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SocialistViewpoint

★ The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it. —Karl Marx ★

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2026 VOL. 26 NO. 5



How to Fight Capitalism and Win - Page 4

On Slow Violence in Cuba - Page 10

Two Cases, One Tradition - Page 14

No, Israel Does Not Have "A Right to Exist" - Page 19

Glorifying Rapists - Page 26

Brutality Against Anti-ICE Protests

BY BRAD REED

July 14, 2026—Federal, state, and local law enforcement agents' brutal attacks on protesters across the U.S. have caused blindings, traumatic brain injuries, permanent disabilities, and other maladies, according to a report released Monday, July 13, 2026, by researchers at Physicians for Human Rights and the Human Rights Center at the University of California at Berkeley.

In an examination of actions taken by authorities in response to demonstrations against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) actions over the span of a year, the report documents 412 instances of misuse of force against protesters, journalists, and bystanders.

Just over half of the misuses of force were directed at demonstrators, while 43 percent were directed at journalists, the report finds.

This misuse of force led to 203 documented injuries affecting 119 individuals, including 44 incidents of laceration, 19 traumatic brain injuries, ten ocular injuries, seven permanent disabilities, and one instance each of amputation and hearing loss.

The report adds that the actual number of injuries inflicted upon anti-ICE demonstrators "is likely far greater" given researchers' limitations in documenting "invisible injuries" such as chronic pain or hearing loss.

What is particularly troubling, the report emphasizes, is the number of injuries impacting people's heads.

"The high number of head injuries (19 brain, ten eye, one hearing loss) suggests a pattern of force directed towards the head," the researchers write. "Whether intentionally or recklessly, this violates virtually all use-of-force guidelines and results in significant harm."

The report documents 97 incidents of law enforcement officials shooting crowd control projectiles at people's heads, making it the second-most frequent type of improper force used, following shots taken at close range.

Dr. Rohini Haar, the lead author of the report, said in an interview with *The Guardian* that she started tracking misuse of force in response to anti-ICE protests after a federal agent shot a pas-

tor in the face at close range during a demonstration in Oakland last year.

"Those weapons can cause harm," said Haar, who for years has been researching the health impacts of crowd control weapons. "It's just when they're used, how they're used, and if they're used."

Tactics used by ICE and other law enforcement agencies have come back into focus over the last week after the fatal ICE shootings of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo in Texas and Joan Sebastian Guerrero in Maine over the span of less than a week.

Salgado Araujo, 52, was an undocumented immigrant from Mexico who had lived in the U.S. for more than three decades and ran a small construction business. Sebastian Guerrero, 26, was a Colombian national who was authorized to work in the U.S. and was shot and killed by ICE in front of his three-year-old daughter.

—Common Dreams, July 14, 2026

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/ice-protests-police->



A U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agent pulls the pin out of a canister of tear gas before tossing it towards residents of a residential neighborhood in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on January 12, 2026

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CONTENTS

SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT

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U.S. and World Politics

Brutality Against Anti-ICE Protests 2
By Brad Reed

How to Fight Capitalism and Win 4
By Bonnie Weinstein

Trump's Brutal Blockade on Cuba 7
By Jonathan Ng

On Slow Violence in Cuba 10
By Tre Nowaczynski

Two Cases, One Tradition 14
By Blanca Missé

No, Israel Does Not Have "A Right to Exist" 19
By Craig Mokhiber

South Africa's Xenophobia Wave 23
By teleSUR

**How Communists Would Spend
One Trillion Dollars** 24
By Joe Attard

Glorifying Rapists 26
By BettBeat Media

**Largest Gathering of Service Members for Antiwar
Protest Since Vietnam** 30
By Mike Prysner

Latin America's Deepening Organic Crises 32
By Josefina L. Martínez and Matías Maiello

Class War in Sugartown 34
By Joe Allen

Solidarity Strikes and Taft-Hartley's Long Shadow .. 37
By Hayley Brown

An Injury to One Is an Injury to All 39
By Tatiana Cozzarelli

**Attack on Class Independence
in the Labor Movement** 40
By Luigi Morris

**Only Organizing Will Halt
Trump's War on Immigrants** 44
By Justin Akers Chacón

Trump's Attack on Temporary Protected Status 47
By Stephen Prager

Hands Off Cuba 67
By Kevin Cooper

Environment

Capitalism Fans the Flames of the Climate Crisis .. 49
By Emma Lee and M. Carlstad

Incarceration Nation

**Mumia Abu-Jamal Seeks UN Intervention
After 44 Years Behind Bars** 51
By Ed Pilkington

Minnesota Activists Defend Anti-ICE Protesters ... 54
By Ibrahim Hirsi

Professor Faces Prison in "Antifa" Case 55
By Sam Levin

**The Ways the Government Spies on Our
Communications** 58
By Jeremy Busby and Isabella Lucia Maitino

Trump's Widening Crackdown on the U.S. Left 60
By Michael Arria

Arsenal of Marxism

Outlook for Socialism in the United States 62
By Eugene V. Debs

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How to Fight Capitalism and Win

By BONNIE WEINSTEIN

The power of the capitalist class is based upon one thing—it's ownership, by law, of the means of production and the profits created by the labor of the working class.

But workers have no say in the creation of these laws that guarantee wealth only for the capitalist class. All these laws relegate workers to wage-slavery—earning a tiny fraction of the

wealth we create from our labor—getting paid only as much as we fight for.

Ending capitalist dictatorship over us seems insurmountable, but it's not.

The foundation of capitalism

Our very survival depends upon selling our labor power to the wealthy for as much as we can possibly fight them for, and not a penny more.

Workers must pay for everything that we need to survive—food, housing, healthcare, education, the clothes we wear, the tools we need for work, the transportation we need to get to work—we must pay out of pocket for everything while the wealthy flourish.

Capitalist democracy is democracy for the rich and totalitarianism for the poor

If you are a millionaire, billionaire or trillionaire you can afford anything, including winning elections. How can an independent candidate of the working class compete in the electoral process against the ruling elite?

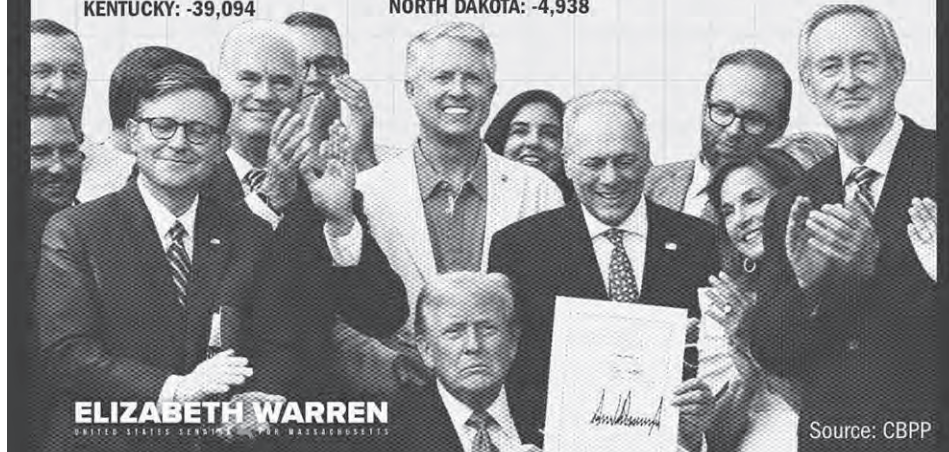
It costs millions of dollars to win an election. To make matters worse, our labor organizations are working in partnership with the bosses by donating millions of dollars of funds collected from union members to capitalist politicians—mostly Democratic Party politicians who pretend to be on the side of the working class in order to tie us to their undemocratic electoral process that overwhelmingly favors those with the most money.

