



**'NO WAR ON CUBA!'**

Rings out in New Orleans & NYC

# NO SAFE PLACE

## Murder, social murder, and genocide against trans people

By Melinda Butterfield

June 1 – Today is the first day of LGBTQIA+ Pride Month. A few days ago, I organized a vigil for a neighbor who was murdered.

Eryka Caldwell was a Black trans woman, 41 years old. She was killed May 19 in her apartment, just a few blocks from mine. Eryka had been struggling to escape a relationship with an abusive man.

**PRIDE 2026:  
Genocide of trans people  
threatens all workers**

Eryka lived, and I live, in Bushwick, a neighborhood in north Brooklyn. Bushwick and neighboring Ridgewood, Queens, are at the center of queer life and culture in New York City – especially for trans people.

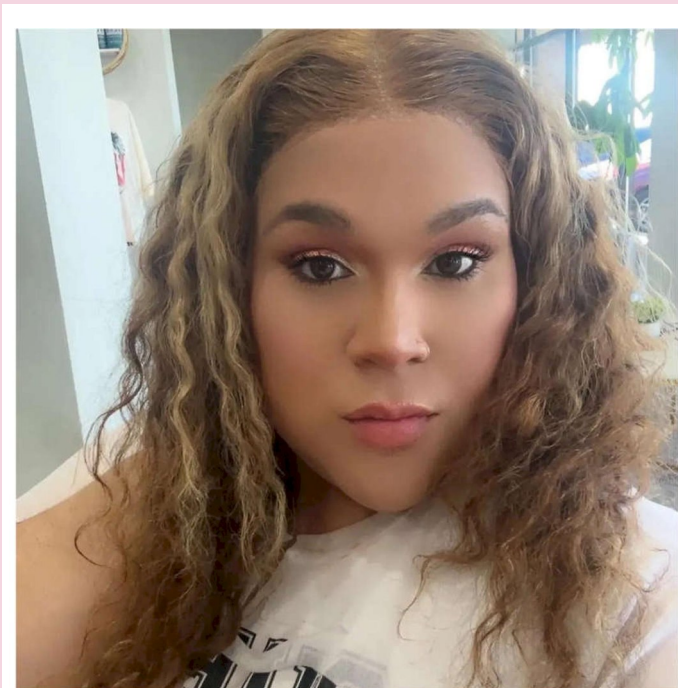
Bushwick is what people imagine

Greenwich Village was like in the years after the 1969 Stonewall uprising, before it was decimated by real estate developers and gentrification. It's where queers gather, where our bands play, where our artists and writers hone their craft.

On any given day, you can see trans people on their way to work, on the subway, heading to school. We are simply part of the community – present, accepted, unremarkable. Which is itself very remarkable in this time of ascending fascism.

We come here for many reasons, of course. But these days a major, if unspoken, reason is: the sense of safety in numbers. We seek community and closeness in hopes that it will offer some protection as the powerful forces pushing for trans extermination close in.

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## PRIDE 2026:

# Genocide of trans people threatens all workers

Struggle-La Lucha and the Struggle for Socialism Party salute our LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit siblings this Pride Month, at a critical juncture in the fight for transgender and queer liberation.

It is no exaggeration to say that advances won through decades of blood and sacrifice are at risk today. How the working class responds to this moment is a test of the greatest seriousness.

## From trans panic to trans genocide

Four years ago, SLI's 2022 Pride Month statement called on the workers and oppressed to "Resist the capitalist 'trans panic' strategy." We wrote then: "The only way fascist movements have ever been defeated is by people uniting and fighting back.

"It is not enough to rely on elections or hope that friendly politicians will save us. They won't. The Democratic Party is tied by a million threads to the same capitalist class that demands these anti-people measures."

The campaign of demonization has only intensified since then.

For the past 18 months, Donald Trump's regime has been steadily putting in place all of the infrastructure, legal and otherwise, to make it impossible for trans people to exist in public, and to justify the dehumanization and extermination of trans lives on a mass scale.

In this, like the evisceration of Black voting rights and reproductive rights, the U.S. Supreme Court is Trump's enthusiastic and loyal collaborator.

Trans people have been raising the alarm of approaching genocide for several years now. Earlier this year, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention issued its third "red flag alert" about the advance of trans genocide in the U.S. And it's spilling out around the world – especially in Latin America, where Trump-allied forces are seizing power in country after country backed by Pentagon aggression.

The targeting of trans people began more than a decade ago, after right-wingers lost their campaign against same-sex marriage in 2015. Ideologues of

the Christian Nationalist right and the Republican Party determined that the most vulnerable part of the queer rainbow was the trans community, who were just beginning to emerge into broad public view and make tentative gains after decades of struggle.

These powerful influencers, with the financial backing of the most right-wing elements of the capitalist class, agreed that the way forward was to paint the trans community as a danger to children, to women, to "the family" as an institution of patriarchal control.

Between Donald Trump's attempted coup on Jan. 6, 2021, and his second election in 2024, the ruling class as a whole moved decisively behind the anti-trans witch hunt – which before had been considered a fringe movement.

## Capitalist fear, capitalist revenge

Why? The anti-trans tsunami had much to do with the 2020 George Floyd Uprising, which scared the rich and powerful.

In that moment of profound working-class solidarity with the Black community, in which trans and queer people played a highly visible role, the capitalists recognized their

own vulnerability. They were terrified, and as soon as the movement subsided under police blows, they sought revenge.

They agreed that trans people – just 1% of the population – were an excellent target. Not just as a divide-and-conquer tactic, but to set an example of what would happen to those who resisted.

Now, the 2026 U.S. National Security Strategy has declared trans people a terrorist threat. Health care monopolies in so-called "blue," "sanctuary" states are preparing to hand over lists of trans youth, their parents, and their providers to Washington for prosecution; any lower court injunctions are temporary at best.

Identification documents are being invalidated at the state level, and the State Department is tampering with trans people's passports. The government plans to implement changes to firearms purchasing to prevent trans people from arming themselves in self-defense.

With all this information at its disposal, the regime is assembling lists of trans people and

those who support them.

What do you think Trump, Stephen Miller, RFK Jr., Kash Patel and their ilk plan to do with this information?

The Trump government and its backers make no bones about their intention to eliminate trans lives. Believe them.

No other countries are willing to provide asylum, for fear of harming their economic relationship with U.S. imperialism or inviting Trump's military wrath.

There is no room, no time left, for illusions or wishful thinking that the midterm elections or 2028 will change the equation. Democratic Party leaders have spent the past year and a half collaborating with fascists and blaming trans people for Kamala Harris's election loss.

## Get organized, get ready to fight

Trans people live with this weight on their shoulders every day. Violence stoked by the anti-trans campaign has led to the murders of at least 13 trans and gender nonconforming people in the last three months. Suicide – or more accurately, social murder – is claiming more and more lives, especially among trans youth, as the door is slammed shut on their futures.

Cisgender workers who stand in solidarity with their trans siblings today are protecting themselves too.

After trans people, the fascists are coming for the rest of the LGBTQIA+ community, and then for everyone else the capitalists see as a threat. Their broken system can't offer any future beyond environmental collapse, rigid conformity, and increasingly desperate conditions. All they have left to maintain power is repression and fear.

Will our unions, mass organizations, leftist parties, and working class embrace the spirit of the heroic Stonewall Uprising and join the fight for trans lives?

Or will potentially millions be sacrificed in the U.S. and worldwide – a historic setback with dire consequences for generations to come?

This Pride Month, we urge you to get organized. Get prepared for community defense. The rapid response networks developed to combat ICE kidnapping of immigrant siblings are a good model to start from.

We won't go quietly. We must fight for every trans life. An injury to one is an injury to all. #



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# F-35 supplier put 50,000 California residents in blast zone

By Gary Wilson

For nearly a week, 50,000 residents of Garden Grove, California, were driven from their homes by a chemical emergency at an aerospace plant that makes parts for F-35 fighter jets and other military aircraft.

The evacuation orders were finally lifted on the night of May 26. No one has been held accountable. The plant has not been shut down. The Pentagon contracts continue.

The emergency began May 21 at GKN Aerospace Transparency Systems, when a storage tank holding methyl methacrylate, or MMA, began overheating uncontrollably. MMA is a volatile, highly flammable chemical used in making stretched acrylic cockpit canopies for military aircraft. Once it begins a self-heating reaction, the danger can accelerate: more heat produces a faster reaction, and a faster reaction produces more heat.

Unchecked, that process can end in a BLEVE — a boiling liquid expanding vapor explosion. In plain language, the tank could have exploded, throwing fire and toxic danger beyond the plant fence and into homes, schools and small businesses in a packed working-class neighborhood.

Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer called the situation “irresponsible” and “horrific.” Officials later said a crack in the tank may have relieved pressure and prevented a catastrophe. Monitoring showed no release of contamination or fumes, they said. But the danger was real enough to force tens of thousands of people out for days, most with nowhere to go, no shelter, no clear support and no say over what happened next.

GKN is not a household name. But its parts go into front-line U.S. and allied warplanes, including the F-35. The Garden Grove facility manufactures canopies for the F-16, F-15, F/A-18 and F-35. F-35s have been used by Israel in the assault on Gaza.

GKN is owned by Melrose Industries, a Britain-based holding company whose slogan is “buy, improve, sell.” The same production network that helps arm Israel also placed tens of thousands of California residents in a blast zone.

The May 21 emergency did not come out of nowhere. In 2018, California’s Department of Industrial Relations cited the Garden Grove facility for failing to inspect active machinery and for improper cooling of volatile chemical tanks — the same kind of danger at issue when the MMA tank began overheating.

In 2020, South Coast Air Quality Management District inspectors found more violations. GKN was releasing more chemical emissions than its permits allowed, using chemicals outside those permits and failing to keep required records. The case dragged on for nearly five years. In early 2025, GKN agreed to pay \$909,935.95. The



Water sprays over storage tanks at the GKN Aerospace facility in Garden Grove, California, after an overheating tank of methyl methacrylate forced 50,000 residents from their homes. GKN’s Garden Grove plant manufactures canopies for F-35 fighter jets and other military aircraft.

company admitted no wrongdoing, but did not dispute the listed violations.

That is not enforcement. It is a cost of doing business. A penalty under \$1 million is something a Pentagon supplier can absorb and move past. The company keeps operating. The contracts keep flowing. The people nearby are left with the risk.

The cause of the overheating remains under investigation. But when the tank began to fail, GKN had no effective way to bring the danger under control.

Garden Grove is a working-class immigrant city of about 172,000 people. Nearly 45% of its residents are foreign-born. It is majority Asian and Latine, with the largest Vietnamese community in the United States. More than 55,000 Vietnamese residents live there, many in and around Little Saigon — inside the evacuation zone.

Yet when emergency notices went out, they went out in English only. In a city where many families speak Vietnamese, Spanish or another language at home, that failure increased the danger.

The GKN plant sits on a 15.5-acre site surrounded by homes, schools and small businesses. It handles volatile chemicals in the middle of a dense working-class community. That is not an accident. Hazardous industry is allowed to operate where workers, immigrants, renters and oppressed communities have the least power to force it out.

When the evacuation orders came, FEMA did not provide shelter. Residents described sleeping in cars. Schools closed for days. Graduation ceremonies were canceled. Memorial Day

weekend was spent in shelters, relatives’ homes, special-rate hotel rooms or parking lots.

