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Vol. 9, No. 8 • April 27, 2026

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Socialist candidate John Parker: Abolish ICE & police, fund people's needs

By John Parker

Following is a recent campaign meeting talk by socialist congressional candidate John Parker. Parker is a founding member of the Struggle for Socialism Party and Struggle-La Lucha magazine. He is a coordinator for the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles and is running for election to the U.S. House to represent California's 37th Congressional District. He is on the ballot for the primary on June 2, 2026. Campaign information can be found at socialist4congress.org.

I'm John Parker and I'm running for the Congressional District 37th seat on the Peace and Freedom Party ballot.

Wouldn't it be something if the police and sheriffs were replaced with a community safety patrol that would be organized and made up of the neighbors of that community? Imagine how many young adults are looking for a job, or forced into low-wage, part-time and dangerous work to feed their parents or children – jobs that don't cover the rents and inflated prices of food and gas. That's what this capitalist system forces upon us. It's an oppression that's forced upon a lot of Black and Brown young adults. Imagine if the young adults had the chance to get a pension, to get a full-time position, and the respect of the community in being part of an agency of peace and empowerment, not terror and occupation. Imagine how many people would jump at that opportunity.

When we talk about being safe in our communities, we have to do what works – what's worked in the past when community self-defense organizations like the Black Panther Party or Young Lords or Brown Berets kept the neighborhoods safe from the few anti-social and the many military occupiers in blue.

Contrast that with the terrorism, the fascist-like repression we feel today, especially in the 37th district, which I am trying to rep-



resent in Congress. This is a district whose makeup is diverse, representing many communities in South Los Angeles and the borders of Inglewood. That oppression we feel every day would disappear in a flash if the billions being spent on the police and sheriffs – right now to oppress and put us in fear and humiliation – were spent on people who would be schooled in mental health and strategies of de-escalation. Imagine if we had those folks who knew how to talk to folks and be patient and not so fearful and cowardly, like the cops that pull a gun when someone of the wrong color looks at them the wrong way.

I see community members in South Central, where I live, put themselves in the line of potential violence and successfully de-escalate something that didn't have to end in violence. My son and I have done it. Unfortunately, cops won't do that because they play their role in attempting to keep us compliant as the ruling class of billionaires steals the wealth we created and uses our basic necessities of health care, education and housing as a source to maximize their profits through blood and oil.

When we all realize that, then we know that the police forces and sheriff's departments as they exist today will not change in any funda-

mental way. We know that because Mapping Police Violence started tracking the number of people killed by police in the U.S. in 2013, and every year the numbers went up. In 2024, it was 1,365 across the country. During DA Jackie Lacey's eight years in office, from 2012 to 2020, police in LA County killed more than 340 people, and only one cop was charged. We know that many of those killed were unarmed and presented no threat. That's been normalized, like the killing of the people in Minneapolis by ICE, who are assisted by the police.

And we all know here better than most about the normalization of terror and genocide in Palestine. When I went to Gaza in 2009, I saw the effects of the Israeli bombings, some of which included depleted uranium, and we know what that did in Iraq. The United Nations finally admitted that the acts of the Israeli military are acts of extermination and the weaponization of sexual violence. There's 78 years of history of that against the people and children of Palestine.

Leila Khaled, a Palestinian freedom fighter, recently spoke about what she witnessed as early as four years old. She didn't allow Israeli horror to keep her compliant, and her life inspires many revolutionaries – I have her photo on my t-shirt.

What can we do to stop the war abroad and the war here? What can a congressperson do? Well, it's hard to do anything when you've got a system that is designed to keep working people in check and exploited. But the main reason why I'm running is to help build a movement that can create the necessary power to create change.

But if winning were possible in the congressional race, one of the first things to be done would be to demand an end to bombs going to Israel. Their next planned shipment is 20,000

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Starbucks strike forces talks – company answers with union-busting expansion

By Lallan Schoenstein

Starbucks returned to the bargaining table with its baristas in April 2026 after the longest nationwide strike in company history forced the company back. Days into the renewed talks, management delivered its answer: a \$100 million corporate expansion in Nashville, Tennessee – a right-to-work state – with up to 2,000 jobs promised over five years.

The April 21 announcement landed alongside a fresh round of layoffs in Starbucks' Seattle-based technology workforce. Starbucks Workers United (SWU) represents more than 600 of the roughly 10,000 Starbucks stores in the U.S.

The strike began on Nov. 13, 2025, and ran into early February 2026. At its peak, about 4,500 baristas picketed at 230 stores across more than 130 cities. Management refused throughout to move on the workers' wage and staffing demands.

The contract fight centers on pay, hours, and staffing. The union originally pushed for a \$20 starting wage across the company. In its February 2026 contract proposal, it scaled that back to a \$17 floor for the lowest-paid workers, with 4% annual raises. Starbucks' current starting wage sits at or below \$16 an hour in 43 states.

Inflation has eaten the raises. Baristas report turning to food stamps to cover groceries. Many enroll in Medicaid because Starbucks keeps their hours below the 20-per-week threshold needed to qualify for the company health plan.

Staffing is the other issue. The union wants at least three workers on the floor at all times – a demand aimed at overwork, long customer wait times, and safety on closing shifts. It also wants existing baristas to be offered open hours before the company hires anyone new. Starbucks has long preferred the reverse, adding part-time staff while keeping individual workers below the hours needed to qualify for benefits.

Bargaining resumed in April 2026 after the union's strike, and a continuing consumer boycott pressured management back to the table. The opening move, according to the workers, was to reopen contract terms that the two sides had already agreed on.

"They're trying to move backwards on issues we've already settled instead of settling the few that we have left," Mina Leon, a barista in downtown Manhattan who struck for two months, told Labor Notes. Jasmine Leli, a Buffalo, New York, barista on the union's bargaining team, said the company was reopening terms "that we had already fought for and won after months in bargaining in 2024."



Photo: Starbucks Workers United

Starbucks Workers United members on the picket line. The union, led by LGBTQ+ workers, is fighting for higher wages for the lowest-paid baristas, a three-worker minimum staffing level, more hours, health and safety improvements, and protections against discrimination. "We are forming a union because we care deeply about every single one of our coworkers, and believe that everyone deserves to have what they need to thrive at work," the union says.

The union has filed fresh unfair labor practice charges over the regressive bargaining. They add to hundreds of outstanding unfair labor practice charges against Starbucks, including millions of dollars in back pay owed to fired workers.

Management brings relocation plans to the bargaining table

Starbucks said it had reopened agreed contract terms to "reflect current business realities." Days later, it announced its own new realities. On April 21, 2026, the company unveiled the \$100 million Nashville office – up to 2,000 jobs over five years – and a same-day round of layoffs in its Seattle-based technology workforce.

The company insists its Seattle headquarters stays put. Nashville will serve as a Southeast hub, housed in a newly built 250,000-square-foot office tower that Starbucks is leasing downtown. A company blog post said that most Nashville roles would be new hires, with some Seattle-based teams – in supply chain and technology – asked to relocate. Bloomberg reports the company has had little success persuading Seattle staff to make the move.

Tech staff offered the Nashville move were told they could take a pay cut or leave. Bloomberg reports they were initially given less than a month to decide.

The Nashville announcement landed

against a specific political backdrop. Washington State allows union-security clauses in collective bargaining agreements – contract provisions requiring workers covered by a union contract to pay dues or fees that support the representation they receive. That legal framework has helped unions like SWU build durable footholds in Seattle.

The Seattle political climate has shifted. On Nov. 13, 2025, Mayor-elect Katie Wilson joined striking Starbucks workers on the picket line outside the shuttered Capitol Hill Reserve Roastery. "I am not buying Starbucks, and you should not either," she told the crowd. Wilson took office Jan. 1, 2026.

Starbucks has been pulling back from its hometown for months. On Sept. 25, 2025, the company closed the Capitol Hill Reserve Roastery and the Reserve Store inside its SoDo headquarters, along with other Seattle locations, and announced 900 corporate layoffs. On March 30, 2026, Governor Bob Ferguson signed the state's new Millionaires' Tax – a 9.9% levy on household income above \$1 million, effective in 2028. Starbucks founder Howard Schultz announced the same day that he was moving to Florida.

Anti-labor laws in Tennessee

Tennessee is a right-to-work state. The law has been on the books since 1947, further en-

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Greeley meatpackers win contract after three-week strike

By Lallan Schoenstein

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 released a statement on April 12 reporting that meatpackers at the JBS beef processing plant in Greeley, Colorado, voted to ratify a tentative agreement covering nearly 3,800 workers. The contract runs through April 2028.

UFCW Local 7 members ratified the contract following JBS's return to the bargaining table, ending a three-week unfair labor practice (ULP) strike that began March 16. The ULP strike shut down the facility as an 80% immigrant workforce exercised their protected right to strike, refusing to be intimidated by the bosses and their ICE partners.

The Greeley strike was protected under federal labor law as an unfair labor practice strike. Local 7's contract had expired in July 2025. Instead of bargaining with Local 7, JBS demanded that the union accept terms negotiated at other JBS facilities. Under labor law, forcing a union to accept terms negotiated by outside parties violates the duty to bargain in good faith.

JBS was counting on a workforce that couldn't afford to demand its rights. Beginning in the 1980s, the meatpacking industry began hiring immigrant workers in an attempt to break UFCW's union power. They recruited workers who were far from home, many of whom had precarious legal status,

UFCW Local 7 members on the picket line at JBS Greeley during the three-week strike that began March 16. For nearly 3,800 workers – most of them immigrants – walking out meant three weeks without a paycheck. They held the line anyway.



Photo: UFCW Local 7

and they moved the factories to rural areas to break community ties.

The night shift at JBS Greeley is largely Haitian. Some workers report being recruited through TikTok ads promising stable jobs and housing. They arrived to find overcrowded housing – 40 to 60 people in a house – sometimes without running water or electricity. A December 2025 lawsuit alleges human trafficking tied to a JBS HR supervisor. JBS denies the claims.

JBS is trying to spin the result, claiming the deal is the same as before the strike and that any improvements came from shifting pension money, not from the company. That doesn't hold up. It is the workers who held the line through three weeks of March cold who forced more. They came back with wage increases 33% higher than what JBS first offered. The contract includes a 70-cent-an-hour raise on ratification, followed by 40 cents in July 2026 and another 40 cents in July 2027 as well

as a \$750 bonus on ratification and \$500 in April 2027. UFCW Local 7 called it “all gains, countless improvements, and not a single concession.” Whatever the company's accounting says, it was the strike that moved the numbers.

It has been reported that JBS made \$415 million in profit in the fourth quarter of 2025 and is valued at \$18.7 billion on the stock market. The company is the top U.S. beef supplier to McDonald's, Costco, Walmart, Kroger, Burger King, and KFC.

UFCW Local 7 reports that the agreement secures wage increases, protects workers from health care cost increases, and requires JBS to provide personal protective equipment at no cost to workers. Those wage increases are about 33% higher than what JBS offered in its pre-strike final offer.

Kim Cordova, president of UFCW Local 7, said the agreement “is a testament to the incredible resolve of our members. These workers stood together on the picket line for three weeks, through extreme weather, because they knew their worth and refused to be disrespected.”