The wealthy spend millions of dollars on publicity for their campaigns that promise everything and deliver nothing—and often force give-backs that workers have fought for and lost. The capitalist elections are a lopsided battle that favors the wealthy over the poor.

Workers can't compete fairly in capitalism's electoral process where money rules and the poor are rendered voiceless. There can be no partnership between the exploiter and the exploited. The exploited must stand independently and in solidarity with each other if we are to survive.

1 Year After Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill": **HERE'S HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE LOST FOOD ASSISTANCE SO FAR**

ALABAMA: -52,480	LOUISIANA: -127,693	OHIO: -106,133
ALASKA: -422	MAINE: -11,071	OKLAHOMA: -107,821
ARIZONA: -469,400	MARYLAND: -32,502	OREGON: -46,792
ARKANSAS: -18,549	MASSACHUSETTS: 145,968	PENNSYLVANIA: -200,976
CALIFORNIA: -300,838	MICHIGAN: -158,599	RHODE ISLAND: -15,390
COLORADO: -26,095	MINNESOTA: -16,011	SOUTH CAROLINA: -63,100
CONNECTICUT: -33,599	MISSISSIPPI: -40,350	SOUTH DAKOTA: -5,001
DELAWARE: -18,458	MISSOURI: -48,436	TENNESSEE: -99,979
FLORIDA: -495,585	MONTANA: -6,937	TEXAS: -392,637
GEORGIA: NO DATA	NEBRASKA: -16,873	UTAH: -21,787
HAWAII: -7,926	NEVADA: -70,965	VERMONT: -4,547
IDAHO: -7,588	NEW HAMPSHIRE: -1,514	VIRGINIA: -114,077
ILLINOIS: -201,959	NEW JERSEY: -40,506	WASHINGTON: -34,401
INDIANA: -55,706	NEW MEXICO: -17,106	WEST VIRGINIA: -14,337
IOWA: -23,630	NEW YORK: -147,176	WISCONSIN: -22,485
KANSAS: -19,780	NORTH CAROLINA: -177,415	WYOMING: -1,820
KENTUCKY: -39,094	NORTH DAKOTA: -4,938	



ELIZABETH WARREN
UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR MASSACHUSETTS

Source: CBPP

Our only hope is to break from this rigged system and organize ourselves independently of the capitalist class.

We must fight our own battles based upon the power and strength of our unity and solidarity with one another and for the rightful full share of the wealth we produce through our labor. We are the overwhelming majority. All we need do is organize for our own benefit.

Capitalism's predation

The depths and expanse to which capitalism's profit motive is destroying us and our environment is staggering. In July three stories in the *New York Times* illustrated this destruction.

The first article, by Murray Carpenter, published July 6th, titled "Tobacco Companies Are Cashing In on Zyn's Unstoppable Popularity," is about how the tobacco industry is devising ways to get more people—especially youth—addicted to nicotine, which is proven harmful to the body:

"Along with vaping products, the Big Tobacco corporations have seized on the nicotine pouch market as a way to offset the steep decline in domestic sales of cigarettes. Pouch sales are projected to increase to more than \$40 billion worldwide by 2033 from \$6.9 billion in 2025, according to an analysis by Grand View Research, a market research firm. Companies are racing to meet the demand, so far investing more than \$1 billion in plant production to accommodate the growth. Several states have welcomed the industry's forays into the latest twists on nicotine products, handing out millions of dollars in tax credits and grants. But the marketing of nicotine-laden items like pouches, gums and lozenges as another safe alternative to traditional cigarettes has heightened public health concerns. Experts are accusing the tobacco industry of once again deliberately ignoring decades of science that proved the addictive nature of nicotine, and of stoking demand by producing more and more potent varieties. Reminiscent of Juul

and other flavored vaping products that caused a public uproar over teenage consumption, the pouches — tobacco-free 'lip pillows' placed between the cheek and gum — have revived warnings that nicotine is highly addictive and can cause a host of conditions, like anxiety and heart arrhythmia. It also threatens a teenager's still-developing brain, with the potential for affecting behavior and cognitive function, experts say."

There can be no partnership between the exploiter and the exploited. The exploited must stand independently and in solidarity with each other if we are to survive.

The second article dated July 9th, by Catrin Einhorn, titled, "Sea Mining Could Devastate an Enigmatic Group of Creatures, Researchers Warn" explains how deep-sea mining threatens the health of the oceans, but will take precedence over the welfare of life

on earth in order to increase the profits of mining companies:

"Deep-sea mining threatens to drive to extinction more than half of the snails and other mollusks that rely on hydrothermal vents, according to the latest update of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List, the global scientific authority on the status of species. The finding comes as nations are expanding plans for deep-sea mining, eager to access valuable minerals needed for electronics and other uses. Some of these minerals are found in and near chimney-like structures around hydrothermal vents, areas where cold seawater seeps through fissures in the earth's crust and hits magma. As the water heats, it picks up elements like copper, zinc, gold and silver before shooting back into the ocean at temperatures that can reach over 750 degrees Fahrenheit. The rapid cooling causes the metals to precipitate out. Companies are interested in harvesting these and other deep-sea metals, arguing that growing demand combined with the serious environmental impact of mining on land make oceans an attractive source. ... The Trump administration has moved to push ahead with deep-sea mining in international waters without global approval."



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The third article, again, points out the insidious nature of capitalism's quest for profits at the expense of our health—especially the health of our children.

In a July 27th article by Julia Belluz titled, “This Is the Way Out of Our Ultraprocessed Dystopia” she explains how capitalism deliberately produces unhealthy and addictive foods for the poor as a cheap substitute to the healthy diet we can't afford:

“Researchers have uncovered how processed foods override the body's built-in signals for satiety and nutrition and increase the risk of Type 2 diabetes and obesity, among other chronic diseases. ... Philip Morris purchased Kraft in 1988, and a little earlier, R.J. Reynolds acquired major food brands and merged with Nabisco. The tobacco documents show that cigarette companies applied

their knowledge about flavor optimization, youth marketing and brain chemistry to ultraprocessed foods in order to increase profits. ... To play on a question that the former Food and Drug Administration commissioner David Kessler asked during the tobacco trials: Whose choice is driving the demand for ultraprocessed foods in America? Is it a choice by consumers to continue eating them? Or by food companies to maintain the public's dependency on them?”

We have become immune to all the ways capitalism is destroying our lives and the planet in pursuit of profits—including their continued wars of aggression against working people around the world.

It is the ordinary people who fight and get killed in wars. The elite sit on their thrones and direct the hits that will

benefit them the most financially because that's all they are concerned about.

