frame the trans person as a predator, or a groomer, or a bully, or a tyrant. It won't matter what actually happened. The framing is the point.

Then the calls will start. To the school board, to the administration, to the HR department. Local news will cover the "controversy." A state legislator will demand an investigation. The institution, desperate to make

the problem go away, will put the trans person on leave. Maybe they'll be fired outright. Maybe they'll resign because the harassment makes it impossible to do their job. Either way, they're gone.

And then the person who started it all will go on Fox News. They'll get a GoFundMe. Maybe a speaking gig at a conservative conference. If the story is big enough, if it goes viral enough, they might get something more. A podcast. A book deal. A center with their name on it.

This is not a guess. This is a pattern. We've watched it happen over and over again, and we will keep watching it happen until the institutions that capitulate to these campaigns start recognizing them for what they are: coordinated attempts to purge trans people from public life, dressed up as individual controversies.

Oklahoma University had a choice. They could have looked at the essay, looked at the rubric, looked at the feedback, and said: this grade was justified. They could have noted that two instructors independently reached the same conclusion. They could have pointed out that Curth had just won a teaching award. They could have said, simply, that they don't put instructors on leave for doing their jobs.

Instead, they folded. They issued a statement about protecting religious expression, as

if the issue were ever about that. They gave the machine exactly what it wanted: another trans person removed from a position of authority, another signal sent to every other trans person watching.

The next time this happens, and there will be a next time, the institution will face the same choice. Most of them will make the same decision Oklahoma did. They'll calculate that the cost of standing firm is higher than the cost of sacrificing one employee. They'll tell themselves it's just one case, one person, one controversy. They won't see, or won't admit, that each capitulation makes the next one easier.

Mel Curth did nothing wrong. They graded a bad essay honestly and gave thoughtful feedback that any reasonable educator would recognize as fair. For that, she's on administrative leave, her name is circulating through right-wing media as the latest villain, and her career may never recover.

The essay isn't the point. Curth is the point. And the point after Curth will be someone else – another trans teacher, another trans health care provider, another trans person who made the mistake of existing in public while the machine was looking for a new target.

That's what this has always been about.

Parker Molloy is the writer of *The Present Age* newsletter.

Trump's oil theft is an act of war on the Caribbean

By Colby Byrd

On Dec. 10, the fascist Trump carried out an act of outright piracy, seizing a Venezuelan oil tanker in that country's own coastal waters. The ship was carrying crude bound for Cuba – two nations Washington has tried to strangle for decades.

Trump bragged about the operation, calling it the “largest” tanker ever taken and adding, “we keep it, I guess.” That is the voice of a government that believes it can plunder at will.

Axios quoted a senior official who celebrated the seizure as “a twofer: we’re going after Maduro’s bank account and the Cubans that

keep him in power.” That one sentence says everything. It’s an act of war. Washington is attacking two countries that refuse to bow to U.S. imperialism.

U.S. air and drone strikes in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific have killed almost 100 people. The seizure of the tanker is a continuation of the absolute criminal and brutal lengths the capitalist class will go to secure their interests.

This seizure is an attack on communities that have long resisted U.S. imperialism and have fought to maintain their dignity. Whether it be in Palestine or the Caribbean, the U.S.



An oil tanker near the Venezuelan port of La Salina, Feb. 25, 2025.

imperialists will stop at nothing to ensure the destruction of Black and Brown communities in their pillaging of resources.

Workers and oppressed people in the United States and abroad must say no to capitalist war and, by any means necessary, work to end it! #

Pentagon GPS jamming blocks Venezuela peace conference delegates

By Stephen Millies

An emergency news conference was held on Dec. 10 at the International Action Center in New York City to protest the latest war moves against Venezuela. The same day, in an act of piracy, U.S. armed forces seized a Venezuelan oil tanker.

Speakers at the news conference denounced the Trump regime’s attempted sabotage of the People’s Assembly for Sovereignty and Peace in Our America. The news conference was chaired by Sara Flounders of the IAC.

Many delegates planning to attend the peace conference in Caracas were prevented from traveling by the Pentagon’s jamming of Global Positioning System (GPS) signals, which disrupted airline flights to Venezuela. (See: Venezuela sees surge in GPS jamming amid U.S. military buildup, forcing flight cancellation.)

Some U.S. delegates were able to get through this blockade while others participated in the news briefing. The GPS jamming follows Trump’s illegal declaration of a “no-fly zone” over the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a blatant violation of the country’s sovereignty. So is Trump’s killing of over 80 people in the Caribbean.

William Camacaro, co-founder of the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle in New York, denounced Trump’s actions as criminal. “This is a very critical moment,” said Camacaro, who is also co-founder of the Venezuelan Solidarity Network and co-coordinator of the Al-



SLL photo: Stephen Millies

From left, Drea Sommers, N.Y. Chapter, Nat’l Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL); William Camacaro, Bolivarian Circles; Sara Flounders, International Action Center and United National Antiwar Coalition; Susan Adely, National Lawyers Guild and Int’l Association of Democratic Lawyers; Corinna Mullin, U.S. Peace Council and Anti-Imperialist Scholars Collective; Roger Wareham, NCBL and December 12 Movement, and Margaret Kimberley, Black Alliance for Peace and Black Agenda Report.

liance for Global Justice. “The only thing we see is aggression.”