This is one hidden cost of the war machine. Congress is weighing the Trump administration’s request for a massive Pentagon increase, up to \$1.5 trillion, to refill arsenals drained by war on Iran, U.S.-armed assaults on Gaza and Lebanon, and preparations for confrontation with China. The debate in Washington is about planes, missiles, munitions and “readiness.” It does not ask what happens to the people who live next door to the plants that make those weapons.

The war machine demands output: more parts, more contracts, more profit. Safety systems, maintenance crews and protection for nearby residents are treated as costs to cut. Garden Grove residents paid the bill.

Real accountability starts with the people placed in danger. Residents have the right to know what chemicals are stored near their homes, in what quantities, under what safety protocols and in every language spoken by the people at risk.

Worker-safety enforcement has been gutted. The AFL-CIO reported in 2026 that federal OSHA had enough inspectors to inspect each workplace only once every 191 years. In California, Cal/OSHA’s maximum penalty for a serious violation is only \$25,000 — no deterrent to a defense supplier tied into Pentagon contracts.

The tank has been stabilized. The evacuees have returned home. The district attorney is investigating. And on the other side of the world, aircraft whose canopies were made in Garden Grove are still destroying lives and communities in Gaza. #

# Court protects drug distribution giants, leaves Baltimore to pay for opioid crisis

By Lev Koufax

On April 24, the Supreme Court of Maryland overturned the landmark \$152 million judgment that Baltimore City won against opioid distributors for their role in creating the opioid crisis. The decision sends a clear message to a majority-Black working-class city that even when a jury agrees the harm was real and massive, the system will still serve to protect mega corporations. In the wake of the Maryland Supreme Court's decision, the City formally dropped the opioid lawsuit.

The City won the initial \$266 million verdict in November 2024 in a lawsuit against drug distribution giants McKesson and Cencora. A circuit court judge decided the initial number was too high and reduced the award to \$152 million, which the city accepted in 2025.

Baltimore's opioid crisis did not fall from the sky. The crisis developed over decades as overproduction and over-prescription flooded communities with cheap narcotics, creating high levels of addiction. Drug manufacturers, distributors and pharmacy chains pushed, shipped and profited from a flood of addictive opioids. In



Narcan nasal spray is used to reverse opioid overdoses. Baltimore won a \$152 million verdict against opioid distributors, but Maryland's highest court wiped it out, leaving the city to keep paying for the crisis.

Baltimore's case, the city argued that McKesson and Cencora failed to stop suspiciously large orders from pouring into the region.

The core question with a decision like this is always: Who wins, and who pays?

The people of Baltimore certainly didn't win with this ruling. Only the pharmaceutical companies won. With this ruling, companies like McKesson and Cencora will likely be less inclined to settle before trial. Why settle for tens or hundreds of millions when you can count on the court system to throw out any unfriendly judgment?

The legal system protects powerful businesses by turning "causation" into a maze. Courts say the

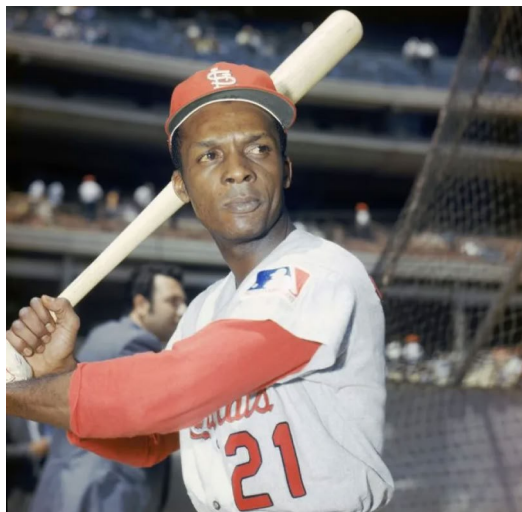
opioid crisis is too complex to pin on corporate conduct in a way that allows a citywide remedy.

Baltimore's verdict mattered because it pointed to something bigger than one person's case. Public nuisance is a way to say: when private business creates a public disaster, the public can demand that those responsible remedy the disaster.

There is a broad misconception that courts stand independent and above politics; however, this could not be further from the truth. The core role of the capitalist state, its judiciary included, is to protect the profits of the powerful, as the Maryland Supreme Court did in this case.

This reversal sends a clear message. Baltimore can keep cleaning up the wreckage, but the companies do not have to help pay for it. #

# Baseball bosses push salary cap — players fight back



By Lev Koufax

For the first time since 1994, the Major League Baseball (MLB) billionaire capitalist owners have proposed a salary cap for all 30 professional baseball teams. The baseball world and the MLB players union have expected this move for some time. However, the proposed cap is still a brazen attack on MLB labor rights, just as it was in 1994.

MLB teams have never had limits on what they could spend on player salaries. This has been a thorn in the side of the billionaire MLB owners for years, who feel that player payroll has unduly cut into their massive profits. Under the owners' proposal, all teams would be capped at \$245.3 million for player salaries. Meanwhile, the average value of an MLB team is almost \$3 billion. The owners would have us believe they are all struggling to get food on the table because of the greedy players.

The MLBPA, the players' union, is strongly opposed to any policy that would limit the earning ability of the players, without whom there would be no MLB. Steve Cohen (net worth \$23 billion),

Rogers Communications (net worth \$19 billion), and Mark Walter (net worth \$7.3 billion) don't suit up and take the field. No one takes their family to a ballgame because they love billionaire owners and \$10 hot dogs. People pay for the games because they want to see the players.

The MLB would not exist without the labor of the players, who create all the value the owners pocket. While many of the players are relatively highly paid, they are still workers who deserve to reap the value that their labor create.

Billionaire owners dictating the earning capacity of the players who actually play the game is the peak of absurdity and capitalist arrogance. It is for this exact reason that the players went on strike in 1994, when the owners last proposed a salary cap.

All workers and progressive people should stand in solidarity with the MLBPA as they fight to defeat this salary cap. This is not merely a tiff between "millionaires" and "billionaires" but another front in the ongoing broad societal attack on organized labor. The players need a contract that reflects what they're worth — and every worker has a stake in whether they win it. #

Curt Flood refused a trade in 1969 and sued MLB, challenging the reserve clause that bound players to their teams for life. He lost in court and lost his career, but his sacrifice built the solidarity that cracked open free agency six years later. The players' union's highest honor bears his name. Now the owners want a salary cap to put a ceiling on what that free agency is worth.

# Big Tech turns record profits into AI machinery and layoffs

By Gary Wilson

Big Tech is booking record profits and cutting workers at the same time — taking money that once paid workers and turning it into property: the machines, buildings, computer systems and power contracts the corporations will own.

Amazon, Microsoft, Alphabet and Meta plan to spend a combined \$700 billion in 2026 on the AI buildout: data centers, chips, networks and power. Meanwhile, according to TrueUp, nearly 150,000 tech workers have been cut so far in 2026 across 364 layoff events — an average of 967 a day.

The cuts are not driven by bad business. Meta posted first-quarter 2026 revenue of \$56.31 billion and net income of \$26.8 billion — the strongest quarter in its history — then three weeks later terminated about 8,000 workers, roughly 10% of its workforce. Oracle's AI infrastructure segment posted revenue growth of 243% in its most recent quarter, with net income of \$3.7 billion, then moved to eliminate up to 30,000 employees — about 18% of its global workforce — to fund a \$50 billion data center buildout. Amazon cut about 16,000 roles in January 2026 while reporting that AWS grew 28%, its fastest rate in 15 quarters.

Technology is not neutral when the bosses own it. In their hands, every new machine becomes a weapon in the struggle over jobs, wages and control of the workplace. Wages buy living labor. Data centers, chips and power contracts are dead labor turned into company property. Big Tech is using record profits and mass layoffs to replace workers where it can, speed up those who remain, cut wages and drive the whole labor market down.

But machinery creates no surplus value by itself. Living labor does. That is the contradiction inside the AI race. Hundreds of billions are being poured into machinery that can pay off only if the companies find new customers, burn more power, pile up more debt, charge monopoly prices and squeeze the workers who remain. They are building the private tollbooths other companies will have to pass through to use AI. That private empire rests on public systems — immigration law, patent law, university research, tax breaks, power grids and government contracts that help turn workers' labor into corporate property.

Cloudflare CEO Matthew Prince spelled out the logic in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece on May 20, 2026, headlined "How I Choose Which Cloud-



Alphabet workers are organizing for job security as Big Tech uses the AI race to justify layoffs and forced ranking. Photo: Alphabet Workers Union CWA Local 9009

flare Employees to Replace With AI." Prince sorted workers into those who build products, those who sell them, and those he called "measurers" — audit, finance, legal, compliance, middle management and operations. The vast majority of the 1,100 Cloudflare workers laid off, he wrote, were measurers — the firm's own legal and reporting apparatus, internal layers that can slow decisions, raise objections and document risk. Prince's answer is to replace that human review with automated systems management itself trains.

The AI story is also a wage-suppression operation. Much of the work does not disappear; it is shifted offshore, contracted out or brought back later at lower pay. Oracle began terminating its U.S.-based workers on March 31, 2026, with 6 a.m. emails saying their jobs had ended immediately, while holding 3,126 pending H-1B guest-worker petitions across fiscal years 2025 and 2026. The threat of layoff, offshoring or — for H-1B workers, whose right to remain is tied to the job — forced departure within 60 days is used to push wages down and keep workers quiet.

Tech has long been hard to organize because the companies worked to convince tech workers they were not workers. High wages, stock grants, titles and "mission-driven" culture blurred the class line — the old attempt to dress wage workers up as a

"middle class" apart from the working class. But tech workers live by selling their labor-power. They own none of the platforms, data centers, patents or products their labor creates, and when profits demand it they are fired like anyone else.

On May 29, 2026, 2,100 information technology workers at the University of California voted overwhelmingly to join the University Professional and Technical Employees-Communications Workers of America Local 9119. With the existing unit, that brings membership to 8,400 — the largest tech worker union in the country. The workers raised three demands: protection against layoffs, higher wages and a say over how AI is used on the job. That last demand goes to the heart of the fight. The bosses claim the sole right to decide what gets automated, who gets monitored and how fast work must move. The workers say those decisions must be fought over, not handed over.

The Alphabet Workers Union-CWA Local 9009, answering Meta's May 20 layoffs, has pressed the same fight for guaranteed severance, voluntary buyouts before layoffs and an end to forced ranking quotas — credited with winning exit packages offered to more than 70,000 Google employees.

The \$700 billion buildout and the 150,000 jobs cut in 2026 are two sides of one restructuring. Big Tech is cutting workers, repricing labor and pouring the savings into privately owned AI infrastructure that hands it greater command over the labor process. Prince said out loud what the bosses are doing. Workers cannot answer that by asking them to be fair. AI is already in the workplace. The question is whether the working class will have the power to control how it is used — or whether Big Tech will use it to deepen exploitation under the banner of progress.#

University of California tech workers organized with UPTe-CWA Local 9119, demanding protection against layoffs and a say over how AI is used on the job.

Photo: CWA



# In China, AI is no excuse to fire workers

By Gary Wilson

The day before International Workers' Day, a court in China sent a clear message to employers: artificial intelligence is not a license to throw workers away.

On April 30, the Hangzhou Intermediate People's Court in Zhejiang Province upheld a ruling that an AI technology company had unlawfully fired a worker named Zhou. Zhou had been employed since November 2022 as a quality assurance supervisor. He earned 25,000 yuan a month.

His work was part of the new AI industry itself. He matched user queries with large language models and filtered illegal or privacy-violating content. When the company introduced AI systems that could perform those tasks, it did not negotiate a real transition. It did not provide retraining. It offered him another job at 15,000 yuan a month — a 40% pay cut.