UFCW Local 7 extended their gratitude to the solidarity of union brothers and sisters and community allies who stood up for them throughout the strike. The union says the outpouring of support was felt every day on the picket line. In turn, the courageous meatpackers' strike has infused the labor movement with its energy.

One significant result of the strike was a worker safety bill introduced at the Colorado legislature in April. The bill would reinforce the union contract by protecting workers from wage garnishment for personal protective equipment and would hold meatpacking companies accountable for denying workers access to restrooms. It should be noted that legislation like this has to be fought for because of the dehumanizing conditions in the meatpacking industry.

In the end, it's the union's organizing power that gives workers a position of protection from which they can afford to withhold their labor and fight back. #

Socialist candidate John Parker: Abolish ICE & police, fund people's needs

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1,000-pound bombs aimed at those remaining in Gaza, especially women and children.

We could demand that police not work with ICE – that hasn't happened yet. We could demand that the flock surveillance system used by ICE in the schools be dismantled. We could demand that the governor begin demanding the dismantling of the detention centers.

I was in detention in Egypt for trying to get aid into Gaza in November 2023. And I can tell you that, as bad as the detention was in Egypt, it didn't compare to the detention that we have in the United States, where so many have died.

Yes, I've been to a lot of places targeted by U.S. imperialism, like Sudan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Ukraine, Russia, Venezuela and Cuba. I got to see a clear picture of U.S. imperialism and its ugly hatred of humanity.

As Martin Luther King said, “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today – my own government.”

We cannot tolerate an intolerable system addicted to war and theft. Let's build working-class power by uniting with the struggles of the Black and Brown communities facing terror from the police and ICE. Let's build power by uniting with everyone facing gender oppression and homophobia. Let's unite with our trans youth who are under a severe attack today. Let's unite with the victims of U.S. imperialism in Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, Sudan, Nigeria and the entire Global South.

The financial and industrial monopolies of capitalism that run this government take joy in being represented by psychopaths.

Let's unite our international working class and fight the power, and seize the power. #

ICE out of Milwaukee: Free Palestine, free Salah Sarsour!

By Gregory E. Williams

On April 6, almost a dozen ICE agents surrounded Muslim community leader Salah Sarsour in his car shortly after he left his Milwaukee home. They kidnapped him, first taking him to Chicago and then to a county jail in Indiana, where he remains held.

Salah was born in the Israeli-occupied West Bank of Palestine and has been a legal permanent resident of the U.S. for over 30 years. He has no criminal record in this country. He is a community leader, currently serving as president of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee. His “crime” appears to be his unwavering support for the Palestinian people and all the oppressed.

Many in the community have come out in support of Salah, including Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson, who called his arrest “an outrage.”

Writing for *In These Times*, Dr. Hatem Bazian, who knows Salah, said:

“Salah grew up in the occupied West Bank, where he endured the violence, torture and humiliation of Israeli occupation as a child. He came to this country, built a family, built a business, and built a community. He spent those thirty-two years as a living rebuttal to the lie that Palestinians are anything other than human beings deserving of dignity. His abduction is not about law enforcement. It is about silencing. It is part of the same pattern we have seen with Mahmoud Khalil, with Leqaa Kordia, with Mohsen Mahdawi – a deliberate campaign to use the machinery of U.S. immigration enforcement as a weapon against Palestinian and Muslim voices at the very moment when the world is watching a genocide unfold in Gaza.”

Salah Sarsour was profiled by an anonymously run Zionist website called Canary Mission, which was also involved in the slandering of Mahmoud Khalil and other Palestinian activists. As reported by CNN, on July 9, 2025, senior ICE official Peter Hatch told a federal court in Boston that more than 75% of the names of student protesters his agency was asked to look into came from Canary Mission. The admission exposed the political motivation behind these arrests: crushing dissent.

Struggle-La Lucha spoke with a family member of Salah:

“Just look at his statement. He’s been locked up by ICE, but he barely talks about himself. The statement is all about the community in Wisconsin. It’s about standing with oppressed people in Lebanon and Palestine. He talks

about the struggles of Black and Latin American people and standing together. This is an example for all of us!

“You know, when my husband passed away, he was there for us. He treated my children like they were his own children. He was always there for them when they needed him. That’s the kind of man he is.”

One of Salah’s nephews also told Struggle-La Lucha:

“He is a man of faith, integrity and resilience. Salah’s unjust imprisonment is nothing more than the extension of Israel’s oppressive regime to U.S. soil. This sets a terrifying precedent. His statement is evidence of his resilient character and faith.”

There are many linkages between U.S. police and Israel’s occupation forces. ICE has increasingly used Israeli spy technology, as reported by Turkey’s Anadolu Agency. Representatives from U.S. police departments regularly attend seminars and trainings with their

Israeli counterparts; New York, Los Angeles and Memphis departments have come under scrutiny for these activities.

Having grown out of slave-catching patrols, U.S. police are an occupying force in Black, Brown and working-class communities. They are cut from the same cloth as Israeli police and military forces because they serve the same capitalist class. Israel could not exist for a day without billions in annual funding from Washington to protect Western capitalist interests in West Asia. Israel does much of Washington’s dirty work in the region. This is the relationship of a crime boss and a hit man.

Salah Sarsour is no criminal.
Resisting occupation is not a crime.

Mailing address to send letters:

611 East Jackson St.

Brazil, Indiana

46834

LaunchGood link for legal defense fund:

bit.ly/freesalah

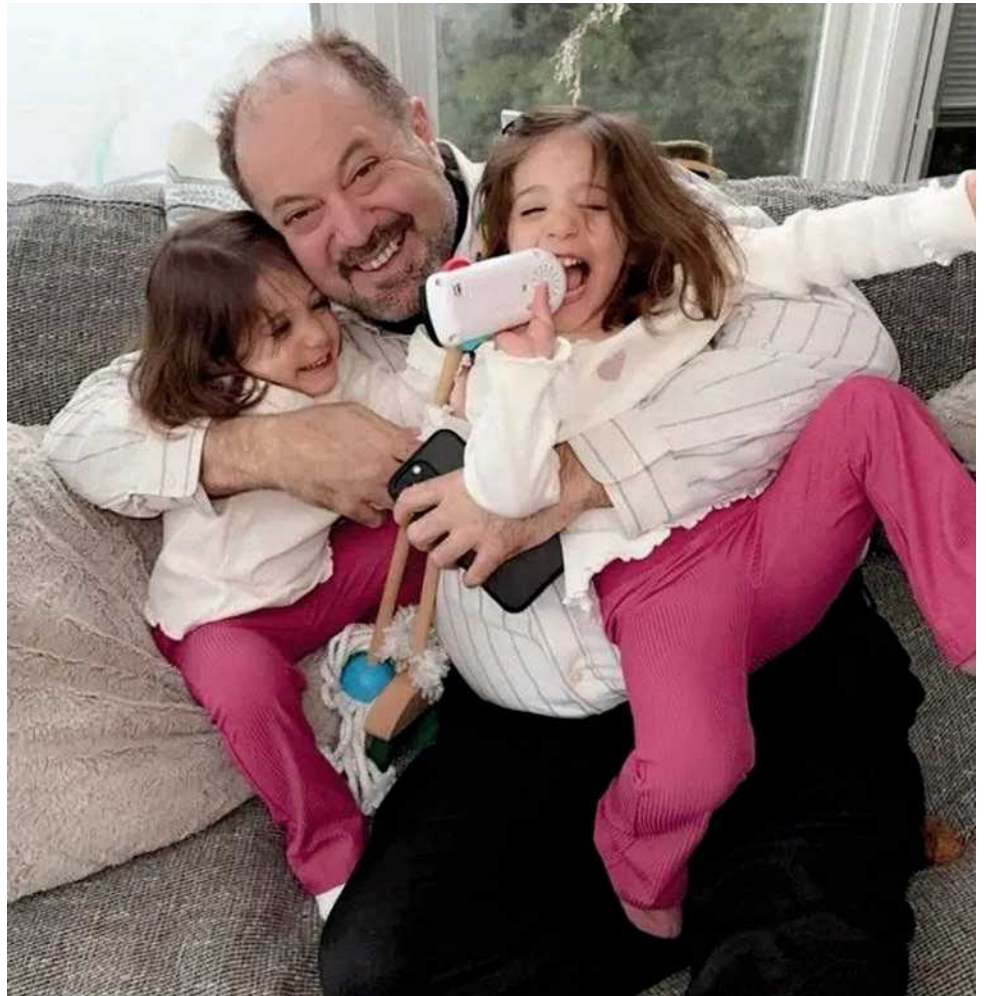


Photo featuring Salah Sarsour from Dr. Hatem Bazian’s Substack.

Class divisions & patriarchy are not eternal

Learning from Bob McCubbin

By Gregory E. Williams

The following are remarks at the memorial service for Comrade Bob McCubbin, held on March 21 at the People's Forum in New York City. Bob McCubbin was a pioneering theorist of LGBTQIA+ liberation, author of the groundbreaking 1976 work *"The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal,"* and a tireless organizer who built branches of revolutionary organization with nothing but knowledge, passion, and commitment.

From the Stonewall era through his final days organizing at San Diego Pride 2025, Bob never wavered in his belief that queer liberation was inseparable from the fight against capitalism and imperialism.

Gregory E. Williams is a longtime food service worker from south Louisiana now working in public health. He is co-editor of *Struggle-La Lucha* magazine and a member of the *Struggle for Socialism Party*.

Hi, comrades. First of all, most of you don't know me – I'm Gregory from New Orleans. I'm bringing a message from Workers Voice Socialist Movement in New Orleans, which includes a former comrade of many of you, Gavrielle Gemma. The first thing I'm going to read is the statement they wrote.

"Bob's groundbreaking pamphlet, published by World View Press and encouraged by Sam Marcy, then chairman of Workers World Party, sent an electric wave through the U.S. and international communist movement. Bob demonstrated how LGBTQ oppression arose out of class society – but that before class society, LGBTQ identity was an integral, accepted, and ordinary part of human society for thousands of years.

"Bob lifted the dusty thinking off our minds to understand that all gender oppression was the result of the rulers – be they slaveholder over slave, feudal monarchy over serf, or capitalist over worker. He showed that the exploiting class imposed deadly bigotry – often using their religious accomplices – in order to divide society and accumulate wealth. Bob advocated fighting for every inch of LGBTQ rights while aiming to overthrow the exploiters and all their rotten bigotry and death.

"He understood, with proof, that by overthrowing the exploiting class, humanity can return to a natural state of peace, respect, genuine love, and prosperity – first by building socialism, a society run by the formerly exploited and abused workers and oppressed. Bob's work was an act of liberation for the LGBTQ population and an act of liberation for the straight population as well, destroying re-



Bob McCubbin (right) joins Gloria Verdieu and a young activist in a rally for Palestine.

pressive ideas about sexuality and gender. Bob McCubbin, ¡presente!"

And here is what I wrote as a member of the *Struggle for Socialism Party*.

Bob McCubbin's 1976 pamphlet *"The Gay Question"* – later retitled *"The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression"* – came out 10 years before I was born. So I didn't experience the impact it had on the movement at the time. But as a young queer person entering the movement, I benefited from his influence without knowing it. I came on the scene taking it for granted that Marxism and LGBTQ+ liberation went hand in hand.