Camacaro reminded everyone that María Corina Machado – the corporate media’s darling who was bestowed the Nobel Peace Prize—supported the 2002 coup that tried to overthrow the Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez.

Suzanne Adely, the president of the National Lawyers Guild, said of her visits to Venezuela, “Every trip was an inspiration.” She described her role as an election observer and denounced U.S. interference.

Drea Sommers, of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, condemned the threats and “outrageous remarks of Trump,” who “has

authorized the extrajudicial killing of at least 83 people.” She demanded the investigation of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth for these crimes.

Same playbook as the CIA coup in Chile

Roger Wareham, a member of the International Secretariat of the December 12th Movement and also a NCBL member, compared the current efforts to overthrow Venezuela’s President Nicolás Maduro with Kissinger’s campaign against Chilean President Salvador Allende.

“Make the economy scream,” said Kissinger,

Continued on page 18

LA teach-in exposes U.S. war lies on Venezuela

By Nolan

The United States is escalating its threats against sovereign Venezuela – and working overtime to manufacture public support for intervention. In Los Angeles on Nov. 22, activists gathered for a community teach-in to break down the lies driving this new war push and to equip people with tools to challenge it.

The teach-in opened with a concise overview of Venezuela's modern history and the achievements of the Bolivarian Revolution. Presenters emphasized that Washington's hostility did not begin yesterday: It is rooted in decades of U.S. attempts to dominate Latin America and crush any nation that asserts its independence.

From there, the discussion turned to how corporate media creates the illusion of consensus for war. Facilitators walked participants through the core tactics of “manufacturing consent” – selective facts, emotional manip-

ulation, and the erasure of U.S. economic sabotage – all designed to portray targeted countries as crises that demand foreign intervention.

A segment from CBS's “60 Minutes,” “Life on the Ground in Maduro's Venezuela,” served as the centerpiece for analysis. Attendees examined how the piece relied on distortion, omission, and sensationalism to recast Venezuela's hardships as proof of government failure rather than the predictable result of brutal U.S. sanctions and continuous destabilization campaigns.

After dissecting the clip, the teach-in shifted to strategy. Participants discussed how to push back: building popular education, joining anti-war organizations, and mobilizing in the streets to oppose any U.S. attack on Venezuela or any other sovereign nation.

Only after the main program concluded did organizers acknowledge the collaboration that made the event possible, including members



Panelists at the Los Angeles teach-in break down how corporate media fuels Washington's war drive against Venezuela. SLL photo

of the Struggle for Socialism Party (SSP), the Harriet Tubman Center (HTC), and the Los Angeles Tenants Union Koreatown (LATU).

The core message that carried through the event was clear: No war on Venezuela. No more public money for imperialist aggression while communities at home are denied housing, health care, and basic social services. The fight against U.S. intervention abroad is inseparable from the fight for justice at home. #

65 U.S. cities mobilize against war on Venezuela

By Stephen Millies

Hundreds of protesters confronted the U.S. military's Times Square recruiting office on Dec. 6, part of 65 demonstrations across the U.S. demanding: No war on Venezuela!

Among the sponsors of the anti-war mobilization were The People's Forum; ANSWER Coalition; December 12th Movement; Palestinian Youth Movement; PAL-Awda, Palestinian Assembly for Liberation; Palaver; All-African People's Revolutionary Party; Party for Socialism and Liberation; and Code Pink.

Many flags of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela were carried. The colorful signs and banners – as well as chants – attracted friendly attention from people passing by. Polls show that at least 70% of people in the United States oppose a war against Venezuela.

Speakers in Times Square denounced Trump's assassination of over 100 people in the Caribbean. The continuing murder on the high seas by the Pentagon is no different than the pirates who kidnapped Africans and enslaved them.

Andre Easton, the socialist candidate in the Bronx's 15th congressional district, called it a “criminal enterprise. ... that has killed people. Shame!” Claudia de la Cruz, Executive Direc-

tor of the IFCO (Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization), said that Trump and his White House predecessors “have sanctioned the people of Venezuela, stealing from the economy.”

Roger Wareham, a member of the December 12th Movement's International Secretariat, reminded people how the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez provided free heating oil to poor people in both the United States and Haiti.

Speaking for PAL-Awda, Bill Dores pointed out that the U.S. -financed genocide in Gaza and the attacks on Venezuela were the same war.

Former New York State assemblymember and New York City councilperson Charles Barron denounced the killings and the war moves against Venezuela.

Following the rally, 1,000 people marched through the streets. Chants and drums echoed against the skyscrapers.

People on the sidewalks waved in support. Some joined in the chants. Nobody wants a war.

The march ended at Fox News headquarters in Rockefeller Center. The liars at Fox serve the Rockefellers and all the other families of Big Oil.

Venezuela has the largest oil reserves in the world. No blood for oil company profits! #



A sign in Times Square lights up with the message “No to war against Venezuela.”

Venezuela's People's Assembly: Building socialism through communes

By John Parker

Caracas, Venezuela – From Dec. 9-11, Venezuela hosted the Assembly of the Peoples for Sovereignty and Peace of Our America. The gathering aimed to reshape government structures to more directly reflect the will of the Venezuelan people. Central to the Assembly were the communes – organizations designed to place production under the control and direction of workers themselves.