Our unity is free and our votes can be free, too

An independent organization of unity and solidarity among all of us who must work for a living can surmount the power of wealth because we are the overwhelming majority.

If we stood united in our demand for control over the wealth we produce by our work, we could turn the tables on the wealthy and end the balance of power of the rich over the poor forever.

And we could conceivably achieve this peacefully and without violence if we stop work on capitalism's production for profit *en masse*—before they *do* destroy the world—and take control of the means of production out of their hands and into our own, for the benefit of all of us.

We could elect who we want to represent us. We could disarm capitalism, and free the world from their constant wars of power, destruction, threats and the illegal acquisition of the wealth we alone produce.

We can remove the borders that separate us and plan democratically to build a fair and equitable world internationally.

Production for the needs of all on a foundation of economic and social equality and justice *is* in our power to achieve—if we stand united.

All we need do is organize democratically in our own defense, and in defense of all life on earth.

An independent organization of unity and solidarity among all of us who must work for a living can surmount the power of wealth because we are the overwhelming majority.

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Trump's Brutal Blockade on Cuba

By JONATHAN NG

August 1, 2026—In recent months, President Donald Trump's blockade against Cuba has generated blackouts and hunger, stretching society to its breaking point. Exploiting the crisis, Cuban American reactionaries across Florida are pressing for regime change. Decked in MAGA swag, they frequently gather along the palm tree-lined streets of Miami to excoriate socialism, promote escalation, and sport signs declaring "Make Cuba Great Again." Since the war against Iran began, their demand has been simple: "Cuba next."

While lobbying for intervention, community leaders have drafted detailed agreements for dividing the political spoils and implanting unfettered capitalism on the island. From Guantánamo Bay, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth recently primed activists' expectations by declaring that Trump is "taking back our hemisphere," insinuating the imminent use of force.

Cuban American conservatives and U.S. officials claim to champion Cuban democracy. Yet the intensified sanctions and pro-war demonstrations lay bare the violence of U.S. policy, while revealing a horrific tolerance for human suffering. Far from defending Cuban sovereignty, Washington and its reactionary allies have long attempted to thwart the island's aspirations for self-determination. For over a century, U.S. officials have regarded Cuba as a plantation to exploit, rival to defeat, or dissenting voice to silence, never shedding their colonial outlook. The current crisis mirrors this troubled history, as policymakers and right-wing extremists revive siege warfare in the Caribbean.

The blood-stained façade

The latest string of U.S. sanctions and promises to liberate the island resound with bitter irony. In 1898, Washington justified intervening in

Cuba's war for independence against Spain by citing mass starvation among civilians. Leading the charge, Senator George Hoar declared that Madrid "deliberately [plotted] to starve them to death." After invading, President William McKinley proclaimed Cuba's liberation, yet refused to cede power to local revolutionaries, excluding them from negotiations with Spain.

Cuban authorities allowed U.S. investors to remit profits, while controlling entire industrial sectors and 40 percent of sugar fields.

Instead, his administration turned the island into a U.S. protectorate, while claiming that its large population of color made self-rule dangerous. Echoing this sentiment, *The New York Times* warned

against "an irresponsible government of half-breeds," and the *San Antonio Express* argued that foreign control was necessary to "save the Cubans from themselves." For four years, U.S. military authorities attempted to disenfranchise Black citizens, established the Rural Guard to squash dissent, and oversaw a land grab by foreign businessmen, who displaced thousands of farmers.

In 1901, Washington linked independence to acceptance of the Platt Amendment, which granted the United States "the right to intervene" to protect strategic interests. Senator Orville Platt argued that it was essential for stability, since local politicians were as "irresponsible as children." The statute allowed U.S. officials to establish a naval base in Guantánamo Bay, before again invading the island in 1906, 1912, and 1917. U.S. leaders mocked Cuba's sovereignty. Deploying U.S. soldiers in 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt derided "that infernal little Cuban Republic," claiming that he wanted to "wipe its people off the face of the earth."



View of a graffiti reading "Long Live the Revolution," in Havana, Cuba, on July 29, 2026.

In large part, tensions remained high because of economic exploitation. Following the War of 1898, U.S. businessmen manipulated the widespread destruction of legal records to seize Cuban land. Between 1905 and 1911, the number of farms in Guantánamo alone fell from 1,154 to 419, as foreign investors consolidated massive sugar plantations. The sociologist Lowry Nelson observed that property disputes were “one-sided affairs,” since U.S. corporations employed high-powered lawyers and “corrupt[ed] the officials ... with bribes.” Poverty spread across the island, and male unemployment rates surpassed 20 percent by 1907.

Popular outrage finally exploded in 1912, when the Independent Party of Color organized mass protests against racial and economic exclusion. In response, Secretary of State Philander Knox pressured Cuban officials to stifle the uprising by threatening another invasion. Historian Louis Pérez, Jr. emphasizes that U.S. Marines blitzed from the local naval base to protect U.S. property, freeing Cuban soldiers to undertake a cruel campaign of repression. “They have lopped off the heads of probably some six thousand negroes in this province,” a U.S. citizen in Guantánamo claimed. One Afro-Cuban resident recalled that soldiers “killed everything that was Black” and set fire to piles of bodies.

The massacre of 1912 not only showcased the racist fury of Cuba’s ruling class. It also revealed the persistence of colonial control, as the threat of further U.S. intervention supercharged the violence. For decades, Washington portrayed such policies as a form of benign paternalism that guaranteed Cuba’s sovereignty. Yet the Platt Amendment’s shadow encouraged Cuban leaders to prioritize the rights of foreign investors over demands for social justice, prompting former U.S. Ambassador Sumner Welles to conclude in 1934 that Cuba’s government was “merely a *façade*” for “American interests.”

Unwanted guests

Before the Cuban Revolution, U.S. businessmen oversaw the island’s economy, while backing President Fulgencio Batista, who tortured dissidents and received suitcases of bribes each week. Historian Van Gosse explains that Batista cemented Havana’s status as a hotbed of vice and colonial desire, where tourists like future President John F. Kennedy drank, gambled, and watched live sex shows in segregated luxury. Overseeing a tropical tax haven, Cuban authorities allowed U.S. investors to remit profits, while controlling entire industrial sectors and 40 percent of sugar fields.

For over a century, U.S. officials have regarded Cuba as a plantation to exploit, rival to defeat, or dissenting voice to silence, never shedding their colonial outlook.

In 1956, Fidel Castro returned from exile to lead a popular uprising that aimed to dismantle the semi-colonial order. President Dwight D. Eisenhower mobilized to help Batista quell the insurrection. A CIA officer recalled that agents “penetrated all institutions” of Cuban life, and U.S. diplomats pursued “all means short of outright intervention” to block Castro from power. While providing military aid, the Pentagon also allowed Batista to launch air strikes from its Guantánamo naval base, razing hamlets with B-26 bombers. In a theatrical twist, rebels then seized U.S. Marines as hostages, forcing Eisenhower to downgrade cooperation.

After their victory in 1959, revolutionaries strove to overcome the legacy of colonialism, successfully eliminating malnutrition and racial segregation. Rebel leader Raúl Castro announced

that Cubans had finally “finish[ed] the War of Independence.”