I didn't know anything about Bob until about 2018. At that time, I was part of a socialist collective in New Orleans, and we had decided to hold an LGBTQ+ study group. Around that same period, we also organized our first Take Back Pride contingent, which marched ahead of the city's official Pride parade – and I think Bob would have appreciated that.

I was tasked with giving a presentation as part of a study group on LGBTQ+ liberation, and I was trying to figure out where to start. Comrade Gav gave me a copy of *The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression*. She said, "you need to read this." So I did. And I was blown away.

Bob explained all this history, showed how all these struggles are interconnected, and laid out how we have to fight back – all in a very accessible way. I used this framework in my class

presentation, and the response from the other comrades was great. Together, we were developing a deeper understanding.

Bob lived a revolutionary life and continued to develop his own understanding, assimilating new information from science, academia, and especially from the struggle itself. This is why in 2019 he published *"The Social Evolution of Humanity"* – updating his analysis and making it accessible to new generations.

Bob was also very encouraging to me personally in helping raise funds for our delegation that went to Cuba in 2023 – the U.S. Friends Against Homophobia and Transphobia delegation that went to learn about Cuba's new Families Code. Melinda was the key organizer of that trip. Bob helped make it a reality.

I was fortunate to interview Bob last year for the Pride issue of *Struggle-La Lucha*. I asked him about his past as an activist and a writer, but also about the current wave of attacks against LGBTQ+ people – especially trans people – and about the threat of fascism in the U.S. and other capitalist countries.

He said: "What we're facing right now parallels Nazi Germany in the sense that the ruling class is pointing the finger at trans people and people of color as the source of the economic problems, which are really based on the economic system itself – the system of private property and capitalist exploitation. So yes, we

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Bob McCubbin was a revolutionary guided by love

ANDRE POWELL, Baltimore, Maryland

Good afternoon, comrades. I met Bob McCubbin in 1975 when I was attending a socialist conference here in New York and stayed overnight in his apartment. He was telling me of the evils of capitalism and explaining how there had been weeks and weeks of over 95 to 100 degree temperatures in New York City, and that several people had died on the subway.

This was my second trip to New York as an adult. On my first one, I hadn't taken the subway – wherever we went we took cabs, which were really cheap back in 1975.

So, as Bob explained the horrors of the suffocating heat in the New York City subway system, I began to get more and more scared about how we were going to get to the conference. It was in a hotel somewhere in midtown. I was thinking to myself, I don't know if I want to get on this subway. But alas, he walked me through it, and I made it there.

GLORIA VERDIEU, San Diego, California

I am unable to attend in person. I am sending heartfelt condolences to everyone. For over 30 years, Bob was an active organizer in San Diego, California.

I met Bob over 25 years ago. Pam Africa and members of the MOVE organization came to San Diego and spoke about the case of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who had been in prison for over a decade. That meeting was my introduction to the prison-industrial complex and the national struggle to free all political prisoners.

Bob was the chair of the Coalition to Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Committee Against Police Brutality in San Diego. Today, I continue to organize with the Coalition to free Mumia and all political prisoners. We fight to stop police brutality and mass incarceration, to shut down the prison-industrial complex.

In July of 2025, Bob helped organize a contingent in support of Gaza, Palestine, and in opposition to the attacks on immigrants at the annual San Diego Pride March. The banner read: No Pride in Genocide.

When I visited Bob in the hospital after he was hit by a car while walking in Balboa Park and saw the extent of his injuries, I was still confident he would recover. Bob had no memory of what had happened. His concern was that we continue to work on making a better world for all. When I reminded him that he was in the hospital, his response was: "We have a lot of work to do."



SLL photo:
Gloria Verdieu

San Diego, Dec. 9, 2023 – Bob McCubbin (far left) participated in a gathering between the San Diego Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Black Panther Party San Diego, organizing for Mumia on the 42nd anniversary of his arrest. The event was held at the Malcolm X Library.

He spoke of Demetrius DuBose, a football player killed by San Diego police in 1999. He spoke of Mae Mallory and the Harlem Nine, who fought segregation in New York schools.

Bob said, "We must bring working-class people together who fight for a better world." He believed that as workers, we have more in common than the system leads us to believe.

Bob touched the lives of many through bus trips to protests, meetings, conferences, and rallies. He was a scholar, educator, author, and mentor who led by example. Bob not only envisioned a better world – he motivated me and many others to fight for it: a socialist world. Bob was my comrade, my motivator, and my true friend. He is physically gone, but his revolutionary spirit lives on inside of me.

Bob McCubbin, ¡presente!

BERTA JOUBERT-CECI, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Compañero Bob made great contributions to society with his Marxist understanding of the roots of gay oppression. That was a tremendous aspect of his revolutionary life. Yet it was accompanied by other important facets of his political life.

Bob embodied what Che used to say: revolutionaries are guided by great feelings of love. Because what I remember most of him was his smile, his solidarity – that sense of being close to a loving, respectful, and understanding person.

Even if you did not know him for a long time, there was a familiarity, as if you had known him all your life. And as a Puerto Rican, as a Latina woman not born in this country, that is not an easy matter. Yet it was true with Bob – my brother in struggle, my comrade.

There was another striking quality that always impressed me: his determination to struggle under any physical ailment he endured. During some meetings that the party held by phone, I remember how he apologized for not taking notes because he was lying on the floor to relieve the excruciating pain in his back. Yet

that did not prevent him from participating fully in the discussions. Any other person could have used it as an excuse to avoid being on the call, but not comrade Bob. There he stayed, on the floor, on the meeting. Resilience, determination, and love – for the struggle, for the people, and most of all for his comrades.

That was Bob. And he will always be, ¡presente!

ANDREW MATATAG, Baltimore, Maryland

When people ask me what really helped me understand Marxism, I say: "The State and Revolution," "Philippine Society and Revolution," and "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State." But I didn't really understand Origins until I read Bob McCubbin. It blew open the doors for me. It really helps you understand historical materialism in a way that actually helps the struggle against capitalism. And it is such a rare thing for there to be a new weapon in the arsenal of the working class. Bob gave us that.

I didn't know Bob as well as many of you did. One of the few times I got to spend time with him in person was here in New York at Gary and Lallan's place. I remember the chair he was sitting in. I remember the bad joke that I told him that did not land. And I really feel honored to have had that time – to listen to him talk, to listen to him analyze – and to have this weapon in the arsenal of the working class that a book so rarely can be. He really gave us that.

Bob McCubbin, ¡presente!

I also quickly want to give space to our comrade Lee Patterson from Baltimore, who passed. I know grief. We all know grief. We all know pain. But I do not grieve Bob and Lee the same way I grieve anybody else, because – as people have said – they're still here. They live. Communists live forever. It is my assertion. They are still with us today.

Comrade Lee, ¡presente!

Comrade Bob, ¡presente!

Kamala Harris sows confusion: Washington calls the shots, not Tel Aviv

By Lev Koufax

The former Democratic Party nominee for the Presidency has spoken and she has proclaimed, it's all Israel's fault! U.S. imperialism is off the hook!

Speaking at a Michigan Democratic Women's Caucus event April 18, former Vice President Kamala Harris asserted that Donald Trump and the United States "entered a war, got pulled into it by Bibi Netanyahu." Harris continued, saying that the U.S. war on Iran was merely "a feeble attempt to distract from the 'Epstein Files.'" She went on to lament the risk to "American service members" across West Asia.

Funny, Vice President Harris was not nearly as concerned for the sanctity of life when the Biden administration empowered Israel to effectuate a holocaust in Gaza. Nor was she concerned when the CIA and other Western intelligence powers co-planned Israel's brutal pager attack, which shattered homes, cars, and storefronts across Beirut. Forty-two people were killed and at least 3,000 were wounded.

And if the blatant hypocrisy wasn't bad enough, the former vice president has now fallen into completely right-wing rhetoric regarding the origin of the current war on Iran. As the imperialist war on the Global South continues to escalate, there is a crucial point that must be understood.

The origin of the wars on Iran, Yemen, and Lebanon, and the genocide against Palestine is not in "Tel Aviv" or "Jerusalem." The origin of



these wars and catastrophes is in Washington, D.C. Imperialist wars, like that against Iran, are not driven by a "Zionist occupied government" but by profit motive and a desire to strike at the enemies of the U.S. ruling class. Israel exists because the U.S. funds it, not the other way around.

Since the escalation of imperialist war in West Asia in 2023, the United States ruling class has engaged in a widespread media and propaganda campaign to deflect responsibility for crimes against humanity and endless war. To materialize this deflection, U.S. politicians, media outlets, and talking heads have all turned to an old friend in obfuscation: antisemitism.

Wealthy billionaires and corporate conglomerates, whether they are Elon Musk, Lockheed Martin, IBM, Jeff Bezos, Oracle, or Deutsche Bank, want to be able to plunder the world without facing any scrutiny or pressure. To that effect, these ruling class bases of power have pushed responsibility for deepening

Israel has received more aid from the U.S. than any other country. In the two years following Oct. 7, 2023 – during the Biden administration – Washington gave Israel \$21.7 billion in military aid, not including tens of billions in arms sale agreements made in that period, to be paid for and delivered at a future time.

war and economic crises onto an old scapegoat.

With its colonial satellite in Israel, the U.S. ruling class obtains not only a military base for terror operations against the entire region, but also a perfect straw man to blame. For hundreds of years, dating back to the Holocaust, the Spanish Inquisition, and the bubonic plague, the wealthy have obfuscated their own role in crises by blaming such crises on some all-powerful, evil, mythic Jewish cabal.

While the whole world hyper-focuses on U.S. pawns and henchmen in Israel, the U.S. is able to completely ravage the planet without facing substantial political pressure. All working-class people and progressive organizations must reject the line repeated by Kamala Harris and constantly pushed by the entire ruling class.

Responsibility for the various wars in West Asia, the genocide in Palestine, the joblessness in the U.S., and the growing climate crisis lies with Wall Street and the Pentagon. When the working class politically defeats those powers, then – and only then – will these crises end.

Lev Koufax is an anti-Zionist Jewish activist.

Hundreds of medical professionals put pressure on U.S. political elites

By Andrew Matatag

Washington, D.C., April 15 – Chanting "Health care, not warfare," and "Free, free Palestine," hundreds of medical professionals and allies assembled at Union Station for a day of action.

The main demands are to stop the criminal blockade against Cuba and to end funding to Israel, the U.S. military base and apartheid state.

Initiated by Doctors Against Genocide and the Americas Without Sanctions campaign, the medical professionals held a press conference and a congressional briefing and lobbied political elites in Congress. #



Under U.S. siege, Cuba marches for May Day

By Gary Wilson

On April 16, the 65th anniversary of Fidel Castro's declaration that the Cuban Revolution was socialist, Miguel Díaz-Canel stood at the same Havana corner where Fidel had spoken on the eve of the 1961 U.S.-backed invasion at Playa Girón. "Cuba is not a failed state. Cuba is a besieged state," Díaz-Canel told the crowd. The country, he said, had to prepare once more for grave threats, including military aggression.

He was responding to an escalating threat. Three days earlier, Trump had told reporters at the White House that the U.S. "may stop by Cuba" after concluding the war in Iran. On April 15, USA Today reported – citing two sources familiar with White House directives – that the Pentagon was accelerating contingency planning for a possible military operation in Cuba. Asked to comment, the department said it plans for a range of contingencies and remains prepared to carry out the president's orders.