The communes evolved from the co-operatives that existed from roughly 2006 to 2008. Both represent experiments of the Bolivarian Revolution that began in 1999 with the election of President Hugo Chávez. For the first time in Venezuelan history, government priorities centered on the needs of poor and working-class people – victims of centuries of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism under the Monroe Doctrine, the 1823 U.S. policy declaration that became an ideology justifying the exploitation and theft of Venezuela's oil, gold, and sovereignty.

The Chávez era: building revolutionary infrastructure

During Chávez's presidency, Venezuela saw record housing construction and the eradication of illiteracy in the mid-2000s. By 2005, this writer witnessed Cuban doctors establishing clinics in mountain communities that had previously been completely ignored by the government.

At the 2005 World Social Forum, President Chávez declared that humanity's survival now depended on developing socialism worldwide – that climate catastrophe and poverty threatened human existence, and only the working class could stop the profit-driven imperialist countries.

Like current President Nicolás Maduro, Chávez used culture to inspire. He led delegates in singing "The Internationale." Today, Maduro often opens conferences with the Bobby McFerrin song "Don't Worry, Be Happy" – not to encourage apathy, but to meet U.S. imperialist terror and war threats with the calculated confidence of an empowered people.

Reporting from the ground

This writer attended the Assembly as a delegate representing the U.S. West Coast, a member of the Struggle for Socialism Party and the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice. At one commune gathering, I got President Maduro's attention with a message of solidarity. He responded by singing "Don't Worry..." The encounter was televised.

The conference was organized by the Simón Bolívar Institute with strong representation from youth, African, and Indigenous community organizations. The goal was not only to heal the disempowerment that Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism had enforced, but to recover and center the knowledge of these communities.

Presenters reminded attendees about the contributions of the 1804 Haitian Revolution – the first successful slave revolution that inspired enslaved Africans throughout the diaspora, including in North America. That revolution, under the leadership of Alexandre Pétion, president of the Republic of Haiti, provided warriors and military training for Simón Bolívar, who went on to liberate much of Latin America from Spanish colonial rule – from Panama to Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Peru. All these nations remain targets of U.S. imperialism today.

On Dec. 10, the U.S. seized an oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela carrying fuel to socialist Cuba, making clear the continuing motives of U.S. imperialism.

Trump's white supremacy vs. Bolívar's vision

On the second day, Vice President Delcy Rodríguez spoke about the stark contrast between Trump's white supremacy and class war agenda and Simón Bolívar's goals of equality and respect for enslaved and formerly enslaved Africans and Indigenous peoples. Bolívar understood their central position in the fight for self-determination and sovereignty. Trump's plans for renewed colonialism revive the Monroe Doctrine to justify continued theft of Latin American resources and the profits of exploited labor.

Another delegate discussed socialism with a Venezuelan character – the goal of freeing society from dependence on imperialism and developing infrastructure for sustainable production.

That sustainable production, less dependent on global capitalism, was the vision Chávez pursued with passionate respect for Latin American peoples. In Venezuela, over half the population is of mixed (mestizo) African, Indigenous, and European ancestry. To benefit from the wisdom and moral priorities especially visible in African and Indigenous communities – lessons learned through 500 years of brutal repression – Chávez spent much of his presidency visiting previously isolated communities. Like Maduro's continuing experiments, much of his time was spent listening, learning, and creating structures to ensure greater control by the majority of Venezuelans.

From co-ops to communes: fixing a contradiction

The Co-operatives were an experiment involving tens of thousands of projects intended to place Venezuela's production more directly

Continued on page 19

Pentagon GPS jamming

Continued from page 16

which is what the U.S. has done with its sanctions against Venezuela. Wareham noted the irony of Trump's hijacking of an oil tanker on International Human Rights Day.

He reminded people of how Venezuela supplied free heating oil to poor people in the United States beginning in 2005. U.S. economic sanctions gradually strangled the program, ending most deliveries by 2010 and shutting it down completely by 2013.

Wareham told the people of Venezuela, "We got your back." He emphasized that Nicolás Maduro is the "one and only president of Venezuela."

Margaret Kimberley of the Black Alliance for Peace and Executive Editor of Black Agenda Report attacked Washington's efforts to destroy the Venezuelan economy and the stealing of CITGO. She denounced Trump's efforts to revive the Monroe Doctrine – named after a

slave owner – and telling Venezuela that "you can't be friends with China or Russia."

Corinna Mullin, of the U.S. Peace Council, said although its members were blocked from attending the People's Assembly in Caracas, "we're there in spirit." Other speakers who were blocked from attending included Daniel from the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, who declared, "International solidarity is alive and well." He emphasized that Nicolás Maduro is the "one and only president of Venezuela."

Also blocked from going to Caracas were Abdullah of the Sudanese Resistance Front and Jonas of MASS – Mutual Aid and Scientific Socialism. Both denounced the war drive against Venezuela.

So did a representative of the Palaver Collective. Despite Trump's propaganda campaign, 70% of people in the U.S. have said they're against invading Venezuela. #

Continued from page 18

under the control of those doing the work, rather than generating profits through private ownership. Simon Bolivar Institute spokespersons explained that the government provided resources and funding to launch community projects.

Unfortunately, many co-op leaders saw an opportunity to secure government subsidies and appropriate the surplus produced by community workers' labor. The social surplus – what remained after covering production costs and workers' needs – was not, as intended, collectively controlled by the community for reinvestment and social priorities. Instead, individual co-op initiators were extracting this surplus for private gain, reproducing capitalist relations of production within formally co-operative structures.