Yet again, Washington conspired to stifle the revolution, fearing that it would undercut U.S. imperial authority and inspire leftists worldwide. In 1960, the State Department contemplated “every possible means” to “weaken the economic life of Cuba,” paving the way for a decades-long blockade. U.S. authorities even impounded Fidel Castro’s airplane, when he visited the United Nations that year. While tensions grew, Under Secretary of State Chester Bowles lamented the Kennedy administration’s “lack of moral integrity,” as officials sponsored assassination plots and terrorist attacks against Cuba. Asked about invasion plans, presidential advisor Adolf Berle exclaimed, “Let ’er rip.”

After the U.S.-backed incursion failed, Castro stationed Soviet missiles on the island in self-defense. Furious, Kennedy risked nuclear war to remove them. Revealingly, he worried that the missiles made Cubans “look like they’re coequal with us.”

More than anything, the U.S. government’s refusal to leave Guantánamo illustrated its colonial mindset. For decades, policymakers exploited the enclave to promote subversion. Island scholars claim that the base became “an important footbridge” for counterrevolutionaries. One Cuban American operative recalled that he simply “jumped the fence,” after the Bay of Pigs invasion failed. Repeatedly, U.S. soldiers shot Cuba’s sentries, killed local civilians, and hurled stones and insults. In 1964 alone, the revolutionary Ernesto “Che” Guevara reported 1,323 provocations at the border, including “acts of sexual exhibitionism.”

Before the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, U.S. officials portrayed Cuba as an unrestrained aggressor. But the truth was the reverse: U.S. policymakers opposed the revolution because it targeted the legacy of the Platt Amendment and crushing exploitation.

Colonizing the opposition

After the Soviet Union collapsed, the State Department revamped the blockade and stimulated Cuban dissent, hoping to erase what remained of global socialism. Between 1996 and 2011, authorities allocated \$205 million for regime change on the island.

In particular, Washington financed media outlets to stir discontent and orient government critics. The National Endowment for Democracy, USAID, and other institutions funded dissident newspapers such as *CubaNet*, *ADN Cuba*, *El Estornudo*, *El Toque*, and *Diario de Cuba*. In 2010, policymakers also debuted the social media platform, ZunZuneo, to organize “smart mobs,” and later, spread anti-government hashtags in a failed “Bay of Tweets” in 2021. A former senior U.S. intelligence analyst, Fulton Armstrong, stressed that the policy put Cuba in an impossible bind: “We win if the opposition media gain a foothold, and we win if they provoke government repression,” which would further legitimize U.S.-backed dissent.

This cynical logic equally applied to support for human rights activists. Most notably, Washington helped turn the Ladies in White into international icons of resistance. Cuban women established the group in 2003 after authorities imprisoned their relatives, who allegedly received U.S. financing for political subversion. Ironically, the Ladies then used foreign funds to promote the release of “political prisoners” and intensifying economic sanctions.

Leaked cables reveal that U.S. diplomats often collaborated with the group, while requesting covert financial aid from Washington. Chief of Mission Michael Parmly reported that he met with “[l]eading members” to coordinate tactics. At one session, co-founder Berta Soler lamented the challenge of smuggling money “from a private organization in the United States.”

U.S. officials also cultivated charismatic opposition leaders such as

Oswaldo Payá, who became the leading anti-government critic in Cuba. In 2012, Payá died in a car accident. The driver, Ángel Carromero, was a far-right activist from Spain illegally funneling cash to him. Notorious for speeding, Carromero had received 42 traffic tickets from the Spanish government. Nonetheless, Washington and the Payá family claimed that Cuban authorities assassinated Oswaldo by forcing his car off the road.

The statute allowed U.S. officials to establish a naval base in Guantánamo Bay, before again invading the island in 1906, 1912, and 1917.

Relying on Carromero’s testimony, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights blamed Cuba for the crash in 2023, while U.S. leaders venerated the deceased activist as a martyr. Afterward, the Trump administration strong-armed members of the Organization of American States into placing Oswaldo’s daughter, Rosa María Payá, onto the commission. Human rights experts feared “conflicts of interest,” since her anti-government activism would tarnish the body’s “appearance of independence.” In response, the State Department secured her nomination by threatening aid cuts to states that opposed it. Payá now exploits the position and her U.S.-sponsored non-profit organization to promote regime change against progressive governments across the hemisphere, citing the violent 2019 *coup* in Bolivia as a model.

In short, U.S. officials have fostered political division in Cuba for decades. Rather than strengthen democracy, they chose to colonize the opposition. In turn, prominent government critics

pursued counterrevolution over reform, as they competed for foreign support. Projecting an imperial force-field, U.S. power remained discreet yet suffocating. Policymakers were too weak to uproot socialism, but strong enough to keep Cuba frozen in an unending Cold War.

The politics of hunger

Since 2017, the United States has drastically tightened the blockade against Cuba, asserting extraterritorial sovereignty over the island. Both Republicans and Democrats backed sanctions to court the votes of Cuban Americans in Florida, as many drifted into the MAGA camp. Celebrating this shift, the Ladies in White dubbed Trump the “Achilles heel” of socialism.

A high-tech form of siege warfare, the blockade prevents Cuba from accessing financial markets, oil, agricultural supplies, and more. During the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. officials literally tried to asphyxiate the island, blocking the export of oxygen and ventilators. Since 1992, the United Nations has passed 33 resolutions denouncing the blockade, which it says inflicts incalculable losses running into the trillions of dollars.

This year, Trump justified escalating sanctions by citing the Monroe Doctrine, which U.S. leaders invoked to invade Cuba in 1898. Ironically, he portrayed Cuban socialism as undemocratic, while interfering in elections in Argentina, Honduras, and Colombia to advance the far-right realignment of the region. He also pardoned the former Honduran president, Juan Orlando Hernández, for cocaine trafficking, so he could help isolate Cuba and other leftist governments. In leaked audio files, Hernández and his colleagues boast about plans to “eradicate the cancer of the left,” as well as a “new North American base” in Honduras “for conflicts... [with] Cuba.”

More than anyone, Cuban American extremists propel the latest wave of

aggression. Despite espousing democracy, their leaders exemplify the strident conservatism and vulgar corruption of the Batista dictatorship, while pushing Cuba toward humanitarian collapse. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's main political backers, the Fanjul brothers, run a sugar plantation that employs forced labor. Likewise, Trump's principal adviser on Cuba, Mauricio Claver-Carone, is notorious for sexual and financial misconduct. More broadly, the Cuban American National Foundation, Cuban Democratic Directorate, and other pillars of the Cuban American lobby have misused federal funds, violently assaulted critics, or organized terrorist attacks against the island.

Leveraging her human rights credentials, Payá now leads *Pasos de Cambio*, a coalition of counterrevolutionary groups, and has signed a "Liberation Agreement" advocating regime change. Island residents call the blockade "genocide," reporting skyrocketing infant mortality rates and starvation. By con-

trast, Payá's colleague Orlando Gutiérrez-Boronat of the Assembly of the Cuban Resistance dubs it "a great achievement by Cuban exiles," claiming that it grants them the legitimacy to govern Cuba.

Policymakers were too weak to uproot socialism, but strong enough to keep Cuba frozen in an unending Cold War.