Eleven days earlier, on April 5, Havana's electric grid generated 1,278 megawatts at peak demand. Demand was 3,000 – a routine shortfall of more than 1,700 megawatts. March had already seen three full national collapses, the longest lasting 29 hours and 29 minutes.

On April 12, the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC, the Cuban Workers' Federation), together with its affiliated unions and the National Association of Innovators and Rationalizers, issued its call for May Day 2026. The slogan was *La Patria se defiende* – the Homeland is defended. The call put the latest escalation in plain terms. Trump's Jan. 29 executive order, it said, added an "energy siege" (*cerco energético*) to the commercial, economic and financial blockade imposed on Cuba for 65 years.

What is happening to Cuba is often reported as three separate stories: Venezuela, Ukraine and Iran. Each has narrowed Cuba's access to fuel. Together, they have deepened the fuel crisis bearing down on Cuba.

The executive order

On Jan. 29, Trump signed Executive Order 14380, declaring a national emergency and authorizing tariffs on any country that directly or indirectly supplies oil to Cuba. The order took effect the next day. It threatened third countries with punitive tariffs and broader economic retaliation for trading with the island.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had already called the December 2025 collapse of the Cuban peso on the unofficial currency market the "grand culmination" of the maximum-pressure strategy he inherited. That strategy did not begin with Trump. Biden left most post-



Havana, Cuba – A million marched on May Day 2025 despite fuel shortages imposed by Washington's blockade. Many walked more than 6 miles to join their contingents.

2019 sanctions in place. What changed on Jan. 29 was the method. Washington added secondary tariffs aimed at cutting third countries out of trade with Cuba. Mexico's state-owned Pemex halted shipments soon after.

The United Nations Human Rights Office has called the fuel blockade a serious violation of international law. U.N. officials say it is worsening a humanitarian emergency. On April 6, U.N. Resident Coordinator Francisco Pichon said conditions had worsened since late March and that needs remained acute across the eight provinces targeted for emergency assistance – affecting 2 million people, including nearly 300,000 elderly Cubans living alone.

That view is not isolated. Since 1992, the U.N. General Assembly has voted every year to condemn the U.S. blockade of Cuba. The 2025 vote was the 33rd in a row. In 2024, only the United States and Israel voted against the resolution. In 2025, Washington pressured five more governments – Argentina, Hungary, North Macedonia, Paraguay and Ukraine – into joining them.

The first war: Venezuela

The Venezuelan front did not begin with Trump's second inauguration. Washington had already prepared the ground in the final months of the Biden administration. The decisive turn came in December 2025, when the U.S. began direct action against Venezuelan oil shipping. Washington seized a Venezuelan tanker on Dec. 10, then on Dec. 16, Trump or-

dered a blockade of sanctioned tankers entering or leaving the country. Venezuelan shipments to Cuba stopped that month, weeks before the Jan. 3 invasion in which President Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores were kidnapped.

This is domination through force, siege and financial strangulation. Trump and senior officials threatened Venezuela with the kind of punishment they praised in Israel's war on Gaza: bombardment, siege and relentless pressure on an entire population. That threat hung over every move Caracas made. Washington then deepened the squeeze through control over oil, payments, insurance and contracts. The government still stands. Maduro remains Venezuela's president, and the Bolivarian Revolution has not been overthrown. But Washington has made it harder for Caracas to sell oil, move money and keep production running.

Washington, acting through the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), now decides what can be exported, whether payments can clear, whether ships can be insured, and whether Venezuela's state oil company, PDVSA, can get the imports it needs to move heavy crude.

In his March 4 State of the Union address, Trump boasted that the U.S. had already taken more than 80 million barrels from Venezuela. Reuters reported on Feb. 18 that Venezuela's oil ministry had canceled 19 private oil and gas contracts, now subject to OFAC licensing review. The effect was to put more of Venezuela's

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No split in Washington on the war on Iran

By Gary Wilson

On the Sunday morning interview programs of April 20, Washington's position on the war in Iran came into full view. There is no meaningful split between the parties.

Amos Hochstein, a senior energy adviser in the Biden administration who brokered the November 2024 Lebanon ceasefire, said on CBS's Face the Nation that he was "supportive" of Trump joining the strikes and that the Biden team had war-gamed similar attacks because "that may have had to happen under our watch." "We did war games," he said. "We did some practice runs on what it would look like."

That is not opposition. It is an admission that the war does not come down to who holds office.

The same morning, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz defended Trump's threat to destroy Iran's power plants and bridges – infrastructure on which 94 million people depend. He cited the Allied firebombing of Germany as precedent. No anchor challenged him. Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York, pressed on whether a president should threaten to wipe out an entire civilization, avoided a direct answer and defended Trump's language.

The division in Washington is over tone and presentation. The policy itself is shared.

The votes in Congress told the same story.

Washington, D.C. – Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker Mike Johnson at the Capitol on Dec. 12, 2023. Both parties back the U.S. war on Iran despite differences in rhetoric.



On April 17, the House voted on a War Powers Resolution to end the war. It failed 213 to 214, with Democrat Jared Golden casting the deciding vote against it. In the Senate, a parallel measure failed 47 to 52.

Democrats have raised concerns about Trump's handling of the war. They have not acted to stop it. Arizona Democrat Yassamin Ansari filed impeachment articles on April 15 over the Feb. 28 strike that destroyed a girls' school in Minab, killing more than 160 children. Her effort stands alone, with no backing from the party's leadership.

The pattern is consistent. Objections are raised. The war continues.

Hochstein's remarks point to why. The war was not launched because of one administration or one decision. It flows from the position Iran occupies in the world system – a major

oil-producing country that broke from U.S. control in the 1979 revolution, when a mass uprising overthrew a U.S.-backed monarchy. That break has never been accepted. Decades of sanctions, pressure and threats followed. The military option is part of that same process.

Both parties speak for the same ruling class interests, which is why the disagreement is over how the war is carried out, not whether it should be.

The forms of opposition remain – hearings, votes, televised criticism – but they do not function to stop the war. They function to manage its political presentation while it continues.

On April 20, that reality was stated openly. The war on Iran is being carried forward with bipartisan support. #

Class divisions are not eternal *Learning from Bob McCubbin*

Continued from page 6

have to defend the trans community. We have to defend people of color. The U.S. contains oppressed nations that need liberation. They're finding groups in society that are already denigrated and targeting them."

As we can see, Bob was laser-focused on the tasks at hand: beating back this brutal, vile offensive from the ruling class. But it wasn't just about this one offensive. Bob believed that we actually can win, that we can overthrow this system and replace it with one that's humane and meets everybody's needs. And that system is called socialism. It's not a dirty word anymore.

Working-class people look around them today, and they're disgusted by what they see. What kind of system denies people food when there's plenty to go around? What kind of system produces war for profit? What kind of society tolerates a military that blows up schoolchildren like they were targets in a video game? What kind of society allows a man like Jeffrey Epstein to amass so much money

that he can buy his own private island to abuse women and girls? What kind of society allows a handful of rich people to destroy the planet and treat human beings as objects?

This is a social order that is rotten and ready to be overthrown.

Bob McCubbin took the long view. He looked back into human history and prehistory, showing that all of this horrible oppression grew from class society, which has transformed through stages before reaching its current form as a global capitalist-imperialist

system. And now humanity is on the brink. But Bob showed that things don't have to be this way.

Things were different in the past. The earliest forms of society were characterized by cooperation and equality. And in modern times, socialist revolutions – like Cuba's – have resulted in huge strides in eliminating oppression and exploitation.

Bob showed us that there was a time before class – before patriarchy. And there will be a time after. #

The Social Evolution of Humanity

Marx and Engels were right! Bob McCubbin

This study of the evolution of humanity focuses on human social/sexual relations. It offers a selection of scientific evidence that updates and augments the viewpoint expressed in Frederick Engels' masterful work, *'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.'*

'Roots of Lesbian & Gay Oppression: A Marxist View.' Published in 1976, during the first rise of the modern LGBTQ2S movement, McCubbin's unparalleled achievement was to offer a historical analysis of when, where, why and how LGBTQ2S oppression developed.

Paperback or Kindle: tinyurl.com/vwarvcv7

Trump's fake peace talk is cover for the next wave of bombing

By Gary Wilson

The ceasefire expires around April 22. The U.S. military buildup has not stopped. Every claim Donald Trump made on April 18 about a deal with Iran was false – and Iran said so publicly, in real time. Then Trump said it himself: “Unfortunately we’ll have to start dropping bombs again.” The pattern is now unmistakable. Washington is constructing a pretext for a massive new air assault on Iran, the fourth major escalation since Operation Epic Fury began Feb. 28.

The script

Trump posted a barrage of claims on Truth Social on April 18. He said the Strait of Hormuz was “completely open and ready for business.” He said Iran had agreed to end its nuclear enrichment program “forever.” He said the war was “very close to over.” He said Iran would hand over its stockpile of enriched uranium, and that U.S. excavators would collect it.

None of this was true.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said the country's enriched uranium “is not going to be transferred anywhere.” He described Trump's claims as “a baseless statement of the enemy.” Iran's enriched uranium, Baqaei said, is “as sacred as Iranian soil.”

The Strait of Hormuz was not fully reopened. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said commercial vessels could transit for the remaining days of the Lebanon ceasefire – a 3-day window, not a permanent arrangement. Iran laid out three strict conditions: no military vessels, no cargo linked to hostile countries, and all ships must follow routes designated and controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. That is not what “completely open” means by any ordinary definition.

Trump acknowledged, in the same burst of posts, that the U.S. naval blockade of Iranian ports would remain in full force “until such time as our transaction with Iran is 100% complete.” There is no transaction. Iran has not agreed to one. The blockade – the third unauthorized war action since Feb. 28 – continues.

Within hours, Iran reversed even the limited opening it had offered. The spokesperson for Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters announced that Tehran was re-tightening control over the Strait, returning it to its previous operational state. Iran had allowed limited commercial passage as a gesture of good faith during negotiations, the spokesperson said, but reversed course after accusing Washington of “piracy” as U.S. forces contin-

ued stopping and turning back vessels under the blockade. Maritime access will remain restricted until the U.S. guarantees free movement of vessels to and from Iran.

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf was blunt. Trump's claims were false. “They did not win the war with these lies, and they will certainly not get anywhere in negotiations either,” Qalibaf said. Control over the Strait of Hormuz is determined “on the ground, not on social media.” Transit will occur only under Iranian conditions and authorization.

Trump, speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One on April 18, then dropped the pretense. He warned that the ceasefire might not be extended beyond the following week and that the blockade would remain in place. “Maybe I won't extend it,” he said. “So, you have a blockade, and unfortunately we'll have to start dropping bombs again.”

In a single day, the sequence was laid bare: Washington announced a breakthrough that did not exist, Iran said so publicly, and Trump answered with a threat to resume bombing.

The pattern

This is the same sequence Washington ran with the Islamabad talks.

A temporary ceasefire was brokered on April 8. The U.S. entered Pakistan-brokered negotiations in Islamabad days later. Reports indicated that Trump envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff walked out after 21 hours. The collapse was not presented as a U.S. walkout. It was framed as a failure of diplomacy – as if both sides had simply failed to agree.