Around 2009, the government began developing the commune model, building on and reorienting the earlier cooperative experiments in order to address this contradiction. The communes were designed to control the direction of production, with community members deciding how profits would be distributed and reinvested. In other words, the means of production would belong to commune members. Communes now have committees that represent members and carry out democratically decided tasks in coordination with the government.

The Bolivarian government committed to being socialist in this manner, with the commune representing the face of Venezuelans and, most importantly, the historically marginalized mixed majority. This model enabled more sustainable production with genuine self-determination.

There are now more than 4,000 communes in Venezuela, representing more than 13 million people, nearly half of the population.

Many communes are producing more than they receive from the government and can contribute to national needs, paying taxes to support national management, planning, and military defense.



President Nicolás Maduro, Chávez used culture to inspire. He led delegates from Assembly of the Peoples for Sovereignty and Peace who were visiting the Amalivaca Socialist Commune in singing 'The Internationale.' He encourages people, to meet U.S. imperialist terror and war threats with the confidence of an empowered people.

When we were encouraged to participate in the dance before discussions and presentations, we learned how different leg movements historically expressed the reality of legs shackled under slavery, with the ball and chain creating a forced limp. That limp was given rhythmic expression in dance movements. This reminded me of how the Irish, under British repression, were forced to keep their dance confined to movement below the waist.

Ryan Coogler did a great job of putting that in the movie "Sinners," showing the liberating role of dance and music from Africa and Asia to Ireland. There is a scene in that movie that expresses that so well – and made this writer shed a tear. Also, shed a tear when being greeted by the African/Indigenous and predominantly women members of the council

in that Commune. I can tell you that when we are hit with the joy of seeing oppressed peoples fighting back with confidence and purpose – and I'm not alone in this – the tears of joy are shared by especially people of color, usually denied in so many seconds of the day.

The Indigenous and African dance we saw at the Commune was a beautiful expression of rhythm and dance and song that are another form of documenting history, and a documentation that was not a surrender – it was taking what you were forced to take from the oppressors and putting your spin on it. A spin that would build your dignity, your way of fighting back, your way of building endurance of mind and body and the confidence to ultimately dance on the graves of the rulers of U.S. imperialism. #

Witnessing decision-making in action

This writer observed the functioning and decision-making process up close at the El Panal Socialist Commune, where members explained they organize according to Marxist-Leninist principles. Committee meetings began with African drums and dance, followed by a roundtable discussion and debate.

Before dismissing the dance, drums, and music as merely supplemental, remember how Fidel Castro and many African liberation and Indigenous leaders recognized culture as the ruling class's primary tool of ideological control – denying the oppressed and working class the ability to think independently, distracting them and directing them toward their own disempowerment.

International workers build ‘people’s embargo’ against Israeli genocide

By Lallan Schoenstein

From the docks of Oakland to the ports of Morocco, from Italian logistics hubs to South African coal mines, an international movement is taking shape to do what governments have refused: Cut off the flow of weapons and fuel sustaining Israel’s assault on Gaza.

On Nov. 22, labor organizers, Palestinian activists, and anti-war campaigners from six countries gathered online to launch the People’s Embargo for Palestine – a coordinated effort to leverage workers’ power at critical chokepoints in the global military supply chain. The webinar brought together a veteran of the anti-apartheid struggle with a new generation of organizers who have notched concrete victories over the past year.

“Anything that comes off of a ship is handled by longshore workers, some of the most critical workers of the global economy,” said Clarence Thomas, a retired member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 and veteran of the 1980s campaign against South African apartheid. “The commerce of the world is handled through dock worker power.”

That power is now being mobilized for Palestine. And it’s working.

Maersk retreats, Zim expelled

Members of the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) reported that their research unit has been tracking military cargo shipments to Israel, publishing detailed reports on shipping routes, weapons components, and fuel supplies. According to Kaleem Hawa, speaking for PYM, their “Mask Off Maersk” campaign has successfully forced the Danish shipping giant to reroute vessels away from Spanish and French ports, where workers have refused to load Israel-bound cargo.

“Maersk has become afraid to bring arms through these ports, and they have rerouted to avoid targeting,” Hawa reported. The campaign also claims a breakthrough: Maersk announced this past summer it would cease carrying imports or exports from Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank – “marking the first time an international shipping company has enacted a de facto sanction of Israel,” according to PYM.

In Oakland, the Israeli shipping line Zim has been entirely expelled from the Bay Area since 2014, when the Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC) organized a “Block the Boat” action. ILWU Local 10 members refused to cross community picket lines for four days,



Nov. 22, Online panel for the launch of ‘People’s Embargo for Palestine’

From South Africa, Noxolo Bhengu of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) brought a message of solidarity rooted in her country’s history. “During apartheid, it was workers in the ports of Oakland, in Liverpool, in Australia, in the Nordic countries – workers just like you who refused to handle South African goods,” she said. “From Cape Town to Cairo, their

and the Zim line never returned. In the case of the ILWU Local 10 members, it has meant a loss of wages, because longshore workers make their money unloading and loading ships.

“There has not been any complaints from any longshoremen that I know about missing money from the Zim line vessels that no longer come into the port,” Thomas said, addressing the reality that solidarity comes at a cost. He said: “Many years ago trade union activist Baldemar Velasquez said, ‘Solidarity is not an empty slogan.’ It means that you give something up.”