Pandering to supporters, Trump recently celebrated the 1898 invasion, before implying that a new era of colonialism has begun: "Cuba ... is coming our way." Afterward, Payá praised the president, recognizing "the historical parallels" and insisting his government is "the best ally of the Cuban people."

As war drums sound, Rubio demands that UN members "refrain from deliver-

ing any remarks" critical of U.S. policy or face retaliation. The Pentagon is considering plans for an aerial invasion of Cuba. And U.S. legislators who visited the island this July warn that sanctions are turning it into a "silent Gaza," systematically strangling Cuban society.

Ultimately, Cuba's humanitarian crisis is the latest episode in a 128-year struggle for control over the island. The Platt Amendment and Monroe Doctrine have morphed into the "Donroe Doctrine," making unprovoked aggression a strategic principle. Legally speaking, the blockade is colonialism in all but name: an extraterritorial assertion of sovereignty that aims to starve Cubans, capsize their economy, and bring them to their knees. As Trump and his allies target Cuba, island residents continue a tradition of unbending resistance against the U.S.

—Truthout, August 1, 2026

<https://truthout.org/articles/trumps-brutal-blockade-on-cuba-harkens-back-to-the-days-of-us-invasions/>

On Slow Violence in Cuba

BY TRE NOWACZYNSKI

The rooftop of Azotea de la India in Centro Habana offers respite. At this elevation, just peaking over the rival buildings, the sea breeze races across the island struggling to combat the heat that blankets the streets below. This place is a Cuban archive, an unmatched collection of vinyl records from a bygone *era* of cultural production, curated alongside a Cuban cocktail class. Dayle and Pancho are a Cuban-Italian couple skilled as artists, craftspeople and historians. When they are not hosting listening sessions, this space is a haven for artists and other creatives that resist succumbing to the despair of the country below. Instead, they have created a space for joy to exist and propagate, to cultivate community, to take care of their neighbors and to embody the resilience of the

Cuban identity. A 1960's Irakere jazz record ricochets off neighboring walls and spills down the unseen alleyways below. Everything in this space is recycled and re-purposed by hand. The bar, the DJ booth, the dining table and the generator articulate more than a gritty DIY event-space—this is a passion project of preservation that simply could not be accomplished without care and love for Cuba.

In many ways, a short research-focused trip to Havana in mid-May of 2026 is wildly incapable of capturing Cuba in its entirety; certainly not the amplified precarity of our contemporary moment. My profession and political proximity to violence, however, lends itself well to discuss the unique cadence of war that Cuba is embattled

in. In contrast to the pure carnage the world has witnessed in Gaza, in Sudan, in Ukraine, in Kashmir and in the Dominican Republic (DR), Americans are co-authoring a slow violence that violates the international human rights of the Cuban people (Nixon 2013). This slow violence is responsible for crimes against humanity and for violating multiple United Nations Charters for Human Rights. I will not make broad sweeping generalizations about the Cuban government here, though it should be of note that the Cuban citizens who held space for me will not excuse their government's role in their decades-long suffering. This, however, is a key feature of this silent military strategy. In economic warfare, sanctions and embargoes are offensive volleys aimed at starving out international

commerce, stagnating value, production, prosperity and daily life for citizens in the public sector.

These are not poorly calculated decisions but rather precise attacks on communist rule. Communism, or rather the goal thereof is, “the creation of a state where every person can contribute according to their ability, and in return receive what is necessary to live equally with everyone else, Furthermore, “the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not ‘abolished’. It withers away,” (Engels 1932). Since communism is seen as a direct threat to the global dominance of U.S. empire and capitalism, coercing a government into paralysis and shaming it publicly as a failed state requiring intervention are important components of a much larger campaign of manufactured ruin. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has peddled this propaganda and seemingly awaits ascendance to the Republican party throne, gambling on the fall of Cuba’s regime as his crown achievement as a politician. His Cuban-American heritage serves as a credential to validate his approval of human suffering, all without acknowledging the critical role that American policy has served in crushing any attempts for the communist state to thrive, starting in 1960.

Rubio wants to usher in a new era for Cubans, one that is (allegedly) prosperous for all. But he noticeably ignores advice from revolutionary Ernesto “Che” Guevara who warned in 1960: “the first thing we will have to do is not to go to the people to offer them our wisdom. We must go, rather, to demonstrate that we are going to learn with the people, that together we are going to carry out that great and beautiful common experiment: the construction of a new Cuba,” (“On Revolutionary Medicine” 1960)¹. Modern day American foreign policy blatantly ignores collaboration with Cuban citi-

zens. Instead, it forges a path forward with its most central insight from land developers and expatriates of the Cuban regime, hawkish to re-make the island fit for their capitalist dreams.

“People speak sometimes about the ‘bestial’ cruelty of man, but that is terribly unjust and offensive to beasts. No animal could ever be so cruel as man, so artfully, artistically cruel.”—Fyodor Dostoevsky, Crime & Punishment 2006

Although Havana lacks the more traditional, physical features of war that we have consented to as Americans, the suffering is equally visceral, an unabashed display of collective punishment. In a socialized economy under

duress, struggle is ubiquitous, and these woes are on the minds and tongues of everyone you may encounter. Strains of exhaustion haunt the faces of caregivers who fought for sleep during frequent blackouts during scorching night; bodies ghastly from inadequate food rations. Families sprawl onto the streets in the late afternoon to escape damning heat that suffocates an overcrowded electrical grid and makeshift housing arrangements. At local, state-run bodegas, bread stores and produce markets, supplies are sparse—if available at all—they are low quality and hardly answer the beckoning hunger in the bellies of the elderly and children. Pensions and salaries (sometimes less than the equivalent of \$20 U.S. dollars a month) are simply insufficient. During a thorough tour through Old Havana a brilliant sociologist named Yoly told me that these state allowances were not always so dismal. There was a time in the country when agricultural production was abundant, and fuel was widely available to transport goods and services across the island. There was a time when guaran-



Photograph Source: Jason Gamble – Unsplash

tees of free education, health care, housing and food were more than empty ambitions for a young nation who dreamt of a future beyond the inherent exploitations of Western capitalism.

Requirements of revolution

Cubans are not unfamiliar with the requirements of revolution: the sacrifice, the risk and the costs of freedom. Unfortunately, a country whose low birthrate and rapidly aging population is at a costly moment in history where these values and identity may very well be forgotten. There is a very stark, generational gap in understanding Cuba's history. This too, is a direct outcome of decades long unilateral policy of sanctions, embargoes and blockades. After the Special Period of the 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Union and their subsidies caused the contraction of the Cuban GDP by more than 30 percent between 1989 and 1993. It also caused a severance of memory within a class of citizens who lack both a historical analysis of material conditions and lived experience under another reality. The only Cuba that young people know is of a government that has been chronically shorthanded, struggling to provide in the public sector. While there was an era of considerable improvement in the private sector under President Obama, the windfalls of this moment were not concretized or advanced into lasting foreign policy. The present reveals a generation who has slowly gained access to other, more individualistic ways of life. Private investment, content filtered through (illegal) Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) and increased access to public Wi-Fi have offered alternatives to a national identity rooted in communal survival. "The internal blockade" is a common phrase that was repeated to me in various conversations with locals discussing their current living conditions and refers to a lack of transparency, active suppression and censorship efforts perpetuated by the Cuban government. While this may very well

be an effort to preserve revolutionary Cuban ideals, it has undoubtedly fomented anger and frustration.