The blockade followed days later.

Now the cycle is repeating at higher volume. Trump announces sweeping breakthroughs that Iran immediately denies. He insists on conditions – surrendering enriched uranium, ending all nuclear work – that no sovereign country would accept. When the fabricated progress fails to materialize, Washington will have its justification: Iran refused the deal. The bombs follow.

Professor Mohammad Marandi of Tehran University identified the logic at work. “I believe Trump is probably saying all this nonsense about agreements with Iran so that he can later claim, ‘Iran didn't keep its promises’ – promises Iran never made,” Marandi wrote on April 18. “The chances of renewed murderous aggression from Trump and Netanyahu are high.”

U.S. military aircraft have continued flowing into the region throughout the ceasefire period. The buildup has not paused.



Photo: video grab by Palestine Chronicle

Tehran – Lt. Col. Ebrahim Zolfaghari, spokesperson for Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, rejects U.S. claims of a ceasefire deal on April 18. Washington's statements were denied in real time as the U.S. military buildup continued.

The market play

Trump's blitz of false claims was not only aimed at building a case for war. It was aimed at Wall Street.

Stocks surged on April 18. Oil futures dropped. Investors took Trump's claims about the Strait and the nuclear deal at face value. The stock market soared on the expectation that the war was winding down.

It is not winding down.

Paper oil prices fell, but actual barrel prices – the cost of physical crude – remained elevated. This gap has been a consistent feature of the war. Speculators trade on Trump's words. The supply chain trades on material reality. Working people pay the real price at the pump and in the cost of goods that move by sea.

The timing of Trump's posts is itself revealing. He described working with Iran “at a leisurely pace” – language directed at portfolio managers, not at Tehran. The effect of the fake diplomacy is to steady financial markets while the Pentagon positions for the next round of strikes.

This is not a president losing control of the narrative. It is a president using public claims to move the markets. The same administration that launched Operation Epic Fury without congressional authorization, expanded it with the blockade, and is now preparing a fourth escalation, is simultaneously manipulating the markets that are supposed to register the cost of war.

The war economy takes shape

While Trump claims the war is nearly over, the Pentagon is building a wartime industrial base.

The Department of War has opened discus-

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Iran withstands U.S. war, controls flow through Hormuz

By Gary Wilson

The U.S. war on Iran was launched for regime change – to overthrow the government and restore imperialist control over a country it once dominated after the 1953 CIA-backed coup that imposed the Shah. It failed. Despite the assassination of top leadership and the destruction of schools, hospitals and key industries, the expected internal collapse did not come. Instead, Iran held together, strengthened its defenses, and now controls the flow through the Strait of Hormuz.

That is why comparisons to the 1956 Suez crisis are being drawn. Britain's 1956 war to retake the Suez Canal ended in defeat and exposed its imperial decline. The United States stepped in, forced Britain to withdraw, and consolidated its own dominance over the post-war order. Today, Washington faces a similar



test in Hormuz – but without the same power to impose the outcome.

Washington did not launch this war from strength. It launched it under conditions of imperialist decline. U.S. imperialism remains the dominant power, but it now needs more debt, more war and more force just to hold the system together. The contradiction is clear: The empire becomes more violent as its abil-

ity to control events declines. The war was launched to restore imperialist domination. Instead, it has thrown oil flows and trade into disorder, driving U.S. imperialism deeper into crisis and showing that even greater force cannot produce the political result it seeks. Trump's renewed threats only underline the point: Washington is still reaching for more war because it failed to get the outcome it wanted.

A setback for U.S. imperialism undermines its ability to impose sanctions and control oil and trade. Iran continues to move energy despite U.S. pressure, oil flows are rerouted, and payments bypass U.S. channels.

The world remains ruled by capital and imperialist domination. But the leading imperialist power can no longer enforce that order as it once did. That makes it more dangerous. #

Trump's fake peace talk is cover for the next wave of bombing

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sions with Ford and General Motors to convert automotive production capacity into military output. The administration frames this as a revival of the World War II "Arsenal of Democracy." The scale tells the real story. The proposed fiscal year 2027 defense budget is \$1.5 trillion – a 44% increase over current levels.

The need is driven by depletion. In the first 40 days of the Iran war alone, the U.S. burned through Tomahawk cruise missiles and Patriot interceptors at a rate that will take at least five years to replenish. Tomahawks cost roughly \$2 million per unit. The burn rate is outstripping both the budget and the production capacity of existing defense contractors.

Retired Army Major General John Ferrari, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, put it plainly. "We are on borrowed time. The Russians, the Chinese, the Iranians, everybody knows that we don't have enough munitions."

The Pentagon wants auto factories because the traditional defense industrial base cannot produce at the volume this war demands. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has called the existing contractors "stagnant." The administration is seeking off-the-shelf commercial components to bypass the high costs of spe-

cialized weapons systems. Ford is operating at 73% capacity. General Motors sits at 79.5%. The Pentagon sees available factory space.

The technical barriers are real. In 1942, cars and bombers shared the same engine base, so factories could shift quickly. That is not the case today. An F-150 assembly line cannot be converted into a precision-guided missile line. "You're not going to make F-150s next to planes and tanks," said Sam Fiorani of AutoForecast Solutions. The F-150 is Ford's full-size pickup truck, the best-selling vehicle in the U.S. for over four decades.

The political friction is sharper. UAW President Shawn Fain called the production push a "foolish agenda" with no strategy and no exit plan. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has conceded there is "no plan to bring it to an end."

Working people face the cost from both ends. The Strait of Hormuz disruption drives up energy and shipping costs globally. The diversion of factory capacity, materials and labor into weapons production will push car prices higher. The end of the federal EV tax credit compounds the squeeze. Auto workers are being drafted into a war economy that no one voted for, to sustain a war that Congress never authorized, with no timeline for it to end.

None of this is consistent with a war that is "very close to over."

Israel's spoiler role

The ceasefire that is supposed to hold until April 22 was already in trouble on its first day.

Large-scale detonations of Lebanese infrastructure were reported across southern Lebanon within hours of the truce taking effect. Displaced civilians who attempted to return home found their villages destroyed or still under Israeli military occupation. Sen. Lindsey Graham immediately demanded Hezbollah disarmament as a condition for any "real" peace – a demand that has nothing to do with the terms of the ceasefire and everything to do with ensuring it collapses.

This matters directly for the Strait of Hormuz because Iran tied commercial transit to the Lebanon ceasefire. Iran conditioned the limited reopening of commercial transit on the Lebanon ceasefire holding. The Tasnim News Agency reported that a source close to the negotiations warned explicitly: If the blockade continues or the ceasefire fails, Iran will shut the Strait again. That warning has already

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U.S. turns to 'financial bombing' in war on Iran

By Gary Wilson

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent used a White House briefing on April 15 to announce what he called the "financial equivalent" of a bombing campaign – a new escalation in the U.S. war on Iran.

The U.S. would apply secondary sanctions to any country or company doing business with Iran, he said. Banks holding Iranian money were targets, along with ships moving Iranian oil. Like the bombing, it is aimed at breaking resistance by making normal life impossible.

The bombing campaign and naval blockade began Feb. 28 as Operation Epic Fury. Bessent's statement confirmed what the Treasury Department had already put in writing. On April 14, the Treasury Department sent letters to financial institutions in China, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, warning they could face secondary sanctions for handling Iranian business.

Secondary sanctions turn the dollar into a weapon. A U.S. sanction on an Iranian firm forbids U.S. companies from trading with it.

Fake peace talk

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been carried out. Iran cited U.S. "piracy" – the blockade itself – as the trigger for re-tightening control. Israel's violations of the ceasefire give Washington an additional mechanism to ensure the framework collapses entirely.

What comes next

The ceasefire expires around April 22. Trump has already said he may not extend it. An administration this attuned to market timing is unlikely to launch strikes early in a trading week. A Friday or weekend start would allow the initial wave of bombing to dominate headlines before markets reopen and before the results are known.

The war on Iran has followed a consistent logic since Feb. 28. Each phase – the initial bombing campaign, the expansion of targets, the blockade – has been preceded by a round of false diplomacy and followed by escalation. The current round of fake breakthroughs is louder and more elaborate than any before it. It collapsed within hours. Iran re-tightened the Strait. Trump threatened to resume bombing.

As Speaker Qalibaf said, wars are decided on the ground, not on social media. The ground is being prepared for the next round. #



New York – JPMorgan Chase's new global headquarters at 270 Park Avenue. U.S. sanctions policy is enforced through the dollar system, with major U.S. banks at its center.

A secondary sanction effectively forbids firms worldwide from trading with it – on pain of losing access to U.S. banks, insurers and clearing networks. Washington can impose this penalty because the dollar still dominates global trade and reserves.

The target is not just firms or banks. By cutting off trade, fuel, medicine and credit, the aim is to turn economic pressure into shortages and daily hardship that can force surrender.

This is not new. The template is Cuba. The U.S. imposed a trade blockade on the island in 1960 and froze Cuban assets in 1963. The extraterritorial reach developed over time. The Torricelli Act in 1992 barred foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies from trading with Cuba. The Helms-Burton Act in 1996 went further. It allowed U.S. nationals to sue foreign companies doing business with property nationalized by the Cuban revolution and denied visas to their executives and families. The designation has shifted across administrations, but the wider financial siege has remained.

The bank blockade followed. The Treasury fined BNP Paribas \$8.9 billion in 2014 for clearing Cuban, Iranian and Sudanese transactions in dollars. Credit Suisse paid \$536 million in 2009 for similar conduct. The lesson for foreign banks was clear: Refuse any Cuba-linked transaction, whatever the law technically allows, because the cost of getting it wrong is ruinous. Cuba has lived under the resulting financial siege for decades. The pressure falls not on abstract "markets," but on daily life – shortages, blackouts and rationing used to force political surrender. Wire transfers fail. Correspondent banks pull out. Medical suppliers refuse shipments. The island rations fuel and power.

The Treasury extended the Cuba model to Iran after 2011 and tightened it in 2018. It extended it to Russia after 2022. The list of targets has grown. The instrument has not changed. What is new about the April 14 letter is scale and target. Earlier campaigns targeted economies Washington believed it could isolate. Bessent is threatening the banks of China – the world's second-largest economy and the

largest buyer of Iranian oil. He is threatening the United Arab Emirates, which hosts U.S. warships and an Air Force base at AlDhafra. He is threatening Oman, which has mediated U.S.-Iran back-channel contacts for two decades.

The Treasury and the Pentagon are not separate instruments pursuing different goals. They are organs of the same imperialist state, acting for the same ruling class. When military force fails to impose submission quickly, finance capital turns to the dollar, the banks and the sanctions system. The carrier group and the dollar system are weapons in the same war. Bessent's statement made that unity explicit.

Every new use of that weapon also exposes a deeper contradiction. Each time the Treasury weaponizes the dollar, it reinforces the lesson that holding dollars carries political risk. China, Russia, Iran and a growing number of states under pressure from Washington have spent the last decade building alternatives: yuan-denominated oil contracts, the Cross-Border Interbank Payment System, bilateral swap lines and gold accumulation. Russian central bank reserves were frozen in 2022. Afghan central bank reserves were seized in 2021. The dollar's share of global reserves has fallen steadily since 2000.