Learning from the anti-apartheid movement

The parallels to the 1980s campaign against South African apartheid are deliberate. The same ILWU locals that refused to handle South African cargo then are organizing against Israeli shipments now. The same combination of labor action, divestment, and sanctions is being deployed.

Thomas recalled that in 1988, the ILWU International Convention officially condemned Israel’s treatment of Palestinians, calling it “state-sponsored terrorism” and quoting Israeli journalist Amos Elon’s description of Gaza as “the Soweto of the state of Israel.”

But he was candid about setbacks. In 2024, a resolution written by ILWU Local 10 calling for the entire union to refuse military cargo to Israel “was voted down resoundingly,” Thomas acknowledged. “It was a very discouraging moment.” The union’s membership, he noted, has changed significantly over the decades.

“Each generation has to fight its own battles,” he said. “I’m almost 80 years old, and I’m not giving up.”

courage saved lives, and their actions built pressure when governments were too timid.”

COSATU, which represents government workers, teachers, nurses, mine workers, and transport workers, is now pushing to end South African coal exports to Israel. South Africa supplies the majority of Israel’s thermal coal, according to organizers, making this campaign potentially one of “the most substantial blows against the genocide to date,” as Hawa put it.

Italy: Millions strike against complicity

In Italy, the logistics union S.I. COBAS has led strikes and blockades targeting companies involved in the military supply chain. Alessandro Zedra, the Milan coordinator, described their approach: “For S.I. COBAS, embargo work is not only about policy proposals but about building real power from below.”

The actions face “heavy repression – investigation, trials, and police violence,” Zedra said, but they prove “that workers can play a direct role in disrupting the machinery of war.”

On Oct. 3, Italy saw what organizers describe as a historic convergence: Grassroots unions coordinated with CGIL, the country’s largest union federation, to call a general strike. According to Mariam of Giovani Palestinesi Italia (GPI), millions of workers across the country walked out against the Italian government’s complicity in the Gaza genocide.

“These dates are especially important because they were not only demonstrations but also strikes,” Mariam said. The actions included blockades at ports and airports between Sept. 22 and Oct. 3. Another round of national

Continued on page 22

NYC rises for Gaza on Day of Solidarity

By Stephen Millies

Hundreds of people gathered in Manhattan on Nov. 29 to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The United Nations established the day in 1977 in recognition of the catastrophe unleashed by the 1947 partition of Palestine – a vote forced through the General Assembly by the Truman administration using open threats and bribery.

That vote paved the way for the Zionist settler state. Within weeks, U.S.-armed Zionist militias launched a campaign of terror that destroyed hundreds of Palestinian villages and drove more than 750,000 people into exile, many into refugee camps. Large numbers were crowded into the small coastal area that would later be known as the Gaza Strip.

This November, after two years of U.S.-funded genocide, the Trump regime forced what amounts to a partition of Gaza itself through the UN Security Council. Nearly 2 million descendants of the refugees of 1948 are imprisoned in a small part of the strip, where they are denied adequate food and medicine and bombed daily by Israel's U.S.-made warplanes.

The resolution puts the whole strip under the control of a so-called "board of peace" controlled by Donald Trump himself.

Free Palestine! on Fifth Avenue

Dozens of Palestinian flags were waved by protesters along with signs condemning the

ongoing U.S.-financed genocide in Gaza and the West Bank. The initial rally – alongside Central Park at 59th Street and Broadway – confronted the surrounding corporate headquarters and the penthouses of the super-rich.

The Palestinian Youth Movement helped initiate the action along with other rallies across the United States, as well as in Toronto, Canada. One of the main demands was an arms embargo on Netanyahu's murder machine, which has already killed more than 70,000 Palestinians, including tens of thousands of children.

Among the speakers were those from PYM; PAL- Awda; Nodutdol for Korean Community Development; the Party for Socialism and Liberation; and Neturei Karta, an organization of anti-Zionist religious Jews.

Manolo De Los Santos of The People's Forum held the flag of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as he addressed the crowd. "If you stand with Gaza, you have to stand with Venezuela," he said, speaking beneath the statue of the enslaver Columbus. "The Venezuelan people have committed the crime that under their feet stands the world's largest proven reserves of oil. For this crime, Trump and his army of criminals in Washington have threatened war against them."

People then marched down 59th Street past billionaires' row and the hotels of the wealthy. Going down Fifth Avenue, they marched in front



SLL photo: Stephen Millies

of Trump Tower and blocks of luxury stores.

Pedestrians on Fifth Avenue shouted support for the marchers and joined in chants of "Free Palestine!"

The final rally was held in front of the reference library on 42nd Street. Palestine will win!

#

CHINA *Building socialism in an imperialist world*

China: Building Socialism in an Imperialist World is a report on how over a billion people are building a socialist society inside a world dominated by imperialism. It follows the Chinese Revolution as a long struggle to create new social relations: from the land reform and collectivization



China: state ownership of key sectors of industry, technology and banking, planning, broad participation, universal education and healthcare, and an industrial base able to

that broke feudal power, to the mass campaigns that built industry from scratch, to the Cultural Revolution's effort to curb rising privilege and keep the revolution on a socialist path.

The report shows how socialist construction created the foundations of modern

withstand pressure from the capitalist powers. It also examines how these foundations were strained after 1978, when market policies widened inequality and allowed new layers of privilege to grow – and how today's leadership is working to limit these pressures and strengthen the role of state ownership and planning.