When Zhou refused, the company fired him and claimed that AI-driven restructuring made the dismissal necessary. Zhou fought back and won. The company appealed and lost. The Hangzhou court ordered it to pay more than 260,000 yuan in additional compensation and selected the case as a model ruling for similar disputes.

The point is simple: a company cannot choose to automate, pocket the savings and then claim the worker must bear the cost.

China's Labor Contract Law restricts arbitrary dismissal. It allows unilateral termination only under narrow conditions, including a "major change in the objective circumstances" that makes the original contract impossible to perform. The court said voluntary AI adoption does not meet that standard. Automation is not an outside force acting on the company. It is a management decision made by the company.

That means the employer still has obligations to the worker.

This is the part that matters most. In China, companies that automate cannot simply announce that AI has erased a job. They must deal with the worker — through consultation, negotiation, training, reasonable reassignment or lawful compensation — instead of dumping the cost of technology onto the worker.



AI depends on human labor. In China, companies that automate must still deal with workers, contracts and unions.

And where a union is involved, the employer cannot ignore it. For larger layoffs, companies must explain the situation to the trade union or to all workers in advance, solicit opinions and submit the layoff plan to labor authorities. Before a unilateral termination, the employer must notify the union of the reasons. If the company violates the law or the contract, the union has the right to demand correction.

That does not mean every dispute is automatically won. It means the employer's decision to automate is not treated as a private command. The worker, and where present the union, is inside the process. Technology does not wipe out negotiation.

That is exactly what Zhou's company tried to avoid. It treated AI as a weapon to force a 40% pay cut. When Zhou refused, it fired him. The courts said no.

The contrast with the United States could not be sharper. In the U.S., the general rule in private-sector employment is termination at will. Most workers have no union, no individual contract, no right to negotiate over automation and no legal claim when management decides that a machine,

an algorithm or an AI system will replace them.

The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act requires advance notice before some mass layoffs, but it does not stop the layoffs. It does not require retraining, reassignment or negotiation. It does not say automation is a company decision whose costs cannot simply be dumped on workers.

That is why U.S. Big Tech can cut more than 148,000 workers in the first five months of 2026 while pouring nearly \$700 billion into AI infrastructure. The money that once paid workers is being turned into machines, data centers, chips and power contracts owned by the corporations. The workers are discarded. The capital remains.

No U.S. court has ruled those layoffs unlawful because automation is a management choice, not an external necessity. U.S. law does not contain the protection China's Labor Contract Law provides.

China's AI industry is expanding rapidly. Employers will keep trying to use automation to cut labor costs. But automation does not settle the question by itself. The company is not the only force in the workplace.

That is the real lesson. AI does not erase the worker. It does not erase the contract. It does not erase the union. A company that wants to reorganize work must deal with the worker — and where the union is involved, with the union.

The fight is over who pays for new technology. The bosses want the gains for themselves and the costs pushed onto the workers. Zhou's case shows that workers do not have to accept that as natural or inevitable.

AI does not erase class struggle. It gives the bosses a new weapon. The question is whether they can use it to cut jobs and wages — or whether workers and unions can force them to pay for the technology they choose. #

## CHINA: Building socialism in an imperialist world By Gary Wilson

This report looks at how over a billion people are building socialism in a world still dominated by imperialism. It follows the Chinese Revolution from land reform and collectivization, through the mass campaigns that built industry and expanded education and healthcare, to the Cultural Revolution's effort to curb privilege and keep the revolution on a socialist path.

It shows how socialist construction created the foundations of modern China: state ownership of key industries, technology and banking; planning; broad social participation; and an industrial base strong enough to withstand capitalist pressure. It also examines the strains created after 1978, when market policies widened inequality and allowed new privileged layers to grow, and how today's leadership is working to strengthen state ownership and planning against those pressures.

China is not treated here as a puzzle or a ready-made template, but as a workers' state developing inside a capitalist world system. Its advances and contradictions are rooted in the unfinished struggle of socialist construction, begun with the revolution of 1949.



# Hegseth orders Pacific allies to arm for China war

By Gary Wilson

U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth went to Singapore on May 30 with an order for Washington's allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific: spend more on war or face consequences.

Hegseth used China as the pretext to demand that U.S.-aligned governments spend more on war, buy more weapons and bind their militaries more tightly to Washington.

At the annual Shangri-La Dialogue, Hegseth told defense ministers, military chiefs and diplomats that U.S. military power had carried the region for too long. "The era of the United States subsidizing the defense of wealthy nations is over," he said. "We need partners, not protectorates."

That is the language of empire collecting rent.

Washington arms the region. It bases troops across it. It commands the alliance structure. Then it demands that every subordinate government reshape its budget to fit U.S. war plans.

Hegseth said the U.S. expects its allies and partners to raise military spending to 3.5% of gross domestic product — the same demand the Trump administration has pressed on NATO. Governments that comply will move to "the front of the line" for arms sales, intelligence sharing and military-industrial cooperation, he said. Those that refuse will face "a clear shift in how we do business."

This is not "burden sharing." It is a demand that governments turn more workers' wages into missiles, submarines, drones, warships and bases. Every percentage point added to military spending means less for housing, health care, schools, pensions and disaster relief.

Hegseth claimed there was "rightful alarm" over China's military buildup and warned against "a Pacific dominated by any hegemon."

This turns reality upside down. China is not surrounding the United States. The United States is surrounding China.

China again declined to send its defense minister to the Shangri-La Dialogue. Beijing was represented instead by a delegation led by PLA Major General Meng Xiangqing, who pointed to the concrete threats Washington and its allies are advancing in the region: Japan's military expansion and AUKUS, the U.S.-British-Australian submarine pact.

Meng tied Japan's buildup to history. He noted that 2026 marks the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Tokyo Trials, which condemned Japanese militarism after World War II. He questioned whether a country that has not fully reckoned with that legacy has any standing to lecture Asia about defense cooperation.

**Japanese troops march with the Rising Sun flag, the banner carried by imperial Japan's armed forces during its wars of conquest in Asia, as Washington revives Japanese militarism for its war drive against China**



That was the point Washington wants covered up. U.S. imperialism now needs Japan — the former colonial and military oppressor of much of Asia — as a forward base for confrontation with China.

Japan's cabinet has approved a record defense budget exceeding 9 trillion yen, roughly \$58 billion, for fiscal 2026. The budget funds long-range strike missiles, drone systems and next-generation fighter development. The buildup marks a major break from Japan's postwar "exclusive self-defense" doctrine, long understood as limiting Japan's military to defensive operations.

Washington is not worried about the return of Japanese militarism. It is encouraging it, so long as that militarism is tied to U.S. strategy against China.

The military map Hegseth pointed to is the First Island Chain — the arc running from Japan past Taiwan to the Philippines along China's eastern coastline. Washington calls this "deterrence by denial." In plain language, it means using bases, fleets, missiles, war exercises and allied governments to hem China in, with Taiwan turned into a forward position in U.S. war plans.

On the sidelines, Hegseth met Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro and pledged stronger military cooperation along the First Island Chain. The two governments pointed to the latest Balikatan war exercise, which brought troops from Australia, Japan, Canada, France and New Zealand onto Philippine soil.

Hegseth praised South Korea for pledging to spend 3.5% of GDP on its military. He praised the Philippines for a 12% increase. He commended Japan for accelerating its "defense transformation." He cited Australia for deeper integration with U.S. forces.

In every case, the praise was for governments

moving their budgets, industries and armed forces closer to U.S. war planning.

Meng also targeted AUKUS, the military pact among the U.S., Britain and Australia formed in 2021. Its central project is equipping Australia with nuclear-powered attack submarines.

On the sidelines of the forum, the three AUKUS partners revised the submarine plan. Australia had been expected to buy at least two used Virginia-class submarines and one new one. Under the revised plan, it will buy three secondhand Virginia-class submarines from the U.S. instead.

Australia showed the pressure beneath Hegseth's praise. Canberra has already announced that military spending will rise to 3% of GDP by 2033, with about \$10 billion more over four years and \$38 billion over the decade. But that still falls short of Hegseth's 3.5% demand.

This is how the Pacific war buildup works in practice: Australian workers pay, U.S. shipyards and weapons firms collect, and the Pentagon tightens its grip on the region.

Australia is also building a submarine construction yard at Osborne in South Australia. Assembly of the first domestically built submarine is expected to begin in the early 2030s, with delivery projected in the early 2040s. The program binds Australia's military future to U.S. war planning for decades.

China has condemned AUKUS as stoking bloc-to-bloc confrontation in the Pacific. Meng's remarks made clear that Beijing sees it as part of the same encirclement strategy behind the First Island Chain buildup.

Washington's direction is clear.

The Shangri-La Dialogue is not a peace conference. It is an annual assembly of military planners and arms buyers. Hegseth's speech was its keynote sales pitch. #

# Cuba prepares its people for U.S. air strikes

By Gary Wilson

Cuba's government told its people on May 16 to prepare for a U.S. military attack.

The National Civil Defense General Staff issued a family guide titled "Protect, Resist, Survive, and Win." It tells civilians how to shelter during air strikes, where to go, what to carry and how to endure the first days of an assault. Every household is told to know its assigned shelter and prepare documents, a radio, batteries, drinking water, medicine, hygiene supplies and three days of ready-to-eat food.

The guide came during Exercise Meteoro 2026, Cuba's national civil defense drill. But this was not routine. Its introduction recalls the long record of U.S. aggression since the triumph of the Revolution: covert operations, mercenary landings, armed bands, terrorism, assassination attempts and economic strangulation.

No government issues that kind of document without reason. Washington's moves that same week made the reason plain.

On May 14, CIA Director John Ratcliffe flew to Havana to deliver Washington's demand for "fundamental changes." U.S. imperialism first tightened the fuel siege. Then it sent the head of the CIA to deliver the political ultimatum.

The administration has openly pointed to Venezuela as the model. Ratcliffe urged Cuba to take a lesson from the Jan. 3 U.S. operation that kidnapped Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores. Washington moved from threats and sanctions to the seizure of Venezuela's leaders. Now it is pointing that threat at Havana.

Cuba rejected the ultimatum. That is what Washington cannot tolerate: a small socialist country refusing to submit.

On May 18, President Miguel Díaz-Canel warned that a U.S. military assault "will cause a bloodbath with incalculable consequences." Cuba, he said, is already suffering "multidimensional aggression from the U.S." and has "the absolute and legitimate right to defend itself."

Two days later, the Justice Department unsealed a murder indictment against former



Cuba is not alone! Photo: José M. Correa

Cuban President Raúl Castro. The charges stem from Cuba's 1996 shootdown of two Brothers to the Rescue planes. That group was part of the U.S.-created anti-Cuba terror network rooted in the CIA's war against the Revolution.

Washington is turning Cuba's defense of its airspace into a pretext for new threats. The pretext does not have to be credible. It only has to exist. Raúl Castro is being targeted as one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla called the indictment "a despicable and infamous act of political provocation" meant to build the case for more pressure and possible military action.

A day later, U.S. Southern Command announced that the USS Nimitz carrier strike group had entered the Caribbean Sea. The Nimitz is a floating air base, with fighter jets, spy planes and helicopters within striking distance of Cuba.

On May 22, Trump told reporters he would likely be "the one" to finally act on Cuba — as if six decades of blockade, sabotage, invasion attempts and terror networks were "inaction." Marco Rubio

said force remained on the table.

Cuba is not waiting to find out if Trump means it.