Threatening the banks of China over Iranian oil accelerates that process. Beijing will find ways around the sanctions. Washington can no longer impose its control over the world economy as easily as before, even with the dollar, sanctions and military force. The more openly U.S. imperialism weaponizes its financial dominance – not just against states, but against entire populations – the more it pushes other countries to reduce their dependence on it. The United Arab Emirates and Oman, caught between U.S. security ties and economic links to Asia, will try to protect their own interests. Repeated secondary-sanctions campaigns since the 1990s have pushed countries to reduce reliance on the dollar.

Bessent called it the financial equivalent of bombing. The aim is the same: force surrender by making normal life impossible. #

U.S. bombs Iran rail lines linking China and Europe

By Gary Wilson

On April 7, U.S. bombs hit eight major rail sections and bridges across Iran, including targets in Tehran, Karaj, Tabriz, Kashan and Qom. Iran halted service from Mashhad and Khuzestan.

The attacks followed weeks of strikes on civilian infrastructure. In late March, U.S. bombs destroyed part of the B1 bridge west of Tehran, a major link between the capital and its western suburbs. They hit petrochemical plants at Asaluyeh and Marvdasht, Kharg Island oil terminals, power grids and Sharif University of Technology. On the war's opening day, Feb. 28, a U.S. Tomahawk missile struck the Shajareh Tayyebah girls' elementary school in Minab, killing at least 170 people, most of them girls between 7 and 12 years old. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Al Jazeera investigations concluded the strike was deliberate. By early March, the World Health Organization had verified 13 attacks on health facilities in Iran. Gandhi Hospital in Tehran had its IVF department destroyed. The Pasteur Institute was knocked out of service. Iranian officials reported 31 major hospitals damaged, 12 of them no longer functioning.

On April 6, Trump told reporters that every bridge in Iran would be "decimated" and every power plant left "burning, exploding and never to be used again." On April 7, he declared that "a whole civilization will die tonight."

Iranians answered. Across the country, people formed human chains at power plants and on bridges. Workers, students, athletes and musicians stood outside the Tabriz Thermal Power Plant, the Bisotun plant in Kermanshah, power stations in Bushehr and Kazeroon, and the Damavand plant that supplies Tehran. In Dezful, students lined the 1,700-year-old Sassanid bridge. In Ahvaz, crowds linked arms on the White Bridge. They carried Iranian flags and placards reading, "Infrastructure is not a battlefield."

The targets were not random. The strikes hit rail lines, bridges, ports, hospitals, schools, power plants and fuel systems across Iran. The rail network under attack carries freight between China, Central Asia and Europe through Iranian territory. It bypasses U.S.-controlled sea lanes. It helps make Iran a transit hub instead of an isolated country under sanctions. That is what the bombing is hitting.

On May 25, 2025, the first freight train from Xi'an, China, arrived at the Aprin dry port near Tehran. The route cut China-to-Iran transit

time from 30 to 40 days by sea to about 15 days by land, bypassing the maritime chokepoints the war has now thrown into crisis. Trade through Iran is growing fast, with container volumes surging 260% in the first half of 2025.

Before 2022, the Northern Corridor through Russia and Belarus carried more than 86% of overland trade between East Asia and Europe. The Ukraine war shut that route down. Sanctions barred Russian freight operators from Europe. Overland shipments between China and the European Union fell 40%. Then, on Sept. 26, 2022, underwater explosions tore apart three of the four Nord Stream gas pipelines linking Russia to Germany.

Nord Stream was a deliberate target. The blasts severed the energy link between Russia and European industry, replacing cheaper pipeline gas with far more expensive U.S. liquefied natural gas. Trade had not broken that link. Sabotage did.

The Middle Corridor – the trans-Caspian route through Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey – absorbed some of the displaced trade. Cargo volumes along it rose to 4.1 million tons in the first 11 months of 2024, up 63% from the year before. But ships still have to cross the Caspian. Rail gauges change at multiple borders. Six countries have to coordinate customs and scheduling. Even at full capacity, the Middle Corridor carries only a fraction of what the Northern Corridor carried before the war.

The Southern Corridor through Iran is the real alternative. China is funding electrification and freight terminals, while Iran is building track and expanding capacity. On July 15, 2025, Iran and China signed a deal to electrify 1,000 kilometers of the Razi-Sarakhs line, a key east-west link. India is connecting its sea routes to Iran's inland rail network through port investments at Chabahar and Bandar Abbas. China's role is not ad hoc. It sits inside the long-term Belt and Road buildout formalized in the March 2021 China-Iran cooperation agreement.

In May 2025, rail officials from Iran, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Turkey met in Tehran to plan a transcontinental network. They met again in Beijing in August. The Aprin freight link, the Razi-Sarakhs electrification and new corridors connect China, Central Asia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Europe by land without passing under a U.S. carrier group.

Marx wrote in 1853 that railways would become "the forerunner of modern industry" in India. The British built them to extract cotton and raw materials at lower cost. But Marx ar-



Aprin, Iran – A freight train at the Aprin dry port outside Tehran, part of the overland rail route linking China to Europe. The line cuts transit time in half and bypasses sea lanes targeted in the U.S. war on Iran.

gued that once a country with iron and coal had railways, it could not be kept from building industry around them. The rails would begin to break the isolation that held development back. They would lay down what he called the material premises for progress – and for independence. But Marx also wrote that the people of India would only reap the fruits of that development when they had grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether. The railroads China and Iran are building today serve a similar function, with one major difference. They are not a byproduct of imperialist extraction. They are being built deliberately to move trade outside imperialist control. That is why they are being bombed.

Washington is not building a cheaper route. It is not building a faster one. Rail cuts time and cost. Russian pipeline gas was cheaper than U.S. LNG. When U.S. imperialism cannot stop trade through competition, it uses force. The Pentagon hits the infrastructure. The Treasury freezes assets, blocks payments and shuts down the banks and insurance that keep the trade moving. The aim is the same: to break the routes that move goods, energy and payments outside U.S. control.

The rail lines will be rebuilt. Iranian crews began repairing damaged bridges within days of the April 8 ceasefire. Service on the Tabriz-Tehran and Tabriz-Mashhad routes resumed April 13. The Xi'an-Aprin route is expected to resume within weeks. The Razi-Sarakhs electrification continues.

Every bomb on an Iranian rail bridge pushes China, Iran and India to build routes less exposed to U.S. force.

The United States is bombing the railroads of a world it no longer controls. The railroads will be built anyway. #

Trump's war to save the dollar is killing it

By Gary Wilson

The United Arab Emirates has asked Washington for a financial lifeline — and threatened to start selling oil in Chinese yuan if it does not get one. That is a contradiction of Trump's war on Iran.

According to the Wall Street Journal, UAE Central Bank Governor Khaled Mohamed Balam raised the idea of a currency-swap line with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Federal Reserve officials during meetings in Washington the week of April 14. Such a line would give the UAE access to dollars from the Fed in exchange for dirhams, a backstop usually reserved for Washington's closest allies. Emirati officials also warned that if the UAE runs short of dollars, it may have to use yuan or other currencies for oil sales and other transactions.

The UAE is not a poor country in need of rescue. Abu Dhabi's sovereign wealth funds hold more than \$1 trillion in assets. It is one of the Gulf client states built into the U.S.-dominated dollar order. Its currency is pegged to the dollar. Its oil is sold in dollars. It hosts U.S. bases and recycles petrodollar wealth back into U.S. Treasury debt, Wall Street investments and — increasingly — AI data center infrastructure for Amazon, Microsoft, Meta and Google built on cheap Gulf energy. In return, Washington protects the monarchy and the system that keeps it in power.

The dollar order

That arrangement underpins U.S. imperialist power. Since the 1970s, world oil trade has been organized around the dollar. Countries that need oil need dollars to buy it. That constant demand helps Washington run huge deficits, finance war and borrow on terms no other country can match.

Iran has stood partly outside that order since the 1979 revolution overthrew the U.S.-backed Shah, installed after the 1953 CIA coup and removed the country from direct imperialist control. Under decades of sanctions, Iran built alternative trade and payment channels, including oil sales to China in yuan. Crushing that independence would have strengthened the dollar system. Instead, Trump's war is doing more damage to the dollar order than Iran ever did.

The clearest example is the Strait of Hormuz, where about one-fifth of the world's oil supply passes. Iran reimposed military control over the Strait on April 19 after the U.S. seized an Iranian cargo ship, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps fired on two vessels trying to cross. International Energy Agency

Trump poses with leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council at the Ritz-Carlton in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on May 14, 2025.



head Fatih Birol said on April 18 that no new oil or gas tankers were loaded for Asian markets in March and that recovery of West Asian energy output could take about two years. The war is not defending stable energy flows. It is choking them.

Now the pressure is hitting the very Gulf states Washington counted on to anchor the petrodollar system.

The UAE is not trying to break from the dollar. It is warning that dependence on the dollar has become dangerous under conditions Washington itself created. When even a core U.S. client state starts raising the possibility of oil sales in Chinese yuan — the currency of the developing socialist country Washington has designated its primary enemy — the system is starting to crack.

Access without influence

Qatar has learned the same lesson. It hosts Al Udeid, the largest U.S. military base in West Asia and the forward headquarters of U.S. Central Command. The Qatari government donated a Boeing 747 to Trump. A Qatari state-owned real estate firm signed a deal with the Trump Organization to build a Trump-branded golf course. When Trump visited in May 2025, the White House announced an agreement “to generate an economic exchange worth at least \$1.2 trillion.” Qatar housed the base, gave away the plane, built the golf course and signed the trillion-dollar pledge. None of it bought a seat at the table when Trump launched a war on its doorstep.

As Qatari analyst Rashid Al-Mohanadi said, the Gulf states were thrown into “strategic shock.” They assumed a war of this scale would at least be discussed with them. It was not. The relationship gave them access to Washington, not influence over it. It is a relationship of dependence and subordination.

Wall Street's war dividend

The financial costs of the war continue to mount. The American Enterprise Institute estimated in early April that the U.S. had spent between \$25 billion and \$35 billion on the conflict. U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright acknowledged on April 20 that gas prices might

not return below \$3 per gallon until 2027.

Wall Street has been celebrating anyway. Stocks surged and oil prices dropped during the week of April 14 on optimism about ceasefire talks — talks that Iran announced on April 20 it would not attend. The rally was a bet that the petrodollar arrangement would hold and that energy flows would resume on the old terms. The war itself points in the opposite direction.

Some on Wall Street are not just wrong about the war. They are profiting from it. On March 23, traders placed \$580 million in bets on oil futures 15 minutes before Trump posted on social media that the U.S. was having “productive” talks with Iran, the Financial Times reported. Trump's post triggered a sell-off that sent oil prices plunging. On April 7, traders spent \$950 million betting oil prices would fall, hours before the ceasefire was announced. That is more than \$1.5 billion in trades timed to presidential statements about a war that has killed thousands. UN and WHO data confirm the destruction of hundreds of schools, hospitals and residential complexes.

The energy industry itself is not so confident. Gerry Morton, oil and gas co-chair at Baker Botts — one of the oldest and most connected energy law firms in the United States — told the Washington Post on April 18 that people closest to the industry recognize how long recovery will take, if it happens at all. People who work in energy production can see the damage. Investors trading oil futures from a distance are betting on restoration.