Instead of treating China as a puzzle or a template, the report approaches it as a workers' state developing inside a global capitalist order. China's advances and its difficulties both arise from the ongoing work of socialist construction – work shaped by struggle, challenged by capitalist forces, and still rooted in the revolution of 1949.

China: Building Socialism in an Imperialist World offers a clear, direct account of how socialism is built in real conditions – and why that process continues to shake the world system shaped by imperialism.



'People's embargo' against Israeli genocide

Continued from page 16

strikes and mobilizations was scheduled for Nov. 28-29.

The Italian movement is also contesting a new financial bill that would massively increase military spending as Italy participates in what organizers call "the plan for rearmament of Europe."

Tracking the supply chain: From Poland to Oakland

The People's Embargo relies on detailed research to identify vulnerable points in the weapons supply chain. PYM's methodology involves tracking shipments before they're loaded, mapping manufacturing sites, and understanding specific routes.

Recent reports have exposed surprising nodes in the network. According to PYM, 90% of TNT imported by the United States – where domestic production has ceased – comes from Poland. "This TNT is used in the bombs that are dropped on Gaza," Hawa said.

In Canada, the government claims it suspended some weapons export licenses to Israel. But a PYM report released the week of the webinar documented how Canadian manufacturers exploit a loophole, shipping components to the United States which then forwards them to Israel.

Shatha M., speaking for Arms Embargo Now Canada, described how the report "triggered a national crisis" with senators referencing it in Parliament and a bill now proposed to close the loophole. When PYM exposed a shipment of antennas used in Elbit drones, the suppliers suspended future shipments to Elbit "within days," she reported.

"What started as a scattered demand is now the shared political baseline across the country because the movement made it so," Shatha said.

Perhaps most surprising was Oakland's role. Despite the city's progressive reputation and history of solidarity with Palestine, PYM research revealed that Oakland's civilian airport has been one of the most frequent departure points for F-35 components destined for Israel.

"These shipments have flown through the Oakland airport multiple times per week, almost every single week this year," said Voulette, a PYM organizer coordinating the Oakland People's Arms Embargo campaign. According to the research, 96% of the cargo went directly to Nevatim Air Base, where Israel's entire F-35 fleet is stationed.

The shipments included bomb release units for 2,000-pound bunker-busters, guidance systems, and targeting components – all transported through civilian infrastructure. The revelation was particularly shocking because Oakland passed one of the first ceasefire

From the docks of Oakland to Morocco, from Italian logistics hubs to South African coal mines, an movement is taking shape to cut off weapons and fuel sustaining Israel's assault on Gaza.

resolutions in November 2023, and ILWU Local 10 has long refused to handle Israeli military cargo at the maritime port.

"FedEx, Lockheed Martin, and these genocide profiteers have been exploiting our city and our public infrastructure to facilitate a genocide that we never consented to," Voulette said. The campaign has built a coalition of over 30 organizations and won endorsement from the Alameda Labor Council, representing 135,000 workers and 135 unions.

Morocco: Organizing under repression

In Morocco, the campaign against weapons shipments operates under difficult conditions. Ismail Lghazaoui of BDS Morocco was imprisoned for his role in organizing protests against ships carrying military cargo.

"It was the first protest on-site back in Nov. 13 to 16, and we were only five people," Lghazaoui said. "I was imprisoned but released two months later, and suddenly we have more mobilizing."

The movement has since identified at least 25 ships carrying military goods – from F-35 parts to maintenance components – through Moroccan ports. Dock workers in Tangier and Casablanca have contributed by halting boats or refusing to work them.

Morocco's complicity is particularly painful, Lghazaoui noted, because the country has historical and cultural ties to Palestine and signed onto international resolutions condemning the genocide. The Moroccan government came under pressure after ships denied docking in Spain were rerouted to Moroccan ports instead.

"UN rapporteur Francesca Albanese [has said] that Morocco is complicit in genocide by allowing or harboring ships that make deliveries to the Zionist regime," Lghazaoui reported. The campaign is now pursuing legal complaints and coordinating with movements across the Mediterranean to halt ships wherever they appear.

The movement also honors Sion Assidoun, a founder of BDS Morocco, who led early campaigns against the Zim shipping line, which led the Zim campaign back in 2010 or 2011. It helped identify how complicit the Zim company is and helped Tunisia to actually remove Zim completely from its itinerary. Assidoun recently passed away. "We will take the torch and continue forward," Lghazaoui said.

A strategy for the long haul

The People's Embargo represents a shift in strategy for the Palestine solidarity movement. Rather than focusing solely on mass demonstrations or lobbying governments, organizers are targeting the material infrastructure of genocide – the ships, ports, airports, and factories that keep weapons flowing.

"This has been a logistics genocide, full spectrum and integrated, the result of a networked world of war profiteers and resource extraction working together against oppressed peoples globally," Hawa argued in opening the webinar. "Close study of supply chains can teach us as people's movements what the ruling classes have not yet admitted, or hope never to admit."

The approach requires detailed research, international coordination, and the willingness of workers to take action at personal sacrifice. It faces government repression in multiple countries. And it operates in the context of a ceasefire agreement that organizers view as fundamentally unjust – what Hawa described as "the theft and primitive accumulation of almost half of Gaza, with the rest left to siege and concentration camp conditions."