Cuban defense doctrine centers on the "War of All the People": prolonged, decentralized resistance by the whole population. Its purpose is simple — make any invasion too costly to sustain.

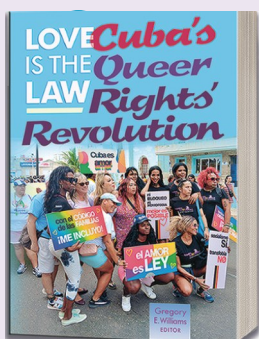
Washington is using every instrument at once: fuel blockade, CIA ultimatums, Pentagon surveillance, Treasury sanctions, Justice Department indictments and carrier strike groups. These are not separate policies. They are the weapons of an imperialist state that has never accepted Cuba's escape from U.S. control.

The goal is what it has always been: force Cuba to surrender the sovereignty won in 1959 and return the island to the rule of U.S. banks, monopolies, the Pentagon and the old gangsters.

Cuba's answer remains what it has always been: defend the Revolution.

Workers and communities in the United States have a different answer from Washington's war-makers: end the blockade, no invasion, U.S. hands off Cuba.

Join NoWarOnCuba.com #



## CUBA's Queer Rights Revolution

In the book 'Love is the Law' –

The process of winning approval of the Cuba's 'Code of Freedom' for Families;

Reports from the U.S. Friends Against Homophobia and Transphobia delegation to Cuba

Reports from CENESEX – the National Center for Sex Education / Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual  
CENESEX director Mariela Castro Espín

The full text of Leslie Feinberg's 'Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba

[tinyurl.com/Cuba-LoveisLaw](http://tinyurl.com/Cuba-LoveisLaw) [tinyurl.com/Read-LOVEistheLAW](http://tinyurl.com/Read-LOVEistheLAW)



# ‘No war on Cuba!’ Rings out in New Orleans streets

By Gregory E. Williams

## New Orleans socialists go to working class with message of resistance

New Orleans, May 29 — During the evening rush hour on Friday, around a dozen activists gathered near the bus stops at Canal and Elk streets, calling for resistance to Trump’s war plans against Cuba. Organizers from Workers Voice Socialist Movement, Struggle for Socialism Party/ Struggle - La Lucha, Louisiana Workers Councils, and the Party for Socialism and Liberation took to the mic and handed out our leaflets at this major transportation hub for workers in the downtown hospitality sector.

Speakers emphasized that the billionaires’ government in Washington that has created the humanitarian catastrophe in Cuba with its criminal blockade is the same government that is attacking us here. The Washington government that is strangling Cuba is taking away our access to health care and education, and driving up prices with never-ending war.

Working-class and oppressed people in the United States have the same enemies as the Cuban people — and those enemies are in Washington and Wall Street.

Visiting activist John Parker — a California District 37 congressional candidate and organizer with the Los Angeles Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice and Struggle for Socialism Party — spoke about the attacks on Black, Brown, Indigenous and working-class people’s voting rights. He made the connection between the U.S. ruling class’s designs to take over and exploit Cuba



Gavielle Gemma with New Orleans-based Workers Voice Socialist Movement addressed the workers around the Canal and Elk bus stops downtown, calling for a people’s fight back against war and austerity. SLL photo

and their attempts to stifle any resistance to their rule here. Parker said that if they can get away with taking away Black people’s voting rights in Louisiana, voters’ rights all over the country are in danger.

Gavielle Gemma with Workers Voice stressed the importance of going directly to the working class with the message of struggle. Going right to



Visiting California congressional candidate John Parker pointed out the connection between the government’s racist attacks on voting rights and their attacks on Cuba and Latin America.

the bus stops and even door-to-door is a way to bypass the billionaire-controlled algorithms.

Popular chants included “Hands off Cuba!” and “Money for health care/child care/education, not war!”

The action was initiated by Workers Voice Socialist Movement and Struggle for Socialism Party. #

# New Yorkers picket U.S. war moves



By Stephen Millies

New York, May 31 — Defenders of Cuba picketed this afternoon in front of the James Farley Post Office in Midtown Manhattan, across from Penn Station, to stop Trump from invading the island.

The emergency action was called by the NY/NJ Cuba Sí Coalition and was supported by

Tarik Haskins, Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army veteran and former political prisoner.

SLL photo: Stephen Millies

many organizations. Some 300 people came out to protest the outrageous indictment of Raúl Castro as well as the dispatching of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz to menace Cuba.

People carried Cuban, Dominican and Puerto Rican flags and many signs defending socialist Cuba. They chanted “¡Cuba Sí, Bloqueo No!” The Trump regime has blocked all oil shipments to Cuba.

Among the speakers were Omowale Clay, chair of the December 12th Movement and Jason Corley from the NY/NJ Cuba Sí Coalition. Other speakers included representatives from the National Network on Cuba, the Democratic Socialists of America, the New Era Young Lords, the Socialist Workers Party, the Struggle for Socialism Party, and the Workers World Party. #

# Bolivia: U.S.-backed government clears road to martial law against general strike

By Gary Wilson

Bolivia's Congress has cleared the road for martial law.

On May 24, the Senate voted to remove legal limits on emergency rule. The Chamber of Deputies followed on May 26. President Rodrigo Paz signed the repeal into law on May 27. The change hands Paz the machinery to turn the army loose on a general strike now in its fourth week.

The repeal passed both chambers by more than two-thirds and cleared Congress in under 48 hours, bypassing normal debate. Deputies met virtually because blockades had cut physical access to La Paz. Law 1341 — passed after the massacres of the Ñez coup regime to limit how far a president could go in suspending rights — is gone. The same Assembly that stripped the restraints would now be asked to bless Paz's use of soldiers against the strike.

"The country needs order," Paz told the press. "Time is running out." In the mouth of a president just handed broader emergency powers, "order" means police, soldiers and arrests.

## The crackdown

The government is using every arm of the state at once — Congress to remove legal limits, prosecutors to file terrorism charges, police to arrest and the army to break blockades.

On May 18, some 2,500 police and 1,000 soldiers carried out pre-dawn operations against the largest demonstration of the conflict in La Paz. More than 127 people were detained that day. Prosecutors charged Mario Argollo, executive secretary of the Bolivian Workers Central (COB), with terrorism. Arrest warrants on terrorism charges have been issued against 25 union leaders.

On May 23, a 3,000-strong police-military operation tried to force open the La Paz-Oruro highway under the name "White Flags Humanitarian Corridor." Aymara communities along the Altiplano stopped the combined forces and drove them off by dirt roads. After the convoy passed, blockaders rebuilt the barriers with dirt, rocks and logs.

During the operation, 24-year-old Indigenous community member Víctor Cruz Quispe was shot in Vilaque, in Calamarca municipality, and died within minutes. The government first denied any



Community members mourn Víctor Cruz Quispe at a blockade after he was killed during the government's May 23 police-military operation on the La Paz-Oruro route.

deaths and claimed the photographs were from 2024. Once the autopsy was public, it admitted the killing but insisted riot police had been told not to fire. The Ombudsman's Office has registered seven dead, 23 wounded and 321 arrested over the course of the strike.

By May 28, blockades had spread across six departments. Sucre, the constitutional capital, was cut off from all road connections. New marches descended from El Alto to La Paz on May 22, 25 and 27, the May 25 mobilization the largest yet. Drivers declared an indefinite strike over fuel shortages and adulterated gasoline. The shortages are now spreading the crisis into Cochabamba, Oruro and Potosí.

## Washington backs the crackdown

Washington has given Paz political cover to crush the strike.

On May 19, at the Council of the Americas in Washington, Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau called the Bolivian uprising "a coup that's being financed by this unholy alliance between politics and organized crime." He pressed other South American governments to repudiate the protests. The next day Secretary of State Marco Rubio posted that the U.S. stood "squarely in support of Bolivia's legitimate constitutional government" and would not let "criminals and drug traffickers" overthrow elected leaders.

That is Washington's translation machine at work: striking miners, teachers and Indigenous communities become "criminals," U.S.-backed politicians become "constitutional government." When Washington says "constitutional government," it means a government that will impose IMF austerity, protect foreign capital and use soldiers against workers.

An IMF mission was in La Paz negotiating Bolivia's first Fund loan in five years as workers were being shot. IDB Invest announced plans to expand its Bolivia portfolio twentyfold — up to \$450 million over three years — as part of a \$4.5

billion package. Paz's Decree 5503, which more than doubled fuel prices overnight in December 2025, already showed what that program means.

Colombia's President Gustavo Petro called the situation a popular insurrection and offered to mediate; Bolivia expelled the Colombian ambassador on May 20. Eight governments tied to Trump's Shield of the Americas alliance backed Paz. Argentina's far-right president Javier Milei sent at least two Hercules cargo planes, presented as humanitarian aid — but charged by critics with carrying tear gas and crowd-control gear and airlifting police into La Paz. The pattern recalls 2019, when Argentina's Macri shipped 40,000 cartridges to the Ñez coup regime.

## Lithium and the selloff

Bolivia sits on one of the world's largest lithium reserves, along with tin, silver, zinc, copper and gas. U.S. Southern Command has named the lithium triangle — Bolivia, Argentina, Chile — a zone of strategic competition with China. With Milei in Argentina and Kast in Chile, Washington holds two corners. Bolivia is the one where Indigenous and working-class resistance can still block the program.

That is why Paz needs emergency rule. His government is drafting new lithium and hydrocarbons laws to revise contracts with Chinese and Russian firms and bring in U.S. companies — Tesla, Amazon and Oracle among them. He restored ties with Israel in December 2025, putting Israeli surveillance back inside Bolivia's security apparatus. He dissolved the Ministry of Environment and Water in his first days in office.

The terrorism charges, soldiers, IMF mission, Argentine cargo flights, lithium opening and repeal of Law 1341 are one operation: make Bolivia's workers, peasants and Indigenous Peoples pay through fuel hikes, privatization and military repression.

They are refusing to pay. #



# No deal: U.S. pause is not peace with Iran

By Gary Wilson

On May 23, President Donald Trump claimed on Truth Social that a peace agreement with Iran had been “largely negotiated.” Within 24 hours, Iranian officials were calling that claim a lie.

Washington is trying to sell a pause in its war as a diplomatic breakthrough.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry said May 25 that no nuclear commitments or uranium handover agreements exist in any draft agreement with the U.S. — and that none will. Fars News Agency said Trump’s claim that the Strait of Hormuz would return to its prewar status “does not reflect reality.” According to Fars, the latest draft exchanged between the two sides would keep the strait under Iranian management. Tasnim reported that the draft would restore only the number of ships moving through Hormuz, not the prewar status of the strait.

Trump says a deal is close. Tehran says no such deal exists. That is the real story of the negotiations.

Iran says no agreement exists unless Washington accepts the basic terms: Iranian control over Hormuz, release of frozen assets, no dismantling of Iran’s civilian nuclear program and a ceasefire that includes Lebanon.

Tasnim News Agency reported that Washington is blocking the deal’s key clauses. Iran told Pakistan, the mediator, that continued U.S. obstruction would make an agreement impossible.

Reporter Ali Hashem cited an Iranian source who said Washington had backed away on two points: releasing Iran’s frozen assets and applying the ceasefire to Lebanon.

Israel wants language that would let it keep attacking Lebanon whenever it claims a “threat.” Iran rejected that formulation. Tehran is demanding a sustainable ceasefire, not a loophole that lets Israel keep bombing while Washington calls it peace.

Iran also rejected Pakistan’s suggestion to move ahead on agreed language while postponing the disputed clauses. Tehran’s position is simple: the disputed clauses are not side issues. They are the agreement. Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.