Slow violence *via* embargoes and sanctions create political apathy and sows the seeds of discontent without firing weapons or threatening military action. It intentionally destabilizes the government while promoting and enabling human suffering amongst the masses.

This erosion of trust in governance simultaneously creates a loosening attachment to national pride and identity. An entire class of people now exist who don't care if foreign invasion or takeover happens because perhaps tomorrow will bring change and hope for the future. Anything is better than the *status quo*. Slow violence *via* embargoes and sanctions create political apathy and sows the seeds of discontent without firing weapons or threatening military action. It intentionally destabilizes the government while promoting and enabling human suffering amongst the masses. It pits those with access to foreign investment in the private sector against those without, historically the most vulnerable. It creates new social divisions that feed on inequality and unrest. This is a man-made crisis, full stop. No better crystallization of policy-driven inequity exists than the words written in a memorandum from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs in 1960, "...If the above are accepted or cannot be successfully countered, it follows that every possi-

ble means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba. If such a policy is adopted, it should be the result of a positive decision which would call forth a line of action which, while as adroit and inconspicuous as possible, makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government," (Mallory Memorandum 1960).

Cuba is a country who has long provided the highest level of medical education and gifted this knowledge back to the world's most underserved and is now without the capacity to save lives within its own borders. Cuban patients are suffering at an accelerated rate without power for ventilators, in intensive care units, without adequate medical interventions. This is further exacerbated by deferred procedures, sub-optimal antibiotic provisions and an inability to transport sick patients to facilities across the island. Human decisions have decided that this level of suffering is not only acceptable, but gainful for scavenging capitalists looking to prop up their ventures without the regulations and tax code of their homelands. Every day that the United States unilaterally allows these conditions to persist, every day that these sanctions force the termination of business relationships, including global, with punitive legal restrictions, Cuban people die. The U.S. government is in an ideological war of ideas, using this to justify avoidable casualties without claiming them as victims of war.

Cruelty

"People speak sometimes about the 'bestial' cruelty of man, but that is terribly unjust and offensive to beasts. No animal could ever be so cruel as man, so artfully, artistically cruel."—Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime & Punishment* 2006

On the night of May 13th, 2026, I descended the steps of Azotea de la India filled with a sense of hope of

what resilience is, and reminders of what place joy has in liberation. On the street, I am met with a contradicting reality. Without the generator-powered luxuries of the rooftop, Havana is enduring yet another hours-long black-out. The urban density is all but invisible in the darkness and yet, life persists. The absence of power creates a kind of deafening silence only punctuated by battery powered radios, speakers, and flashlights. In the darkness, children stay up past conventional bed-times, playing in the streets, laughing through disaster, at last avoiding the stagnant heat that builds mercilessly in the absence of airflow. I navigate the silence, about thirty minutes walking distance from my hostel, buoyed by their resilience. The stars are on full display, typically a view observed only from the countryside. Roads are nearly absent of vehicles, save for the few electric transports, bikes and horse drawn carriages. It's hard to put into words how jarring this experience is. In some contexts, this kind of suffering might incite panic, interpersonal and community violence, or uprising. Instead, the Cuban people have not faltered.

Perhaps we can learn from this, if we are careful and intentional in our dreams of collective liberation. It is one thing to name injustice from my privileged position in the United States. It is another to bear witness to the suffering our political institutions have caused. From a country that glorifies individual achievement, the rest of the world remains on fire around us, at our expense.

"Isolated individual endeavor, for all its purity of ideals, is of no use, and the desire to sacrifice an entire lifetime to the noblest of ideals serves no purpose if one works alone, solitarily, in some corner of America, fighting against adverse governments and social conditions which prevent progress." (Ernesto "Che" Guevara, *On Revolutionary Medicine* 1960.)

Despite an onslaught of mandates aimed at destroying the political will of the people and creating opportunity to revolt and uproot the communist regime, Cubans wait in perpetuity. Wait for change that may yet come, wait for relief that is barred from its shores, wait for a dignified response to the slow violence that all but erases hope for the future. And still, Cuba has demonstrated that continued survival may be the most powerful iteration of defense and liberation on display. Long. Live. Cuba.

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—CounterPunch, August 5, 2026

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2026/08/05/on-slow-violence-in-cuba/>

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1 Read, "Speech to Cuban Medical Students" By Che Guevara in the July/August 2026 issue of *Socialist Viewpoint*.

https://www.socialistviewpoint.org/julaug_26/julaug_26_17.html

"...every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba. If such a policy is adopted, it should be the result of a positive decision which would call forth a line of action which, while as adroit and inconspicuous as possible, makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government," (Mallory Memorandum 1960 by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs)

Two Cases, One Tradition

Revolutionary legalism and the politics of defense campaigns

By BLANCA MISSÉ

Activists under threat of legal repression need more than a good lawyer. This couldn't be more obvious recently, since the arrests of anti-ICE activists in Minneapolis, of pro-Palestine activists in Michigan—and the draconian sentences in the Prairieland case in Texas. Fortunately, as Blanca Missé explains, there are good examples—and a whole tradition—of politically organized defense campaigns.

The fall of 2025 marked an escalation in political repression in the United States, targeting labor organizers, Palestine solidarity activists, and immigrant rights advocates. Two cases—Tom Alter in Texas and John Caravello in California—illustrate how this repression operates and how it can be fought.

This article argues that defense campaigns must treat the courtroom not as a site of justice, but as one terrain within a broader strategy of class struggle. This approach—what we can call revolutionary legalism—rejects both liberal faith in the courts and abstentionist refusal to engage them. Legal

tactics must be subordinated to a different goal: building independent working-class power.

Defense campaigns must treat the courtroom not as a site of justice, but as one terrain within a broader strategy of class struggle.

Two cases, one moment

Tom Alter, a tenured associate professor of history at Texas State University, labor historian, union member, and socialist activist, was fired in September 2025 after speaking at an online Revolutionary Socialism conference on his own time from his home as a private citizen. A self-described “fascist” YouTuber secretly

recorded the event, edited the footage, and launched a smear campaign. Within days, Texas State President Kelly Dampousse announced on social media that Alter was fired for “inciting violence” and “jeopardizing the health and safety of the university community.” There was no hearing, no due process, just a Facebook post.

The response arrived promptly. Students protested for five days. The Texas State Employees Union (CWA Local 6186) mobilized, AAUP provided legal counsel, and major academic organizations issued statements of support. On September 26, a district judge ordered Alter’s temporary reinstatement with back pay. The university complied formally but kept him out of the classroom and upheld the firing after a *pro forma*¹ hearing. His lawsuit continues.

But the central story is what followed. Alter did not retreat; he helped launch a broad, public defense campaign.

Defense campaigns must treat the courtroom not as a site of justice, but as one terrain within a broader strategy of class struggle.