That is the broader contradiction. Trump's war on Iran was supposed to reinforce dollar rule in the Gulf. Instead it is exposing how fragile that rule really is. The dollar system was built on stability in the Gulf and steady energy flows. Trump's war has thrown both into disorder. The Gulf monarchies were meant to stay locked inside dollar dependence — buying Treasury debt, hosting U.S. military bases, powering U.S. tech infrastructure on cheap Gulf energy. Now even they are raising the yuan. Finance still bets on a return to normal. But no cargo seizure or U.S. aircraft carrier deployment can restore a system the war itself is helping break apart. #

Gas prices surge as oil companies cash in on war

By Gary Wilson

The U.S. war on Iran had barely begun before the oil companies started to cash in.

Working people know how this goes. When crude prices jump, gas prices rise almost immediately. When crude prices fall, pump prices come down slowly, unevenly or barely at all. Economists call it “rockets and feathers.” Working people call it getting robbed.

The war on Iran is already driving prices up – and the oil companies are moving in to cash in.

In the first two days of the war, on Feb. 28 and March 1, the U.S. burned through nearly \$6 billion in munitions while carrying out massive strikes on Iran, including attacks on schools, hospitals and key industries. At the same time, shipping through the Strait of Hormuz virtually stopped. Oil available for near-term delivery, around \$72 a barrel on Feb. 27, surged past \$110 in the days after the war began and was still around \$104 on April 13. Jet fuel prices in Asia and Europe have roughly doubled from prewar levels. Refined fuel prices are rising across Africa and much of the Global South.

War does not just disrupt supply. It throws the whole system of shipping, insurance and payment into crisis. In a market dominated by a handful of giant firms, that kind of disruption becomes an opening.

Oil companies move fast when crude prices spike. They point to rising benchmark prices and new risks around Hormuz, and raise pump prices right away. Every new headline becomes the reason for another increase.

But the pattern runs one way. When crude prices fall, retail prices do not follow at the same speed. They drift down slowly, after companies have already widened their margins. That is how concentrated capital operates in a crisis – the disruption becomes a chance to



Gas prices surge after the start of the U.S. war on Iran. Oil companies are using the disruption to raise prices and increase profits.

take more. Decades of studies have found the same pattern: Gasoline prices rise much faster when crude goes up than they fall when crude comes down.

The same pattern is already taking shape in the war on Iran. The U.S. proxy war in Ukraine in 2022 showed how it plays out.

As sanctions hit Russian crude and oil prices spiked, U.S. gas prices shot to record highs within weeks. When crude later fell, pump prices followed more slowly and unevenly. ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell and BP went on to post combined profits of roughly \$150 billion for the year, the highest in their histories.

The executives did not hide it. When they spoke to investors, they described the Ukraine war as a favorable pricing environment. They moved the windfall to shareholders through buybacks and dividends instead of expanding output in ways that could ease price pressure.

That is the setup again now. ExxonMobil and Chevron are due on May 1 to tell investors how much they made in the first three months of the year. They will point to the Iran war and disruption around Hormuz as reasons prices remain high – and on that point, they will be telling the truth. A war launched by the U.S. government is once again delivering direct

gains to the same oil majors.

That is war profiteering. War profiteering runs through military contracts. It also runs through the way war reshapes the market. The disruption pushes prices up, and the oil majors are in position to grab a bigger share. A new Global Witness analysis using Rystad Energy data found that the world’s 100 biggest oil and gas companies took in \$23 billion in windfall profits in March alone – about \$30 million an hour – and could pull in \$234 billion in extra profits by the end of 2026 if oil stays around \$100 a barrel. Working people pay more at the pump, and the oil majors pocket the difference.

The Federal Trade Commission has the authority to investigate price gouging in the petroleum industry. The Trump administration will not do it. But the problem runs deeper than inaction. The same state that wages war and enforces sanctions is helping create the conditions for these profits in the first place. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Interior Secretary Doug Burgum have made clear that expanding fossil fuel production and protecting oil profits are priorities, not abuses to be checked. The oil majors spent heavily to help put this administration in office. Now they are collecting. #

‘WAR AND LENIN in the 21st Century’ Includes U.S. complicity in the Gaza genocide and military profiteering

Vladimir Lenin, the revolutionary leader of the Soviet Union and a key contributor to Marxist theory, wrote **“Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”** in 1916, more than a century ago. It remains an influential critique of imperialism.

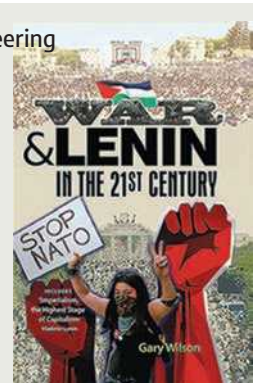
When WWI broke out, Lenin’s main interest was promoting a socialist revolution to end the war. He exposed the war’s economic roots and identified imperialism’s key features: monopoly capitalism, finance capital, the export of capital, and colonialism – the imperialist division of the world.

Does Lenin’s analysis of imperialism hold up today?

The U.S. emerged from WWII as the world’s most powerful imperialist country, it established the U.S. dollar as the international currency and engages in endless wars. As in Lenin’s time, the conclusion is that socialist revolution will end imperialist war, enabling workers to meet their own needs.

This book by Gary Wilson includes Lenin’s original pamphlet.

Available in paperback or kindle at tinyurl.com/LeninAndWar



War failed, talks failed – Washington's blockade will fail too

By Gary Wilson

When the U.S. delegation walked out of the Islamabad talks on April 12 without an agreement, Washington moved at once to escalate. Trump announced that U.S. naval forces would impose a blockade on Iranian ports, cutting off maritime traffic in and out of the country. U.S. Central Command said the operation would begin at 10 a.m. Eastern time on April 13.

But this did not begin with Washington. After six weeks of war, Iran had already asserted control over the Strait of Hormuz – its own territorial waters – restricting passage under regulated conditions and sharply reducing shipping through the waterway. That move came in response to an illegal U.S. war and a sustained bombing campaign that has killed civilians and destroyed hundreds of schools, hospitals and key industries.

The U.S. blockade is the same war in another form. Washington could not break Iran through bombing or impose terms at the negotiating table. Now it is trying to choke off Iran's oil exports – the country's main link to the world market – in an effort to force what it could not win militarily.

This is the third major war action Trump has taken against Iran since Operation Epic Fury began on Feb. 28. He has done it without congressional authorization, without public debate and without even attempting to secure broad political consent. Congress has not been asked to authorize a single step. The war is moving ahead anyway.

Democratic leaders are not calling for the war to end. Their criticism is about how Trump is running it, not whether it should continue.

The economic shock began before the U.S. blockade of Iranian ports even started, because shipping through Hormuz had already been disrupted by war and by Iran's control over passage. Brent crude, which had dropped to \$92 when the two-week ceasefire was announced, climbed above \$102 a barrel on April 13, while West Texas Intermediate rose above \$104. Tankers began steering away from the strait before the operation's start time.

The disruption is already spreading beyond oil. Analysts report shortfalls in helium, liquefied natural gas and industrial feedstocks. An imperialist assault on a strategic energy-producing country does not stay contained within oil markets. It spreads through the entire system of trade and production.

Iran restricted passage through the strait itself, in its own waters. Washington is blockad-

U.S. aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln operates at a distance after retreating from Iran's coast under missile threat, underscoring limits on enforcing a close blockade.



ing Iranian ports to stop its oil from reaching the world market.

The geography of the Strait of Hormuz sets hard limits. At its narrowest point, the strait is about 21 miles wide. Coastal waters extend 12 nautical miles from shore, meaning the shipping lanes run through Iranian and Omani territorial waters, not open ocean. Ships move through a confined corridor under constant surveillance and within range of coastal defenses. This is not a space the U.S. controls.

Tankers are already steering away from the strait. Shipping is reacting to danger, not to what Washington says on paper. More than 15 U.S. warships have been deployed for the operation, including an aircraft carrier, destroyers and an amphibious assault ship. Some are equipped for boarding operations. Others are positioned to stop and redirect commercial traffic.

In practice, stopping ships is not simple. Crews can refuse orders, resist boarding or lock down control systems. Each step of enforcement – from warning to boarding to seizure – raises the risk of direct confrontation. The blockade cannot be enforced without escalation.

For decades, Washington has claimed to defend “freedom of navigation.” In practice, it uses sanctions and military force to decide who can sell oil, who can buy it and how it is shipped. U.S. sanctions restrict which countries and companies can receive targeted oil, while measures like the full blockade of oil shipments to Cuba show how that control is enforced in practice. The blockade makes that reality explicit. It is an attempt to control energy flows at their source by force.

In March, after coming under missile attack, the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group retreated to roughly 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from Iran's coast. That is not a position from which to enforce a blockade.

On April 13, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said U.S. military vessels approaching the strait would be treated as a ceasefire violation and would bring a forceful response, while civilian shipping would continue under regulated conditions.

That distinction matters. Iran is not attempting to shut down all traffic. It is asserting control over its own waters under conditions of war.

The two-week ceasefire announced April 7 technically remains in place through April 21, and further diplomatic contacts have been discussed. But the U.S. blockade has pushed those talks to the breaking point. Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi said the two sides had been close to a memorandum of understanding before the U.S. walked out.

After 21 hours without an agreement, the U.S. delegation walked out. Talks over a war of this scale do not end in a single day unless the U.S. is there to impose terms, not to negotiate.

Washington pointed to the nuclear issue as the reason the talks failed. But the talks turned on Hormuz, Lebanon and whether Iran would accept U.S. terms – the same questions now driving the blockade.

Washington launched this war seeking regime change. It failed. Iran held together, strengthened its defenses and asserted control over the Strait of Hormuz in response to an attack on its existence. Only then did Washington shift to demanding that the strait be reopened on U.S. terms.

The U.S. blockade of Iranian ports is its answer to that refusal. It is an attempt to use a siege – cutting off oil exports and threatening economic collapse – to force what war and negotiations could not deliver.

But that pressure does not fall on Iran alone. China, India and Pakistan depend on Iranian energy flows. Blocking those exports means confronting the countries that rely on them. Washington cannot escalate against Iran without widening the conflict.

Washington presents each escalation in this imperialist war as limited and controlled. In reality, the costs are rising and the risks are widening. The blockade does not resolve the problem Washington has run up against. It deepens it.

There is no reason to expect it to succeed where war and negotiations have already failed.

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Under U.S. siege, Cuba marches for May Day

Continued from page 9

economy under U.S. licensing control.

For Cuba, the effect was immediate. The island's main outside source of fuel was gone – the oil relationship the electric grid had relied on since Hugo Chávez's presidency.

The second war: Ukraine

Russia is Cuba's remaining major fuel supplier. It is also a country under heavy sanctions, with tanker capacity operating through a shadow fleet exposed to secondary enforcement and a wartime economy under strain. That Moscow has continued to send oil to Cuba under those conditions is central to the story, not incidental to it.

On March 31, the sanctioned Russian tanker Anatoly Kolodkin entered Matanzas carrying roughly 730,000 barrels of crude, Cuba's first oil tanker arrival in three months. Washington said such deliveries would be handled case by case. The arrival mattered, but it did not end the crisis.