The frozen assets question shows what is really blocking the talks. Iran is demanding access to its own money — funds seized or blocked by U.S. sanctions. Tasnim reported that Iran will not sign even a preliminary memorandum on promises alone. The U.S. must first release part of Iran’s frozen money and give Iran real access to it.

Trump cannot simply release most of Iran’s frozen money. U.S. sanctions law was built to keep



**Iranian naval craft approach the U.S.-flagged tanker Stena Imperative near the Strait of Hormuz on Feb. 3, weeks before U.S. and Israeli bombing of Iran began. Control over Hormuz remains one of the central issues in the stalled talks.**

that money blocked unless Iran accepts Washington’s political demands. In practice, that means cutting support for Hezbollah and Palestinian resistance organizations while accepting U.S. demands to dismantle Iran’s independent civilian nuclear program.

Iran has not agreed to those conditions and is not going to. What Trump can release without Congress is only a fraction of what Iran is demanding.

Trump could offer sanctions waivers, but waivers can be revoked. Iran already saw Washington tear up the 2015 nuclear deal in 2018. It has no reason to trust another U.S. promise that Trump, Congress or the next president can revoke.

Republican senators Ted Cruz of Texas and Roger Wicker of Mississippi condemned the reported framework, with Wicker calling a rumored 60-day ceasefire “a disaster.” Democrats joined in. Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey said Trump was “being played as a fool,” while Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland called the emerging deal “a blunder.”

When Cruz and Booker are reading from the same script, the message is clear. Washington is not preparing to accept any agreement that leaves Iran unconquered.

The timing of the ceasefire talk also points to a pause, not a settlement. Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, runs through May 30. Saudi Arabia asked Trump to delay renewed strikes until after the pilgrimage season. It did not ask Washington to end the war. It asked for the war to be paused around Hajj. That is not peace. It is war managed around the needs of a key U.S. ally.

Tanker traffic exiting the Gulf has increased, but it remains far below prewar levels. The U.S. naval blockade remains in place. Tasnim reported that if the blockade is not lifted within 30 days, there will be no change in the status of the Strait of Hormuz. Iran still controls transit through the strait. No memorandum of understanding has been signed.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reaffirmed to Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem on May 23 that Iran would never abandon Hezbollah and that any agreement must include a Lebanon ceasefire.

Iran is not the obstacle to peace. It is Washington’s refusal to accept that bombing, blockade and sanctions have not forced Iran to surrender.

The U.S. wants to call this pause a peace agreement. Iran is making the record clear: Washington has not won the war, and it has not made peace. #

# No ceasefire in Lebanon – only more bodies

By Lev Koufax

Typical of his usual antics, Donald Trump took to social media on the evening of June 1 to declare that Israel, upon his request, had agreed to stop bombing Lebanon. This declaration came after Israel unleashed a series of brutal airstrikes across southern Lebanon, including a strike that destroyed a major hospital in Tyre.

Within 15 hours of Trump's announcement, Israeli drone strikes in southern Lebanon killed 11 more people, including multiple children. Since the beginning of 2026, U.S.-backed Israeli forces have killed more than 3,000 Lebanese civilians, injured 10,000, and displaced over a million. The killing continued even as the Lebanese government and Israel engaged in peace talks. In reality, these talks have not been about peace, but about the U.S. and Israel gaining support from the Lebanese government to disarm Hezbollah.

In recent weeks, Israel has targeted Tyre specifically. Tyre is the fourth largest city in Lebanon and is the urban center of the southern part of the country. The city also holds significant historical and cultural significance, as it was founded in 2750 BCE, making it one of the oldest



Site of an Israeli strike that hit near a hospital in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre on June 1, 2026.

are not those of terror, but of self-defense and solidarity with Palestine, Iran, and Yemen.

Even as the fourth round of talks between Lebanon and Israel began in D.C. on June 2, Israel continued its murderous attacks against the Lebanese people. These talks are nothing more than a farce, aimed at strong-arming the Lebanese government into a civil war with Hezbollah.

War on Hezbollah and the Lebanese people is part of a

continuously populated cities in the world. Attacking such a culturally significant place is another chapter in a book of collective punishment by the U.S. and Israel against the Lebanese people for daring to stand up to genocide and war.

On and off since Oct. 7, 2023, Hezbollah has intervened fiercely on behalf of the Palestinian people and attacked Zionist settlements in northern occupied Palestine. Hezbollah's actions

broader landscape of global class warfare. In light of Iran's effective resistance to the U.S. war machine, imperialist forces have had to look to other fronts to attack the global oppressed and working class. Lebanon is one of those fronts.

The continued offensive against Lebanon is not about terrorism or security, but about the U.S. ruling class' attempt to assert regional control in West Asia via its satellite, Israel.

*Lev Koufax is an anti-Zionist Jewish activist.*

## Settlers, settlers go back home, Palestine is ours alone!

By Stephen Millies

May 28 — Hundreds of people came out this evening in Midtown Manhattan, New York City, to protest the sale of stolen land in Al-Quds, the capital of Palestine, also known as Jerusalem. The demonstration was called by Pal-Awda NY/NJ.

They chanted "Stop the sales, settlers out of Palestine!" and "Palestine is not for sale!" Dozens of Palestinian flags were carried by protesters, who included rabbis and members of the anti-Zionist Neturei Karta Orthodox Jewish Community.

A truck circled around the event, also carrying Palestinian flags. Loud chanting was accompanied by the beating of drums.

A long banner read "Israel is killing children!" At least 20,000 Palestinian children have been killed in Gaza by U.S.-made and paid-for bombs and shells. More children were murdered in Lebanon and Iran.

The stolen land expo was advertised as the "Jerusalem, Your Home, Your Future" real estate event. It was also a recruitment fair by the racist

settler organization Nefesh B'Nefesh. What about the Palestinians' homes — which they were driven out of in 1948 — and their future?

These sales violate laws banning housing discrimination since only Jewish people can purchase the homes. It was held at the ritzy New York Hilton Midtown hotel, just north of Rockefeller Center, named for the founding family of Big Oil.

The Zionist regime exists to protect the profits of Big Oil. Former Secretary of State and war criminal Alexander Haig described "Israel" as "the largest American aircraft carrier in the world that cannot be sunk."

Billionaires like the Rockefellers don't care how many people are killed. They had 20 striking coal miners and their family members killed in Ludlow, Colorado, in 1914. The following year, five strikers were killed by Rockefeller gunmen at the Standard Oil refinery in Bayonne, New Jersey.



*Continued on page 13*

:SLL photo: Stephen Millies

# Imperialist-backed forces target Mali's anti-colonial government

By Lev Koufax

Beginning on April 25, 2026, right-wing U.S. and Ukrainian-backed Islamist forces launched a large-scale offensive against the Sahel nation of Mali. These right-wing forces included Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Azawad Liberation Front (FLA). JNIM is the official branch of Al-Qaeda in Mali, and they formed an alliance with the FLA in the hopes of overturning the anti-colonial Malian government.

While these right-wing forces gained initial success, the Malian army, in conjunction with Russia's Africa Corps, eventually slowed their progress and continued operations against FLA and JNIM. If Western media were to be believed, the April attacks were a valiant rebel offensive aimed at overthrowing a supposedly authoritarian military junta. However, the facts on the ground paint a different picture. As is so often the case, what the imperialist West calls freedom fighters are actually right-wing imperialist-backed forces aimed at overthrowing a government that expelled French and U.S. corporations and forces.

So, what are the goals of these so-called rebels?

First, it must be made clear that the militant groups currently waging war on Mali's anti-colonial government are not a representation of the Malian masses but act on behalf of imperialism to undermine a popular government.

Second, forces like JNIM and FLA in Mali leading this fight against the Malian government do not operate in a vacuum. They are equipped and trained by the United States and their proxies. For example, Ukrainian military advisers have played a crucial role in training and equipping Al-Qaeda in Mali (JNIM) but have also supported right-wing Islamist terrorism across the Sahel states.

Third, the attack on Mali is an attack on any movement in the Global South that would defy imperialism. It is widely known that Russia is a crucial ally to the Sahel states. Since the beginning



of its own war against NATO in Ukraine, Russia has supported Sahel's independence from imperialism with economic investment and military aid. This recent right-wing Islamist offensive in Mali is simply a reflection of Washington's desire to spread Russia thin and undermine a growing anti-imperialist bastion in West Africa.

As part of this offensive against the Malian people, the Western-backed forces have carried out "decapitation" strikes against prominent Malian officials like Defense Minister Gen. Sadio Camara.

This sort of assassination is a common tactic of the United States military and its proxies. Examples of these decapitation strikes are not hard to find. One only has to look at Iran, Lebanon, and Venezuela. In Iran, the U.S. and its satellite Israel assassinated Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Feb. 28, 2026, and — six years earlier — assassinated Quds Force commander Qassem Soleimani in a drone strike in Baghdad on Jan. 3, 2020. In Lebanon, the U.S. and its satellite Israel assassinated Hassan Nasrallah. In Venezuela, the U.S. kidnapped Nicolás Maduro.

The JNIM and FLA are being trained from the same playbook. Anti-people forces like those fighting the Malian government exist to sow chaos and lawlessness. To effectuate this plan, significant figures in the opposing camp are targeted in the hopes of undermining a movement.

What the imperialists and their proxies rarely account for is the willingness of the oppressed world to fight back. While a tragedy, the death of General Camara and the assault on major towns like Kidal will not undermine the will of the Malian people. That will is not to be subjugated by Western corporate powers, but is to forge a new path. And on this path, the Malian people control their own resources, reap the benefits of their labors, and live free from the oppressive yoke of Western capital. #

## Settlers go back home

*Continued from page 12*

### Zionism will fall

Star of the "real estate event" at the Hilton was the Zionist mayor of Jerusalem, Moshe Lion. He's a member of the racist Likud party, led by the genocidal prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Mayor Lion welcomed the destruction in January of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees buildings in Jerusalem. His deputy mayor, Aryeh King, called for the killing of UNRWA staff members.

More than 360 UNRWA staff members have already been killed in Gaza while providing humanitarian aid.

The Jerusalem Post — a Zionist newspaper which was originally called The Palestine Post — was upset by Thursday's protest at the Midtown Hilton. They didn't like the chant "Brick by brick, wall by wall, Zionism will fall."

This newspaper was angered by a flag of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which they slandered, calling it "a terrorist organization." The PFLP is a socialist organization whose members study the writings of Karl Marx, who had two grandfathers who were rabbis.

U.S. slave masters also called Nat Turner a terrorist for leading a revolt of enslaved Africans. The freedom fighter was hanged in Jerusalem, Virginia, on Nov. 11, 1831.

Jerusalem — Al-Quds — will always be the capital of a liberated Palestine. #

# Congo's cobalt feeds Big Tech. Its people face Ebola

By Gary Wilson

On April 30, health workers in Bunia tested patient samples for Ebola. The result came back negative. But the test could not detect Bundibugyo — a rare and highly fatal Ebola species with no approved vaccine or treatment. The false negative gave the virus two more weeks to spread through mining communities and displacement camps.

It looked like a technical glitch. It was the result of five centuries of colonial violence and imperialist plunder. Some lives are protected by laboratories, vaccines and treatment. Others are left with nothing.

## What plunder destroyed

When Portuguese ships reached the Congo River in 1483, they found the Kingdom of Kongo — a centralized state with law, diplomacy and government across much of Central Africa. Behind the guns and the priests came slave traders. Over four centuries, the transatlantic slave trade tore the kingdom apart. People were kidnapped. Villages were emptied. Central Africa became the single largest source of enslaved people shipped to the Americas — between 5 million and 6 million from the Congo-Angola region alone.