John Caravello, a philosophy lecturer at California State University Channel Islands and member of the California Faculty Association, faced a different form of repression. During an ICE raid in July 2025, he removed a tear gas canister from beneath a protester’s wheelchair. Initially charged with a misdemeanor, he was later indicted on a federal felony charge under 18 U.S.C. § 111—assaulting a federal officer with a “deadly weapon”—the very canister agents had deployed. He faced up to twenty years in prison.

The California Faculty Association responded with a public campaign, organizing rallies and condemning the charges. On April 9, 2026, a federal jury acquitted Caravello after two hours of



Dr. Alter speaking at a rally in support of his reinstatement as Professor at Texas State University and in defense of free speech.

deliberation, finding him not guilty of assault with a deadly or dangerous weapon on a federal officer. His case, however, became a rallying point. When Alter's speaking tour reached Los Angeles, Caravello joined him on stage linking academic repression to the criminalization of immigrant solidarity.

Two different cases, two legal forms—but a common dynamic: Repression met not with silence, but with organized public resistance.

Defense campaigns as class strategy

The Committee to Defend Tom Alter (CDTA) illustrates a strategic orientation largely absent from the current U.S. Left: turning an individual grievance into a collective struggle. Instead of treating Alter's firing as a narrow dispute over academic freedom, the campaign framed it as part of a wider pattern of repression—linking labor rights, political speech and state power.

What distinguishes the CDTA is not its legal strategy but its political one: refusing to withdraw from private litigation and insisting on building a public campaign for free speech and academic freedom. From the outset, the case was treated not as a personal matter but as a collective fight. This orientation is reflected in the committee's deliberately open and non-sectarian structure. As Alter told *Inside Higher Ed*, the CDTA "includes whoever chooses to be a part of it for however long they want to be involved." Organized around a small core of five people who work on the case weekly, participation extends outward to union members, graduate students, faculty, and community activists, with local committees formed across multiple cities—including New York, Chicago, the Bay Area, and Connecticut. This breadth is strategic. By refusing narrow political gatekeeping, the campaign expands its base and situates the case within a wider class context.

The resulting coalition is unusually broad: labor unions such as the Texas State Employees Union (TSEU)

(CWA), the California Faculty Association, and the AFT; academic bodies including American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and major history associations; and civil liberties and Palestine solidarity organizations. This is not a single-issue campaign or a sectarian front. It is a consciously constructed alliance that insists that Alter's right to speak, organize, and teach is a working-class issue.

The law codifies existing property relations and is enforced by courts and police, who answer to the same state.

Public mobilization is integral to this approach. Rallies accompanied key legal moments—from campus protests in San Marcos to demonstrations at the headquarters of Texas State University System—and unions helped organize a national speaking tour that turned the case into a vehicle for wider organizing. The goal is not just reinstatement, but the construction of networks and capacities that outlast the case itself.

Caravello's defense followed a similar trajectory, with unions organizing public pressure and now moving toward a cross-union defense council. Together, these efforts point toward the reemergence—still embryonic—of a coordinated, labor-centered approach to political defense. In this respect, they echo the tradition of the International Labor Defense (an initiative of the early Communist International): non-partisan, expansive, and oriented not only toward legal resolution, but toward building the collective power necessary to confront repression.

The speaking tour as organizing tactic

By February 2026, Alter had turned his firing into a three-month national

speaking tour (February–April 2026) that quickly expanded beyond its initial scope. What began as a "patchwork" of invitations became a coordinated, coast-to-coast campaign spanning more than nine states with stops at campuses, bookstores, bars, and community venues. He spoke at more than forty venues, including campuses such as Rutgers, Loyola, the University of Ohio, UC Berkeley, San Francisco State, San Diego State, Cal State LA, UT Austin, University of Pittsburgh, and the CUNY Graduate Center, as well as independent bookstores like Midnight Books in Los Angeles and informal venues like Sean Patrick's in San Marcos. He shared stages with Sang Hea Kil, John Caravello, members of the CUNY Fired 4, a Prairieland defendant, union activists, and student organizers, linking his case to a wider field of struggle.

The tour had two strategic aims, neither of which was reducible to "raising awareness." First, CDTA used the case as a lever for organizing. At each stop, attendees were encouraged to join unions, sign petitions, and participate in local defense activities. The tour did not simply draw crowds; it built connections. As Alter told *Inside Higher Ed*, the events consistently brought together students, faculty, and community members, strengthening campus organizing.

Crucially, the tour fed back into the union strategy. The Texas State Employees Union (TSEU) began bringing Alter to campus not only to speak about his case but also to recruit members, demonstrating in practice that a union is not a transactional service provider but a vehicle for collective struggle. In this sense, the tour served both as political education and organizational development, using a concrete case to reshape workers' understanding of the role of unions.

That dynamic points to a broader strategic insight that liberal legalism cannot grasp. The public orientation of the CDTA—the rallies, the tour stops,

the joint appearances with local activists—is not window dressing around the “real” work of litigation. It is work. When Alter speaks in a union hall in Connecticut or a bar in San Marcos, he is not just telling his story. He is modeling what resistance looks like. He is showing faculty and staff that a firing need not be tolerated and that a defense campaign can be a platform for organizing, not just for damage control.

The results bear this out. As *Labor Notes* reported in November 2025: “Membership in the Texas State chapters of AAUP and the Texas State Employees Union has doubled since Alter’s firing as workers unite to defend academic freedom and democratic rights across the state.” That doubling did not come from a clever legal brief or a favorable ruling. It came because the unions—TSEU and AAUP Texas—moved quickly to help form and support the CDTA and go public, because Alter got on a plane, stood on stages, and asked people to join their unions. The courtroom did not build that membership. The speaking tour did.

Second, the tour deliberately linked academic repression to broader attacks on immigrant communities, Palestine solidarity activists, and labor militancy. When UT Austin canceled his April 22 event, citing “security concerns” just days after hosting Clarence Thomas, the TSEU relocated the event to a nearby bar, turning administrative repression into an organizing opportunity.

This is defense work as class struggle. The objective is not simply to win a legal case, but to build infrastructure—to leave behind stronger unions, more militant organizations, and a network capable of responding collectively when repression strikes again.

A century of revolutionary legalism

The CDTA’s approach is not without precedent. For nearly a century, the U.S. Left has grappled with how to turn legal defense into political power—with varying degrees of success.

Lessons from the ILD

The International Labor Defense (ILD), founded in 1925 as a political solidarity and legal arm of the Comintern, remains the most developed model we have for this kind of work. It was not a spontaneous outpouring of outrage. It was an institution—a permanent defense organization with a national office, full-time staff, a monthly magazine (*Labor Defender*), and a budget. Within a year of its founding, the ILD had 156 branches and 20,000 individual members, with 75,000 more affiliated through union and community endorsements¹.