But the victories, while modest in scale, demonstrate what's possible when workers exercise power at chokepoints in the global economy. Zim was expelled from Oakland. Maersk rerouting from European ports. Canadian suppliers are suspending shipments after exposure. Italian workers are shutting down logistics for days.

"The military-industrial complex operates across borders," said S.I. COBAS organizer Zedra. "Therefore, our resistance must also be transnational."

As Voulette put it in closing the Oakland section of the webinar: "History is not just something that is done to us. It is something that we can shape through our actions."

How to support the campaigns
Arms Embargo Now (Canada)
Website: <https://armsembargonow.ca>
BDS Morocco: www.bdsmovement.net
Oakland People's Arms Embargo
<https://armsembargonow.com>
Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC)
www.araborganizing.org
S.I. Cobas <https://sicobas.org>
GPI: instagram.com/giovanipalestinesi.t/?hl=en
Million Worker March Movement,
<https://millionworkermarch.com>

Editor's Note: This article is based on a Nov. 22 webinar launching the People's Embargo for Palestine. Organizations provided the URLs listed above; readers should verify current campaign information directly with these groups.

Trump's 'peace plan' is a war plan for Ukraine

By Lev Koufax

In late 2025, the Trump White House rolled out a new “28-point plan” to end the war in Ukraine. Far from a serious bid for peace, the proposal is designed to lock in NATO’s gains, give the U.S.-backed regime in Kiev time to regroup, and blame Russia when the fighting resumes.

Under Trump’s peace farce, the borders would be frozen along the current line of contact in an immediate ceasefire. Donetsk, Luhansk, and Crimea would officially be recognized as Russian territory. The plan also requires Ukraine to constitutionally commit to not joining NATO.

At first glance, this seems reasonable. However, the plan also calls for a Ukrainian standing army of 600,000 troops, Ukrainian EU membership, and security guarantees from the United States. In practice, this is NATO by another name. It allows for continued military investment and gives the West an open check for new provocations against Russia.

Russia's strategic objectives

Washington portrays Russia’s intervention as the first step in a new Napoleonic or Hitler-style march across Europe. Western media depict Putin and the Russian people as power-hungry aggressors bent on rebuilding the czarist empire. This caricature has nothing to do with reality.

Russia is a capitalist state with its own interests, but it did not choose this war in a vacuum. For three decades, NATO has expanded eastward, ringing Russia with bases and missile systems and backing a hard-right regime in Kiev that waged war on the people of Donbass. Russia’s 2022 intervention was, above all, a response to this encirclement.

From the outset, Russian leaders have named four main objectives in Ukraine: to demilitarize the country, to break the power of fascist formations like the Azov battalion, to protect the people of Donetsk and Luhansk from state terror, and to ensure that Ukraine is permanently neutral – not a NATO bridgehead on Russia’s border.

Since the fascist Maidan coup of 2014, Ukraine has received massive Western arms shipments and training. Neo-Nazi formations have been folded into the regular military and security services. The regime has torn down Soviet monuments, outlawed communist organizations, attacked unions, and elevated Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera as a national



President Trump with defense and commerce officials, Aug. 26. The proposed Ukraine framework reflects the merger of military strategy and economic interests – ensuring continued war profiteering under the guise of peace.

hero. For the people of Donbass, this has meant years of shelling, blockade, and repression.

In this context, Russia’s insistence on a neutral Ukraine and real security guarantees is not “imperial ambition,” but a refusal to accept a permanent NATO forward base on its doorstep – a price Russian society has already paid for in lives and hardship.

Why offer a plan Russia cannot accept?

The U.S. proposed this knowing it contained provisions that Russia could never accept. Russian acceptance of this plan would arguably put them in a worse strategic position than when the war began. The Ukrainian army would be over twice the size it was in 2022. The Ukrainian government would remain a hard-line right-wing U.S. puppet regime.

While technically keeping Ukraine out of NATO, this provision is in name only. The security guarantees did not exist when this war began. Why would Russia accept a stronger U.S. military alliance with Ukraine? This merely sets up another conflict down the road.

Russia has been clear from the beginning, it cannot allow a NATO military bridgehead on its western border. This peace plan would, de facto, establish such a bridgehead. It also allows for massive U.S. economic investment in Ukraine for rare earth mining, natural gas pipelines, and infrastructure projects. Deepened U.S. control over Ukraine’s economy is not a path to peace; it’s one of the very conditions Russia set out to prevent.

So, why propose this plan when Russia clearly cannot accept it? It’s hard to say exactly, but the most likely reason is rhetorical positioning. Washington puts forward a proposal that appears “reasonable” to a public worn down by war. When Russia refuses, the U.S. blames Moscow as the sole obstacle to peace and uses that propaganda to justify more weapons, more funding, and more escalation.

Now, there is another possibility – even if remote. It is possible that Trump and the generals and billionaires around him truly believe they can enforce this plan on Russia through

economic warfare. Russia has faced crippling sanctions since the start of the war, with little impact. Through industrial war mobilization and deepened economic ties with China and the Global South, Russia has consistently circumvented most of the West’s sanctions.

If there is a belief in Washington that sanctions and financial pressure can force Russia to swallow a plan that cements a hostile Western military outpost on its border, that belief has no basis in reality.