The form of plunder changed. The target — labor, land and wealth — stayed the same.

Belgium's King Leopold II held the Congo as personal property from 1885 to 1908. Under his rubber regime, workers who missed quotas had their hands cut off, and forced labor, starvation and murder killed an estimated 5 million to 10 million people. The Belgian colonial rule that followed extracted copper, diamonds, uranium and rubber for decades and built almost nothing. About 30 Congolese university graduates existed in the entire country at independence on June 30, 1960.

Patrice Lumumba, the first elected prime minister, demanded control over Congo's resources and a united, independent Africa. Washington called that a threat. Katanga held roughly 60 percent of the world's cobalt, along with industrial diamonds and the uranium that fueled the Manhattan Project.

On Jan. 17, 1961, Lumumba was murdered. The CIA, authorized by the Eisenhower administration, plotted his assassination. Belgium and the mining firm Union Minière played their parts. In 1965, Mobutu Sese Seko seized power in a U.S.-backed coup. Washington bankrolled his dictatorship for three decades while he looted the treasury and let public health rot.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Mobutu's usefulness ended, and Washington cut him off. The wars that followed were not "ancient hatreds." They were wars for minerals, fought



A patient is tested during the Ebola response at the General Referral Hospital of Mongbwalu in Ituri province, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, May 20. The Bundibugyo strain spread for weeks before it was confirmed.

through proxy forces and armed groups tied to the mineral trade. They have killed more than 6 million people, most from disease and starvation. Eastern Congo became a killing floor.

Cobalt, uranium, coltan and tin from eastern Congo flow into batteries, warheads, electronics and weapons. Apple, Nvidia, Google, Microsoft and Intel depend on those supply chains, and so do the weapons makers and the banks that hold their stock. The minerals leave. The hunger and displacement stay.

## Ebola spreads through what imperialism made

More than 100,000 people were newly displaced in Ituri Province in the months before the outbreak. Seven million are displaced across eastern Congo. Twenty-seven million face acute hunger. In parts of North Kivu, people survive on six liters of water a day and share one latrine among more than 100 people.

That is how Ebola gets its opening. In late April, deaths mounted around the mining area of Mongbwalu, but funerals and hospital care gave the disease weeks to spread before it was confirmed. When the World Health Organization was alerted May 5, officials reported a "high-mortality outbreak of unknown illness." An estimated 50 people were already dead. Confirmation required genomic sequencing in

Kinshasa, more than 1,000 miles away. Ituri had no local capacity, and the wealth that could have built it was looted.

By then the virus had spread for at least six weeks and crossed into Uganda, reaching the capital, Kampala. By May 25 it had passed 1,000 suspected and confirmed cases, with more than 230 deaths in the DRC — now the third-largest Ebola outbreak in history.

## Designed to fail

Bundibugyo Ebola struck Uganda in 2007 and the DRC in 2012, killing 30% to 50% of those infected. The pharmaceutical industry could have developed a vaccine after either outbreak. Merck and Johnson & Johnson saw no profitable market in Congolese and Ugandan lives, so none was approved. WHO officials say doses of the most promising candidate may be six to nine months away.

## The final nail

U.S.-funded programs had kept parts of Congo's disease surveillance running — local health workers, testing, protective equipment. The Trump administration removed it. U.S. aid to the DRC fell from \$1.4 billion in 2024 to about \$430 million in 2025, with roughly \$21 million allocated for fiscal 2026. The International Rescue Committee was

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# Life beyond work: A victory for the Brazilian proletariat

By Catarina Damasceno

**"The strength of the working class is organization. Without the organization of the masses, the proletariat is nothing. Organized, it is everything."**

– Vladimir Lenin

The Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT) in Brazil was enacted in 1943 as a landmark victory for Brazilian workers. It established a 48-hour workweek, paid vacation, protections against arbitrary dismissal, and the right to organize. Despite being a win, it was also a political calculation by President Getúlio Vargas, tainted by a corporatist maneuver that tied unions to the state and limited independent labor organizing. It also excluded rural and domestic workers, deepening a racial disparity that labor legislation never meaningfully addressed. The 1988 Constitution cut the workweek from 48 to 44 hours, the last reduction before this year.

One of the ways labor law held Black and poor workers back was by permitting a workweek distributed across six days, a model known as the 6x1 schedule. It remained the standard for millions of workers in Brazil after the 1988 reduction, disproportionately concentrated in retail, food service, and healthcare.

In September 2023, Rick Azevedo, who then worked as a pharmacy cashier in Rio de Janeiro, published a TikTok about working the 6x1 schedule: "I'm here outraged by the 6x1 schedule. ... When are we, the working class, going to make a revolution in this country over the 6x1 schedule? It's modern, outdated slavery. I keep thinking: I don't have children, I have nothing, I am alone, I can't get things done." As is the case for many Brazilians, Azevedo worked six days a week, from



**Rick Azevedo**

2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., and in the mornings sold popsicles at the beach to complement his income, since his full-time job only paid minimum wage. In addition to working these two jobs, Azevedo had attempted to pursue higher education more than once but had been forced to drop out.

When his TikTok went viral, Azevedo had a modest following of 40,000, mostly built around posts about Beyoncé. He had never organized with a union or a political party. After the viral TikTok, he created a WhatsApp group, started connecting with labor lawyers and activists, and within weeks, they created Vida Além do Trabalho, VAT (Life Beyond Work). A public petition for the end of the

6x1 schedule followed shortly after. In May 2024, Federal Deputy Erika Hilton of the Partido Socialismo e Liberdade formally announced a Proposed Constitutional Amendment calling for a four-day workweek, filed in partnership with VAT.

By October 2024, Azevedo won the election for city councilman in Rio de Janeiro as the 12th most voted candidate out of 51 seats. Despite having received less funding than other candidates from his party, PSOL, he was the most voted candidate of the party. He went from a viral TikTok to having an institutional platform that allowed him a voice in the Brazilian Congress.

Within the last two years, the movement never lost momentum, despite the right's attempts to argue that ending the 6x1 schedule would increase the unemployment rate. That is proven to be a false argument. It is typical of the tyrants of capitalism to threaten the public with fear of economic change. It is encouraging that public support has been overwhelming: a Senate poll on the reduction received 92.6% support and only 7.4% opposition.

On May 27, 2026, the Chamber of Deputies voted to approve a constitutional amendment phasing out the 6x1 schedule, the first reduction to Brazil's workweek since the Constitution was enacted in 1988. Now, the amendment will go to the Senate, where it is expected to be approved.

In the 83 years since the CLT was enacted, few amendments have carried this much meaning for the Brazilian working class. The end of the 6x1 schedule is not just a labor reform. It is proof that organization works. #

## Congo's cobalt feeds Big Tech

*Continued from page 14*

forced to shut down its surveillance in Ituri. The STOP Spillover program, built to catch exactly these diseases, was terminated, and USAID was dismantled.

Elon Musk boasted that USAID had been fed into a "wood chipper," then admitted Ebola prevention was among the programs killed. The CDC lost a quarter of its workforce. The U.S. defunded and withdrew from the WHO.

### Washington's alibi

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said May 22 that the WHO was "a little late." The WHO had deployed to Ituri within days. Its first tests came back negative because the diagnostics targeted the

wrong Ebola species — and because the U.S. had just cut the surveillance programs that might have caught it sooner. First Washington helps produce the lack of capacity, then blames others when it costs lives.

The virus has reached Kampala and Goma. Health workers treat patients without protective gear. Communities bury their dead without body bags. The people holding the line are the ones imperialism wrote off — nurses, doctors, burial teams and women's organizations fighting with almost nothing. The people of Congo and Uganda are paying for what was done to their countries. Not by nature — but by imperialist powers, banks, mining monopolies and the capitalist governments that serve them. #

# Socialist and anti-colonial movements

By Gregory E. Williams

## China and Russia deepen cooperation, issue joint statement on multipolarity

The May 20 meeting in Beijing between Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin came only days after Donald Trump's trip to China with a planeload of oligarchs drawn from tech and finance – Trump's true base. While little of substance came out of the Trump-Xi meeting, Russia and China signed more than 40 cooperation agreements on trade, technology, media, education, and nuclear security.

These agreements are the result of long-term, deepening relationships, not a single trip. China is Russia's largest trading partner, including in oil and gas. In February 2026, Chinese buyers accounted for 50% of Russia's fossil fuel revenue, according to a report by the nonprofit Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

Also, despite Trump's insistence on the importance of his meeting with Xi, the U.S. and China did not issue a joint statement demonstrating any shared understanding. But Russia and China did issue one. The document articulates their vision for a new multipolar framework in international relations and economy.

## Multipolarity and global class struggle

These days, people across the political spectrum and across society are talking about multipolarity. The discussion is not just happening among diplomats and academics, but within political movements and on YouTube channels, in blogs and comments sections across the internet. People are talking about it because they recognize that global power dynamics are changing rapidly. They recognize that U.S. power is declining.

How else can we explain the fact that China just challenged the system of U.S. sanctions when its Ministry of Commerce ordered Chinese firms and individuals to ignore U.S. penalties targeting Chinese refineries importing Iranian oil? China is now strong enough to ignore the sanctions, and Washington can not do anything about it. Things have changed.

But what exactly is multipolarity?

The Cambridge online dictionary defines multipolarity in international relations as “the quality or fact of several countries or areas having power.” That is in contrast to a situation where a single state monopolizes power in the international arena, as the U.S. attempted to do after the 1991 destruction of the USSR.

This historical event already suggests that something beyond geopolitics is at stake here. The USSR was not a competing capitalist – much less an imperialist – power. Rather, it was a very large socialist state, that is to say, a state whose power is based in the working class and laying the foundations for a post-capitalist future. As such, the USSR was the single biggest obstacle to U.S. imperialist domination.

And why was U.S. imperialism so formidable?

With its capitalist competitors in Western Europe and Japan devastated by the Second World War, the U.S. emerged as the dominant capitalist power in the postwar period, with a massive and ever-growing global military presence. As Britain had been before, the U.S. became the manufacturer of the world, with monopolies in top industries like auto manufacturing. Monopoly status brought monopoly profits. In the postwar period, Wall Street overtook London as the world capital of finance. Western Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan submitted to U.S. leadership, while still being imperialist themselves: they became junior partners, still competitors, but subordinates in an established hierarchy.

Throughout the postwar period, the U.S. amassed tremendous power.

If the USSR had not been there to check U.S. imperialism, the latter's so-called “unipolar moment” might have come much sooner, with disastrous results for most of humanity. The destruction of the USSR was, therefore, a counter-revolutionary world event that opened the road for a U.S.-led imperialist offensive: that is the substance of the post-1991 unipolar moment.

In this period, Washington launched many wars, particularly in West Asia, but also increasingly used sanctions and economic strangulation to punish any country not willing to submit to being plundered by U.S. corporations and banks. Washington used the international financial system it controlled to impose austerity (cuts to social spending), particularly in the Global South and in the formerly socialist countries of Europe. Post-1991, Washington and its junior partners also ramped up austerity at home. The pattern was set in the 1980s during the Reagan and Thatcher periods in the U.S. and Britain, respectively: cut corporate taxes, run up deficits, and claim that there simply is no money for the people. Particularly in the U.S., this was done while continually increasing military spending.