A second Russian tanker is now headed for Cuba. But the significance is larger than one shipment. After Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's April 14-15 meetings in Beijing, Moscow said Russia and China were coordinating more closely on Cuba, Venezuela and the wider war. Lavrov said Russia had already sent 100,000 metric tons of oil to Cuba, expected that support to continue, and expected China to continue participating as well.

None of this ends Cuba's immediate power crisis. A 730,000-barrel shipment, even fully processed, covers only about nine or 10 days of national diesel demand. But the squeeze is having another effect. It is pushing Russia,

China and Cuba toward the kind of open coordination the blockade was meant to stop.

The third war: Iran

The U.S. air war against Iran, which began Feb. 28, has sharply disrupted shipping and oil flows through the Gulf. Insurers have pulled back, shipping firms have avoided the route, and commercial traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has at times collapsed. Brent crude was over \$100 a barrel on April 22.

The International Energy Agency has called it the largest oil supply disruption since the 1970s. Asian refiners, which rely heavily on Gulf crude, are rationing. European fuel prices have risen.

The shock is rippling outward through fuel markets. Lufthansa said on April 21 that jet fuel prices had doubled since the war began and that it would cut 20,000 flights through October to save fuel.

For Cuba, the pressure works indirectly, but the result is decisive. In a tight oil market, every supplier with spare capacity has buyers lined up at premium prices. None has a commercial reason to defy a U.S. secondary-tariff regime to move a cargo to Cuba. The Iran war does not target Cuba directly. It makes every other option more expensive, scarcer or politically harder to reach.

What the CTC called for

The CTC's April 12 May Day call was not the usual holiday text. It placed the Jan. 29 executive order at the center. It described "a real military threat" – una amenaza militar real – and exhorted workers to defend the country "from every trench of combat": fields, factories,

classrooms, thermoelectric plants, hospitals, cultural and sports venues. It invoked Antonio Maceo at Baraguá, who in 1878 refused a peace without independence. It invoked José Martí at Dos Ríos. And, in the year of Fidel Castro's centenary, it invoked his 2000 address on what defines a revolutionary process.

A labor federation speaking for a population living through 18-hour blackouts is telling workers that May Day is part of the country's defense. The call does not separate civilian life from national defense. It treats the electric system, the harvest and the classroom as fronts in a war already underway.

The CTC's language is not exaggeration. It matches the purpose Washington has laid out openly.

The goal of the Cuba operation was stated openly. Rubio told the Senate on Jan. 28 that the administration sought regime change. On March 16, Trump said Cuba was weak enough to "take."

The energy siege is not aimed at a concession. It is aimed at putting a government in place that will reopen Cuba to foreign corporations and private profit. That is already happening in Venezuela, where OFAC licensing is positioning outside companies for access to the oil sector. The same interests will next look to Cuba's nickel mines at Moa and to offshore oil and gas fields in Cuba's territorial waters.

What Washington built against Caracas is now aimed at Havana.

Two May Days

A million workers marched in Havana on May Day 2025. This year's turnout is likely to be smaller – the blackouts, the transport collapse, and the fuel rationing are all real limits on what the CTC can stage. Marches began on April 20 in communities and people's councils, per the organizing commission's announcement, and culminate on May 1 in municipal and provincial capitals. A May 2 international solidarity event is scheduled in Havana.

On the same day, in the United States, the May Day Strong coalition is calling the largest labor-backed mobilization in a generation. Its demands are domestic: tax the rich, no ICE, no war, hands off the vote. Its organizers have repeatedly named the Iran war, the immigration raids, and the billionaire class as a single structural problem.

The kidnapping of Maduro and Flores, the energy siege on Cuba and the war on Iran are parts of one imperialist drive, carried out on different fronts. In the United States, May Day Strong is naming war, repression and billionaire rule. In Cuba, the CTC is telling workers the blockade is a war already underway. They are describing the same enemy. #

Starbucks strike forces talks – company answers with union-busting expansion

Continued from page 3

forced in 2022 by additional anti-union measures in the state constitution. Workers cannot be required to join a union or pay fees to one, even when a union represents their workplace and negotiates on their behalf.

Tennessee is also an at-will employment state. Management can fire or discipline workers at any time, for any reason or no reason, as long as the reason is not specifically prohibited by law.

The phrase "right to work" was coined by Vance Muse, who founded the Christian American Association in 1936. Muse was openly white supremacist, antisemitic, and anti-communist. He pitched right-to-work laws to Southern planters and industrialists

as a way to keep the CIO – which was organizing Black and white workers together – out of the South and to preserve Jim Crow labor relations. His own grandson described him as "a white supremacist, an antisemite, and a Communist-baiter, a man who beat on labor unions not on behalf of working people, as he said, but because he was paid to do so."

For Starbucks baristas, the Nashville move fits a template. Employer relocation to a right-to-work state is how U.S. companies have punished organizing for nearly a century. The union's answer is the one it has been making since 2021: at the bargaining table, on the picket line, and at the registers that customers are asked to walk past. No contract, no coffee. #

U.S. blocks Iran funds as Islamabad talks hit sanctions wall

By Gary Wilson

The Islamabad talks between the United States and Iran broke up after 21 hours without a deal. Washington came to the table trying to recover through negotiation what it had failed to impose in war.

The Trump administration sought movement on the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's nuclear program. Iran refused to surrender the leverage it had gained in the fighting.

That was the meaning of the collapse.

The talks were presented as a step toward de-escalation. In practice, Washington was pressing terms bound up with the war itself: reopening Hormuz on U.S. terms, limiting Iran's strategic position and maintaining the broader system of pressure built through sanctions, asset seizures and military force.

At the center of the conflict is the Strait of Hormuz.

Traffic through the waterway remains far below normal levels, even with a few tankers beginning to move again. The disruption has shaken energy markets and increased pressure well beyond the region. On April 11, Washington also escalated militarily, sending two warships through the strait and saying it had begun setting conditions for mine-clearing operations.

Iran has insisted that any lasting ceasefire must reflect the new reality in the strait. Washington is trying to reverse that reality.

The frozen-assets question remains one sharp expression of that broader pressure.

About \$6 billion in Iranian funds remain blocked in Qatari banks under U.S. control.



Strait of Hormuz — Oil tankers sit idle as the war disrupts traffic through the strait and Washington refuses to release billions in frozen Iranian funds held under U.S. sanctions.

But that is only a fraction of a much larger system of asset seizures. More than \$100 billion in Iranian assets are frozen worldwide under U.S. sanctions imposed by Washington.

It showed that sanctions remain a core instrument of U.S. power.

Releasing those funds under these conditions would not have been a minor concession. It would have signaled retreat in one part of a wider coercive structure. Washington was not prepared to do that.

But the failed talks also made clear that the dispute has moved beyond frozen funds alone.

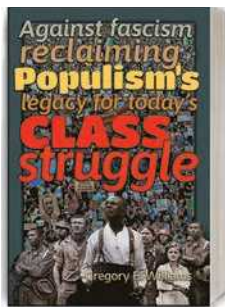
The deadlock now runs across Hormuz, sanctions, Iran's nuclear program, reparations, Lebanon and the wider question of sov-

ereignty after six weeks of war. Pakistan may still try to keep the ceasefire alive, but the central conflict remains unresolved.

That matters politically.

Around the world, people organize against sanctions because they punish whole populations and serve imperialist domination. Islamabad did not show that those struggles are misplaced. It showed the scale of what they are up against.

Sanctions can be ended. But this round of talks showed they will not be lifted through goodwill or routine diplomacy. Washington is trying to preserve them as part of a larger structure of domination, now exposed within the wider war. #



AGAINST FASCISM Gregory E. Williams

Reclaiming populism's legacy for today's class struggle

- + Populism: progressive farmers' movement of 1890s
- + Contemporary trans struggle + Silicon Valley-MAGA connection
- + Legacy of Jena Six + Abortion rights movement in South
- + Fight against KKK leader David Duke & right wing governors

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

tinyurl.com/Populism-book



CHINA 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.

tinyurl.com/USWarChina



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. The report shows how socialist construction created the foundations of modern China: state ownership of key sectors of industry, technology and banking, planning, broad participation, universal education and healthcare, and an industrial base able to withstand pressure from the capitalist powers.

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



RaiNao canta el original Himno Revolucionario de Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Estos días en Puerto Rico, uno de los temas calientes de discusión ha sido la letra del himno nacional. Ustedes se preguntarán qué podría debatirse sobre un himno. Pues querida audiencia, en una colonia, todo es posible. Les cuento.

Al inicio de un juego de Baloncesto Superior Nacional, le habían pedido a RaiNao, que cantara nuestro himno. Y ella lo cantó. Pero no fue del agrado de los dirigentes deportistas, ni de muchos políticos, ni de la legislatura. Se convirtió en un verdadero escándalo. No porque no entonara, no porque variara su música. Fue que acompañada de un cuatrista puertorriqueño cantó nuestro verdadero himno, el que cantamos en todos los actos patrióticos el pueblo independentista que en parte dice: “Despierta borinqueño, que han dado la señal, despierta de ese sueño, que es hora de luchar. ...” “a ese llamar patriótico, ¿no arde tu corazón? Ven, nos será simpático el ruido del cañón. ...”

Inmediatamente, medios comerciales, políticos y el gobierno la censuraron porque dijeron que ese no era el himno oficial.

Bueno, es que aquí hay dos himnos con la misma música. Ese que cantó RaiNao, lo conocemos como el Himno Revolucionario; y es en verdad el original. Lo escribió la poetisa puertorriqueña Lola Rodríguez de Tió durante el levantamiento del Grito de Lares en 1868 en contra del imperio español. Doña Lola también luchaba por la independencia de Cuba y fue la autora de esos famosos versos “Cuba y Puerto Rico son, de un pájaro las dos alas, reciben flores o balas, sobre el mismo corazón”.



La joven música RaiNao canta el original Himno Revolucionario de Puerto Rico en el Baloncesto Superior Nacional más reciente.

Cuba se independizó, pero Puerto Rico quedó presa del imperio yanqui. Como dato interesante les diré que los restos de Doña Lola yacen en el Cementerio de La Habana.

Años después de la invasión estadounidense, ya convertido en colonia, las autoridades yanquis y puertorriqueñas reemplazaron la letra con una verdaderamente indignante del

poeta y periodista español, Manuel Fernández Juncos. Esta letra, muy al contrario de la original, celebra la intervención extranjera sobre nuestro archipiélago.

Imagínense, que en parte dice, “Cuando a sus playas llegó Colón, Exclamó, lleno de admiración, ¡Oh! ¡Oh! ¡Oh!, Esta es la linda tierra que busco yo.”

Este incidente nos obliga a tener muy presente las dificultades que tiene y ha tenido el movimiento de liberación Boricua, desde los tiempos de La Mordaza cuando arrestaban a quien mostrara la bandera puertorriqueña, el carpeteo de independentistas conocidos, los asesinatos desde La Masacre de Ponce, hasta los del Cerro Maravilla, hasta el día de hoy con las acusaciones falsas y múltiples escollos que nos ponen a nuestro quehacer libertario.

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



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Vol. 9, No. 8 April 27, 2026 Vol. 9, Núm. 8 27 de abril 2026