The U.S. doesn't want peace

The billionaires who control the U.S. economy – and the politicians of both major parties who answer to them – are not seeking peace in Ukraine. They are seeking profit and strategic advantage. The war has been a bonanza for Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics, Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, and the rest of the military-industrial complex. They have made fortunes shipping weapons into Ukraine, and they see no reason to stop.

They are interested in war, profit, and the isolation of their primary target: China.

Even if the West believes Trump’s plan can be implemented, peace isn’t the goal. Any cessation of hostilities under this framework would be temporary – a breather for the U.S. and its proxy in Kiev to regroup, rearm, and prepare for the next round of confrontation with Russia.

The U.S. does not want to cool global tensions or bring Russia back into its fold. The U.S. billionaires want to make money, and they have made loads of it by waging war on Russia. Needing a break to regroup is not the same as a genuine desire for peace. Peace is explicitly opposed to the economic interests of the entire military-industrial complex.

These defense magnates and the U.S. government hope that by draining Russia through endless war, they can eventually force regime change and deprive China of a key strategic ally. Imperialism will do whatever it takes to maintain its dominance and increase its profits, even if that means promoting phony peace plans. #

Rafael Ithier fundador del Gran Combo de Puerto Rico, ¡Presente!

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Mucho está pasando en esta colonia caribeña, sobre todo, la profundización de la militarización por parte de los gringos que siguen usando nuestro archipiélago en contra de países hermanos a pesar del rechazo de nuestro pueblo.

Pero hoy quisiera rendir homenaje y dedicar este comentario a un gran boricua que falleció el pasado 7 de diciembre. Rafael Ithier, fundador del Gran Combo de Puerto Rico que llevó nuestra música al mundo.

Pensando sobre su fallecimiento y los éxitos musicales del Gran Combo, hubo un comentario de una persona que me hizo reflexionar y apreciar aún más la vida de Ithier. Les comparto algunas secciones de este comentario que pone la vida del gran músico en el contexto de la lucha de clases, así que cito al compañero Ricardo Santos, quien fue presidente de la UTIER, el sindicato de trabajadores de energía.

Decía Ricardo: “El éxito de Rafael Ithier

con el Combo y también con su vida personal, a mi entender, no se dio por casualidad. Se debió a la buena organización y disciplina, tanto a nivel personal como profesional. Ithier, como músico negro y pobre, conoció en carne propia las desventajas que para un músico representaba abrirse paso en este negocio tan difícil.

Miguel “Pollo” Torres, quien se unió a la orquesta en 1979 le dijo a Normando Valentín en entrevista desde Orlando, Florida que agradecía a Ithier su entrada al grupo y daba gracias porque había podido comprar una casa y pagar el seguro social. Esta es la clave del éxito de Ithier y del Gran Combo, la organización, la estabilidad para los músicos y la seguridad de empleo. De eso se trata, si tú tienes un trabajo donde se te garantizan tus derechos, se te respeta tu antigüedad, se te garantiza un retiro digno, definitivamente tiene como resultado, mayor permanencia de sus integrantes, mayor lealtad y éxito del grupo.



En mi opinión, este es el logro de Ithier, el logro del Gran Combo de Puerto Rico: establecer una organización que reconoce los valores de cada uno de sus músicos.

Para mí, muestra además que nosotros los trabajadores, la gente pobre, podemos y tenemos la capacidad de organizarnos, de construir organizaciones que nos ayuden a nuestra movilidad social. Podemos contribuir para crear un mejor Puerto Rico; el Gran Combo es un ejemplo de esto.”

Aquí cierro la cita y me despido.

Rafael Ithier, ¡Presente!

¡Viva la lucha del pueblo trabajador!

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



History is still absolving Fidel Castro

By Gregory E. Williams

Fidel Castro was born on Aug. 13, 1926. If he were alive today, he'd be turning 100 next year. In Cuba, preparations are already underway to celebrate his centennial. But even without the anniversary, current events – the dangerous world situation right now – warrant a reappraisal of Fidel's life and the Cuban revolution. They have a lot to teach us.

Right now, the U.S. government is intensifying its attacks on Venezuela and other countries of Latin America. This imperialist government, run for the billionaires, has already been illegally assassinating people in the Caribbean who are just trying to make a living, offering zero proof that they are smuggling drugs.

War is a real danger. This would not only be a disaster for Latin America, but also for working-class and oppressed people here in the U.S. itself. (We always seem to get poorer as the war profiteers get richer.)



April 17, 1961 – Fidel Castro, lower right, is seated inside a tank at Playa Girón during the Bay of Pigs invasion, in which Washington-backed forces attempted to topple the revolutionary government.

torship and then spent decades fighting off U.S. attempts to resubjugate Cuba. Sixty-six years later and they haven't beaten the Cuban revolution.

Fidel understood that there really was no making peace with imperialism. The leaders of the global capitalist system might soften their tone from time to time, pretend that they will start playing fair. Trump exemplifies this pattern. But the unrelenting profit motive that drives the whole system can never allow peace, and the imperialists can never accept it when

Continued on page 11

But Washington's attempts to subjugate Latin America to Wall Street are nothing new. Fidel Castro spent his life fighting against the murder machine that is U.S. imperialism. And with his leadership, the Cuban revolution first threw off the U.S.-backed Batista dicta-

STRUGGLE ★ **LA LUCHA**
for Socialism | *por el Socialismo*

Vol. 8, No. 23 Dec. 15, 2025

Vol. 8, Núm. 23 15 de Diciembre 2025