This was a historic offensive of the capitalist class against the working class. The ruling class clawed back many of the gains previously won by working-class and oppressed people. This offensive continues into the present. There is a direct line from Reaganism to Elon Musk's hated DOGE cuts.

So, what is at issue here is not simply a shift in power among states, but what class forces are shaping the world situation. U.S. imperialism represents the interests of the monopoly-capitalist class (like the billionaires who accompanied him to Beijing). Opposed to that are the forces of the working class and oppressed peoples – that is, movements for socialism and national liberation. To explain multipolarity and unipolarity, we need a class lens, not just a geopolitical one.

Perhaps the most significant thing about Trump's China visit is that it demonstrated how

far U.S. standing has diminished and how much China's has risen. This was already the trend before Trump and Netanyahu launched the current war on Iran on Feb. 28, but the war accelerated it. There has been a weakening of the machinery U.S. imperialism has used to dominate the world since the destruction of the USSR, and the imperialist camp itself is starting to register the defeat.

## U.S. defeat in Iran demonstrates and accelerates imperialist decline

Notably, on May 10, Robert Kagan – the neo-conservative architect of the U.S. war on Iraq – wrote in the Atlantic that Iran had defeated the U.S. This might seem a shocking admission from the likes of Kagan, but the evidence is hard to deny.

In late April, U.S. big media outlets like the Washington Post and NBC began reporting on the widespread damage to U.S. imperialism's infrastructure in West Asia. At least 16 U.S. bases were damaged in eight countries, particularly in the U.S.-backed Gulf oil monarchies. These constitute the majority of U.S. bases in the region. Israeli military sites were also hit repeatedly. Because of tight censorship, it is difficult to ascertain the extent of damage across Israel, but Zionist forces are facing stiff resistance from Hezbollah in Lebanon, with Hezbollah increasingly using drones to destroy Zionist tanks and other military assets.

Meanwhile, the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz resulting from the U.S. and Israel's attacks on Iran has destabilized global supply chains, risking global recession. Prices of oil, gas, diesel, fertilizer and helium have gone up, including in the U.S. Workers are paying more for groceries and other goods. The ruling class always shifts the burdens of the capitalist system's crises onto the working class.

## Revolutions of 20th century laid the groundwork

We have already considered how the USSR kept U.S. imperialism in check in the post-war period. The USSR was the largest and most powerful socialist state, but it was not alone. A tremendous wave of socialist and national liberation movements pushed U.S. imperialism back. This revolutionary wave also made possible the emergence of all the Global South countries currently organizing trade and financial relations outside U.S. control. China's industrial power results from the 1949 socialist revolution. Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution was also part of that wave, as are the traditions of resistance in Palestine, Yemen, and Lebanon: these are the forces currently challenging U.S. imperialism militarily.

China and Russia's statement on multipolarity touches upon this history. It reads: “Since the end of World War II, the inter-

# laid groundwork for multipolarity

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national landscape and balance of power have evolved at an accelerated pace.

“On the one hand, the wave of decolonization and the end of the Cold War have led to a significant increase in the number of sovereign states around the world, a more diverse and complex international community, a leap in the development level and international influence of countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and a surge in the number of regional and interregional organizations covering various fields such as international politics, security, economic and cultural cooperation. And its role in global affairs continues to grow. World-wide connectivity and interdependence have reached unprecedented levels in human history. The reckless manipulation of international affairs by certain countries, the imposition of their own interests on the entire world with colonial-era thinking, and the restriction of the development of other sovereign countries have completely failed.”

To reiterate: it was the revolutions of the 20th century – starting with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and picking up steam again with World War II – that laid the foundations for a multipolar transformation of the world.

Through World War II and after, the Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other peoples rose up under the leadership of their respective communist parties and were victorious, breaking with colonial domination. With the defeat of Nazism, Eastern and some Central European countries joined the socialist camp. They materially supported liberation struggles in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Wars for national independence were kicked



Zhou Enlai, Gamal Abdel Nasser and other delegates at the Bandung Conference in 1955.

off from Algeria to Mozambique. In the 1950s, many countries that didn't have full-scale socialist revolutions nevertheless began to break with imperialism in one way or another. Popular movements brought leaders to power who realized that they had to throw off foreign domination if they were to develop their countries and bring adequate health care, education, and other necessities to the people. Often, large and very popular communist parties in these countries pushed their governments to bring about progressive policies – as in Guatemala, Indonesia, and Iran.

A pivotal moment in that period was the 1955 Bandung Conference in Indonesia, the first intercontinental meeting of leaders from Africa and Asia. Bandung showed that the peoples in the colonized and formerly colonized world could come together and assert themselves on the world stage.

It should be noted that one of the primary objectives of these national-popular movements was to bring natural resources – like oil and gas – under the control of national governments, or even under the control of the capitalists of those countries, instead of under the control of British or French capitalists. The struggle for sovereign control over resources continues today, and is a major cause of U.S. aggression against Iran, which took back control of its oil first in the early 1950s (then thwarted by a U.S.-British-backed coup) and then again in 1979 with the Islamic Revolution.

In the post-World War II period, the main trend in the world was socialist revolution and national liberation. That is what broke the hold of colonialism. That is what made the current multipolar trajectory possible. And this history shows us what is still required today: organized struggle and revolution. Only that can break the imperialist system. #

## Murder, social murder, and genocide against trans people

*Continued from page 1*

Seattle, in the Pacific Northwest, is like that, too. So many trans people and other queer folk are fleeing to the city that no amount of mutual aid can bear the weight. So people are organizing and protesting to demand that Seattle officials put resources behind their claims to be a sanctuary for the trans community.

A week before Eryka Caldwell was murdered, Juniper Blessing was killed in Seattle. Juniper was a white trans woman, just 19, a student, murdered by a stranger in her college's laundry room.

Across the U.S., at least 12 trans people have been murdered or found dead in suspicious circumstances since early March. That's about one per week.

On the surface, Eryka Caldwell and Juniper Blessing don't seem to have had much in common: from different generations, different backgrounds, living very different lives on opposite ends of the country. But what they did have in common was being members of a

marginalized group that has been relentlessly scapegoated by the wealthy and powerful for the last half-decade.

The back-to-back murders of trans women in Seattle and Brooklyn, havens of trans life and queer culture, have made explicit what we already knew in our guts: in 2026, there is no safe place for trans people in the United States.

### No more stolen siblings

On May 27, about 60 of us – trans and cis, queer and straight – gathered next to a Family Dollar store near Eryka Caldwell's apartment building. We held candles, a trans pride flag, and signs that read, “Rest in Power, Eryka,” and “Black Trans Lives Matter.”

We walked as a group to the building, where the names of recently lost trans siblings were read out before a minute of silence. A neighbor of Eryka's, a young cisgender Black woman, asked us to add the name of a trans friend who had died. Afterward, local musician Vi Viana played two songs to honor Eryka. People left bunches of flowers.

As the vigil was wrapping up, Jasmine, a Black trans woman, spoke passionately of the responsibility of everyone to protect other Black trans women. The assembled group decided to establish a neighborhood rapid response group for threats to the Bushwick-Ridgewood trans community, modeled after those already operating in the area to respond to ICE raids on immigrants.

Just that morning, news had reached many of us that the body of another trans woman had been found in Houston's Brays Bayou. A few days after the vigil, we learned the victim was yet another Black trans woman. Her name was Persia Amarra Conway.

Between Eryka's death and our vigil 10 days later, we learned of two other lost siblings. Murry Foust, a white trans man and student at Northern Kentucky University, had been missing since late April. His body was found in an industrial area of the town of Wilder by an independently organized

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# Europe's NATO powers march east toward Russia

By Gary Wilson

British troops are dug in along Russia's border in Estonia. A new German armored brigade has opened in Lithuania, next to Russia's Kaliningrad enclave. French warplanes are set to rehearse nuclear strikes alongside Poland's.

Britain, France and Germany are pushing their armies, weapons and nuclear plans up to Russia's borders. Their governments call it defense. Russia has not attacked Western Europe. The danger of a wider war comes from the ring NATO is throwing around Russia.

These are the leading European imperialist powers, not small countries dragged along by Washington. They act inside NATO — an alliance of 32 countries built around the Pentagon, its top general always a U.S. officer, its armies built to plug into the U.S. war machine and buy U.S. weapons. The U.S.-run order that has ruled since 1945 is cracking, and Washington is pushing its crisis onto Europe — bigger war budgets, more arms purchases, more troops on Russia's border. Europe's rulers go along for profit, and because they no longer trust Washington to hold their place. So they build their own war machine inside NATO and point it east.

## Massing on Russia's border

Germany has built a new armored brigade — the 45th — in Lithuania, heading for a permanent force of about 5,000 by 2027. The buildup runs to the sea: Britain is pulling 10 northern European navies into the Joint Expeditionary Force, aimed at Russia across the northern seas. One target is the fleet of tankers carrying Russia's oil to market. Move to blockade those ships, and that is an act of war.

France is taking it nuclear. On April 20, Macron and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk agreed in Gdańsk to prepare regular nuclear exercises in the Baltic, French Rafales flying nuclear-capable runs alongside Polish F-16s — rehearsing how a European war with Russia could cross the nuclear threshold.

## This is NATO's war

Germany has gone furthest, signing a deal with Ukraine to jointly build long-range missiles and drones that can strike 930 miles away — the latest in two years of U.S.-cleared deep strikes inside Russia. The weapons are NATO's, the satellites are NATO's, the targeting is NATO's. U.S. officials help set the route, timing and targets for Ukraine's long-range drones, which ride U.S. satellites, Starlink and GPS past Russian defenses. One U.S. official called the drone force the "instrument" Washington uses to wreck Russia's economy. This is NATO's war — its weapons and intelligence doing the fighting, while its governments insist they are not in it.

## A war economy at home

Trump has ordered NATO governments to spend far more and warned the U.S. may no longer carry

## THE RING AROUND RUSSIA

NATO's European powers mass on the western border — while the Eurasian trade and energy routes they want to control run east, north and south.



the alliance. In late May the Pentagon said it would cut the forces it holds ready for Europe by a third to a half and shift toward the Pacific against China.

So they are forcing the bill onto workers. In March 2025 Berlin gutted its constitutional "debt brake" for the military: every euro above 1% of GDP can now be borrowed without limit, and Germany has set aside roughly €108 billion (\$117 billion) for its military in 2026. Berlin points to a separate €500 billion fund as proof it is rebuilding roads, hospitals and schools, but that money is borrowed and one-time. The everyday budget — wages, pensions, the cost of running those hospitals and schools — stays chained to the cap. War gets an open tab. Workers' needs are told to wait.

The U.S. war on Iran drove it home: Washington could not force Iran to surrender or reopen the Strait of Hormuz. And German industry, cut off from cheap Russian gas, now pours wealth into U.S. companies for costlier U.S. gas, through the energy-as-weapon council Trump set up in February 2025.

## They call peace the danger

Russia anchors the trade and energy routes between Europe and Asia — the India-to-Europe corridor that skips the Suez Canal, the Arctic's Northern Sea Route, the Power of Siberia 2 gas pipeline to China. Its capitalist ruling class has kept Gazprom, Rosneft and Sberbank out of Western hands. The lines drawn around Russia are about whether the imperialist powers can still command the wealth and routes of Eurasia as the old order falls apart. Security is the cover, not the cause.

Europe's rulers are scrambling to lock in their place before any Ukraine settlement cuts them out. The London think tank Chatham House warned that a ceasefire could "imperil" European security. Read that again: they call peace the danger. Europe's NATO governments have lined up roughly another \$104 billion for Ukraine. They are paying to keep the war burning.

## The danger of a wider war

On May 25 the escalation went official. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told Washington, on Putin's orders, that Russian forces were beginning "systematic and consistent strikes" on military and decision-making sites in Kiev. Russia said the strikes answered a Ukrainian drone attack on a college in Starobelsk on May 21 that killed 21 students — guided, it said, by Starlink, the corporate network wired into the U.S. war machine. Rubio warned the war risked "spreading into something new."

Europe's rulers are arming for a fight over their place in a world Washington can no longer hold together. They wave the banner of "Russian aggression," but what they are after is control of Eurasia's resources, pipelines and trade routes. The powers massing on Russia's borders are imperialist contenders reaching for a bigger share — and willing to risk a wider war to seize it. Workers have no stake in that war. National unity behind the war makers is a trap. The task now is to build working-class opposition to NATO's march east, its swelling war budgets and its drive toward world war. #

# Ukraine reburies Nazi collaborator with full state honors

By Lev Koufax

On May 25, 2026, Ukrainian President and NATO puppet, Volodymyr Zelensky, marched in a reburial procession and ceremony for the long-deceased Ukrainian fascist figure, Andriy Melnyk. In 1964, Melnyk was buried at Bonnevoie cemetery in Luxembourg. He remained there until May 19, 2026, when the Ukrainian government exhumed his remains and transferred them to Kiev.

Attendees at the May 25 ceremony included not just President Zelensky, but also Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko, head of the Presidential Office Kyrylo Budanov, Parliament Speaker Ruslan Stefanchuk, and the ministers for Veterans Affairs and Foreign Affairs. This was quite the showing from the Ukrainian political class.

On May 19, as the reburial process began, Zelensky spoke glowingly of Melnyk, describing him and his wife, Sofia Fedak-Melnyk, as “iconic Ukrainians of the 20th century who are deeply respected.” In a post marking the ceremony, Zelensky expressed his gratitude to “everyone who has worked to make such returns of great Ukrainian figures possible and to give the Ukrainian People their own pantheon of heroes.” At the May 25 state ceremony, Zelensky went even further, placing Melnyk among “our Ukrainian heroes” and saying he had returned to the Ukraine he “dreamed of.”

So, who was this great Ukrainian figure? Who was Andriy Melnyk? First, let’s start with what Mr. Melnyk was not. Mr. Melnyk was not a hero. Mr. Melnyk was not a great statesman or leader. Mr. Melnyk was not a person of kindness, grace, or compassion.

Andriy Melnyk was a committed fascist and all but led the collaboration movement with Nazi German forces as they invaded Ukraine. In 1939, Melnyk rose to leadership in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). In a statement condemning the reburial and commemoration, the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress condemned Ukraine for “paying tribute to a leader of a movement whose members supported Nazi Germany and contributed to the climate of hatred, persecution, and mass murder of Jews

The OUN was and is one of the most



**Zelensky joins the state reburial of Andriy Melnyk, a Ukrainian fascist leader who aided Hitler’s invasion of the Soviet Union and promoted Nuremberg-style anti-Jewish laws, at the National Military Memorial Cemetery near Kiev.**

infamous and notorious fascist forces in the world. Under the leadership of Melnyk and people like Stepan Bandera, the OUN did not just collaborate with Nazi intelligence and the Nazi army. These forces drew on the brutal anti-semitic pogroms and anti-Bolshevik violence that swept Ukraine after the 1917 October Revolution. The OUN itself was founded in 1929, but it carried forward the war of terror against pro-Bolshevik and nationally oppressed communities in Ukraine.

By the time Melnyk came to power, they were well funded, well armed, and well established as the main Ukrainian fascist organization. During his leadership, Melnyk organized Ukrainian troop support for invading Nazi troops and aimed to institute Nuremberg-style laws towards the Jewish community.

Unfortunately for Melnyk, Hitler and the Nazi Party were not set on the idea of an independent fascist Ukraine. For the Third Reich, places like

Ukraine had to be subordinated to German fascism. Even when the Vienna Gestapo arrested Melnyk in 1944, he still attempted to build connections within Germany in support of an independent fascist Ukraine. World War II ended in 1945, but Melnyk’s fascist organizing did not. He led the OUN in exile until his death in 1964.

So, this is the great hero that the Jewish President of Ukraine claims is a glorious champion of the Ukrainian people. A Ukraine in the vision of Melnyk would have been one of complete war and terror against the working class. The Ukrainian government’s commemoration and worship of figures like Melnyk is not particularly new. Since the Maidan in 2014, Ukrainian society has consistently moved towards fascism in policy and symbolism. The forces pushing this transition are not a secret. NATO, the United States, and the EU all oversaw investment in Ukraine’s increasingly fascist military and, really, the general direction of Ukrainian society in anticipation of a proxy conflict with Russia.

Ukraine’s reburial of Melnyk was so heinous that even Israel was pressured into condemning the move. Melnyk’s reburial is just another piece added to a mountain of evidence that Jewish president aside, Ukraine is a deepening fascist country working on behalf of NATO and the United States.

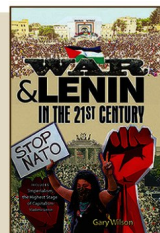
*Lev Koufax is an anti-Zionist Jewish activist.*

## ‘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 key contributor to Marxist theory, wrote ‘Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism’ in 1916.

At [tinyurl.com/LeninAndWar](https://tinyurl.com/LeninAndWar)



# NO SAFE PLACE

## Murder, social murder, and genocide against trans people

Continued from page 17

search party. Police claimed that there was no indication of “foul play,” but the cause of death has not been released.

Last might be the most heart-wrenching. A trans girl, a high school student, identified only as Jane Doe, killed herself in January. She had been the main plaintiff in a lawsuit against the state of Idaho’s ban on trans youth using school restrooms that match their gender. Her death was revealed because, in her absence, the case was dismissed.

The court offered “its sincerest sympathies” as it allowed the vicious restroom ban to take effect statewide.

Every trans suicide is murder.

### What is social murder?

Frederick Engels, who co-founded scientific socialism with Karl Marx, first recorded the phrase “social murder” while studying the appalling conditions of workers in Manchester. That phrase has gained new currency among trans people in recent months.

Writing on the growing incidence of suicide and attempted suicide by trans people, especially youth, and the constant drumbeat of the far right egging us on to kill ourselves, Alejandra Caraballo, an attorney, law professor, and trans woman, explained:

“In 1845, Engels documented the conditions of the English working class in Manchester and articulated a concept that the workers themselves had already named: social murder.

“Engels’s formulation was remarkably precise. When society places people in conditions where they cannot survive, when it deprives them of the necessities of life, when it forces them through the arm of the law to remain in those conditions until death is the inevitable consequence, and when society knows that these people will perish and permits the conditions to remain, the result is murder.

“It is, as Engels wrote, disguised and malicious murder, murder against which no one can defend themselves, because no one sees the murderer and the death of the victim appears natural. But it is murder all the same. ...

“Every element of this framework maps onto what is happening to transgender people in the United States right now.”

Caraballo continued: “In September 2024, Nature Human Behavior published a study ... across five years of survey data from 61,240 transgender and nonbinary young people. The study found that state-level anti-transgender laws caused an increase in past-year suicide attempts among trans and nonbinary youth by 7% to 72%, with the sharpest increases among those under 18. The study established, for the first time, a causal relationship between anti-trans legislation and suicide attempts.

“The causal mechanism is the one Engels described: the imposition of conditions that make life unlivable. When a trans teenager cannot access

medical care that treats gender dysphoria, cannot use a restroom at school, is forcibly outed to hostile parents, is called the wrong name and pronouns by teachers compelled by law to do so, is barred from sports teams, and is told every day by the government of the country they live in that they do not exist in any legally cognizable form, the result is predictable.”

### The groundwork for genocide

Caraballo argues that social murder better describes the current situation facing the trans community than genocide.

In my view, both are accurate. Social murder is in effect and seen as a powerful yet “deniable” way of murdering trans people. It was already operative under Joe Biden’s administration, famous for “thoughts and prayers” while trans futures burned under his nose.

At the same time, the Trump administration has been rapidly laying the ideological groundwork and building the repressive infrastructure to shift toward roundups, mass incarceration of trans people, and extermination.

Most people think of genocide as the death camps and gas chambers of the Holocaust or the mass bombing of Gaza. But there were many steps in the process leading up to those “final” acts of mass murder.

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention has documented the rapid onset of conditions leading to a government-orchestrated genocide of trans people in the U.S.

On March 11, Lemkin issued its third “red flag alert” for trans people in the U.S. It says in part: “The Administration has moved from identifying transgender people as a threat to the family and to the nation’s military prowess to claiming that transgender people constitute a threat to the spiritual health of the nation and the greatest direct threat to U.S. national security in the world.

“Given these ideological developments, especially coupled with the increasingly hostile and draconian legislation against trans identities, the Lemkin Institute believes that the United States is squarely within the early to middle stages of a genocidal process against trans people, the goal of which is to completely erase transgender people not only from public life but also from existence in the U.S. and globally.”

### ‘We will find and kill you’

The Trump regime’s new “Counterterrorism Strategy” was released on May 6. It explicitly names trans people as a “threat” to U.S. national security, along with antifa and other left-wing movements. Naturally, the violent, fascist, white supremacist movement that serves as a pillar of Trump’s power goes unaddressed.

A cover letter signed by Trump ends with the vow, “We will find you and we will kill you.”

“Whether it is the cartels, the jihadists or violent left-wing extremists like antifa and like the transgender killers, the nonbinary, the left-wing radicals who killed my friend Charlie Kirk, we will take them on, head-on,” Sebastian Gorka, the administration’s senior director for counterterrorism, told reporters.

A misinformation campaign by the administration and far-right “influencers” attempted to cast blame on trans people for the assassination of hate-monger Charlie Kirk last year. For a few days, the threat of pogroms against trans people hung menacingly in the air.

The Kirk story fell apart. But it is still repeated as gospel truth by the far right. And every mass shooting or assassination attempt against a Trump ally is now accompanied by stories blaming trans individuals or trans people as a group.

The vast majority of these incidents are, of course, carried out by white, cisgender men with right-wing views.

The purpose of the misinformation campaign is to create a false consciousness among the masses of people, where it’s “common knowledge” that trans people are dangerous.

And that, in turn, intensifies the atmosphere of social murder – even as it brings the final stages of genocide closer.

We mourn the trans people who have been murdered or died under suspicious circumstances since March 1, 2026:

**Persia Amarra Conway** (Houston, Texas)

**Murry Foust** (Wilder, Ky.)

**Eryka Caldwell** (Brooklyn, NY)

**Juniper Blessing** (Seattle, Washington)

**Lucas RedBeard Knapp** (rural N.M.)

**Lanessa Rodriguez** (Ft. Pierce, Fla.)

**Aleanna Royal Belcher** (Binghamton, NY)

**Dannielle Spillman** (San Francisco, Cali.)

**Davonta Curtis** (Chicago, Ill.)

**Shyyell Diamond Sanchez-McCray**  
(Petersburg, Va.)

**Mommie Spotsie King** (Dunnellon, Fla.)

**Daniella Analee Escobedo** (Las Vegas, Nev.)

And all those we don’t know, who were named misgendered, or ignored by police and media.

After this article was submitted, news broke of the murder of 16-year-old **Nathaniel Potts**, a gender nonconforming person, in Raleigh, Illinois, on May 20. Nathaniel, a gender nonconforming teenager, was shot in the back. #

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