The ILD’s principles are worth restating:

- **Non-partisanship.** The ILD did not demand political loyalty. At its founding, James Cannon and Bill Haywood identified 106 “class war prisoners” in U.S. jails—striking miners, Wobblies [Industrial Workers of the World], anarchists, and anti-fascist immigrants. None were members of the Communist Party, yet the ILD defended them all. This was not ecumenical sentimentality. It was strategic clarity: the enemy is the capitalist class. A historical caveat is necessary: The ILD’s non-partisanship was strongest in its early years, from 1925 to 1927. As Stalinization intensified, the organization became more sectarian—a reminder that all defense work must guard against bureaucratic capture.²
- **Mass Mobilization.** In the Sacco and Vanzetti³ campaign, Cannon rejected liberal faith in legal appeals. After the Massachusetts Supreme Court denied a new trial in 1927, he wrote in the *Labor Defender*: “The power of the workers is the court of

last resort to which our appeal must be made.” He was explicit about what this meant organizationally: not legal briefs but strikes. “We must confidently proceed at all costs to still further arouse and organize the anger of the working men and women against the slaughter of the two labor fighters and assist it to take the form of huge mass demonstrations and effective strikes.”

- **Against the liberal “soft pedal,”** Cannon drew a sharp line between class-struggle defense and liberal reformism. He identified two competing policies within the Sacco-Vanzetti movement. The first—his own—puts the center of gravity in the protest movement... puts all faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the justice of the courts. The second, which he called “the policy of ‘respectability,’ of the ‘soft pedal’ and of ridiculous illusions about ‘justice’ from the courts of the enemy,” relied primarily on legal proceedings and sought to obscure the issue of class struggle.
- **Political Education.** In his 1949 speech on the trial of the Stalinist leaders—a case he opposed even as he condemned Stalinism—Cannon articulated a revolutionary approach to political trials. The Stalinists, he argued, were indeed criminals, but “they are being tried in the wrong court” for the wrong crime. “The very provision of the Constitution... was designed specifically to prevent Congress from passing laws which would proscribe the ‘advocacy’ of any doctrine. But this

indictment under the Smith Act... is an indictment against speaking and writing.”

- For Cannon, the purpose of a political trial was never to prove innocence within the framework of the enemy. It was to turn the courtroom into a platform: “We will go in that courtroom not as defendants at all, but as accusers of the prosecutors and the system they represent.” His testimony in the Smith Act trial of 1941, published as *Socialism on Trial*, is a classic example of this approach.
- Material Aid. The ILD sent \$5 per month (\$95 adjusted to today) to each of more than 100 prisoners and \$20 (\$380) to dependent families; at Christmas, it sent \$50 to families and \$25 to prisoners. “It must be recorded to the shame of the labor movement that poverty, hardship, and neglect have too often been the fate of dependent families,” the ILD declared. This was not charity. It was a statement: the working class takes care of its own.

The 1960s–70s resurgence of political defense

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a wave of political trials tested the idea that mass defense could transform legal proceedings. The Chicago Conspiracy Trial (1969–70) saw eight antiwar activists—including Bobby Seale, Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman—use the courtroom as a platform to indict the Vietnam War rather than to prove their innocence. The defense attorney William Kunstler turned the proceedings into political theater. Although five were initially convicted, the Seventh Circuit reversed all convictions in 1972, citing judicial bias.

The campaign to free Angela Davis (1970–72) went further, systematically

integrating legal defense with mass mobilization. Facing capital charges tied to the Marin County courthouse shootout, Davis was placed on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted list before her arrest. The defense campaign refused to treat the case as a narrow legal matter. The “Free Angela” movement mobilized worldwide, organizing rallies, fundraisers, and educational events that turned her prosecution into a global referendum on racism and political repression. As Charlene Mitchell, who led the National United Committee to Free Angela Davis, concluded: “The major lesson we learned was that the legal and mass defense of political prisoners is an inseparable entity; that you cannot free a political prisoner in the courtroom alone, and you cannot, without a good, political legal defense in the courtroom, make a mass defense.”

**“An injury to one
is an injury to all”**

Davis herself understood this double orientation. As she later recalled, “the lawyers would have to understand from the outset that what happened in the courtroom would, of necessity, be related and coordinated with the campaign in the streets.” The legal defense was inseparable from mass pressure, which helped frame the trial not as an isolated criminal case, but as a political indictment of the carceral state. Her acquittal in 1972 was widely understood as a victory both inside and outside the courtroom.

The liberal settlement trap

But not every defense campaign maintained this orientation. The most instructive warning story dates back to the mid-1970s. In the wake of Watergate, the FBI and CIA underwent unprecedented public scrutiny. The Carter administration responded not by dismantling the surveillance apparatus, but by restoring its legitimacy. New “guidelines” were introduced, and

a secret federal wiretap court was established—one that has never denied a government request in practice. The goal was to convince the public that abuses were over and that the “new FBI” could be trusted.

In this context, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) filed a lawsuit against the FBI alleging a decades-long campaign of infiltration, disruption and frame-ups. The government sought to settle, offering standard terms: modest compensation, a promise to “abide by the law” and an implicit agreement to ratify the legitimacy of the reformed security apparatus. Many accepted similar agreements. Jane Fonda settled her case in 1979. The ACLU negotiated settlements that effectively gave political cover to the very institutions it exposed. The price was political, not just financial. As one participant on the SWP’s legal team observed, such agreements helped convince the public that the “new FBI” deserved confidence.

The SWP refused any settlement that would legitimize the state’s narrative. What it sought in court was not mainly financial compensation but a political and constitutional affirmation that advocating socialism and the revolutionary replacement of capitalism was protected under the Bill of Rights. Attorney Leonard Boudin and SWP leaders stressed the fundamental issue: whether individuals and organizations could legally organize for socialism without state surveillance, harassment, or prosecution.

Judge Griesa’s 1986 ruling was a political victory for the entire socialist movement. It declared the FBI’s infiltration and surveillance of the SWP unconstitutional and a violation of First Amendment rights. For the first time, it was established that government informants inside a political organization could themselves constitute a constitutional violation. The court awarded \$264,000 in damages to the party and issued an injunction barring the government from using illegally obtained files. The case took fifteen years. Victory

required patience, persistence, and a clear political perspective.

Revolutionary legalism as a programmatic alternative

The concept of revolutionary legalism is not new. It was first systematically theorized by Piotr Stutchka, the first Soviet People's Commissar for Justice, and debated by his younger colleague Evgeny Pashukanis. Drawing on Lenin's tactical use of tsarist courts and the Duma, Pashukanis argued that a revolutionary party must avoid two errors: fetishizing legal forms (treating courts as neutral arbiters of justice) and the "fetishist denial of legality" (refusing to use legal weapons at all). Pashukanis wrote that Lenin "knew not only how mercilessly to expose tsarist, bourgeois *etc.* legality, but also how to use it, where it was necessary and when it was necessary." This is revolutionary legalism: using bourgeois legal forms tactically, without mistaking them for instruments of justice or sources of legitimacy. This dialectical approach has seen a revival in recent years as neoliberal capitalism and the rise of authoritarian populism have drastically eroded democratic rights, forcing socialists to rediscover the Leninist art of fighting on every terrain.

The courtroom is a battlefield, not a sanctuary. This distinction defines revolutionary legalism. It does not reject the use of courts but refuses to treat them as neutral arbitrators or sources of legitimacy. Against liberal legalism, which seeks vindication through procedure, and against forms of movement lawyering, which can drift toward settlement as an endpoint, revolutionary legalism subordinates legal methods to the construction of political power. The question is not simply whether to win, but how and at what political cost.

This orientation has concrete consequences. First, discovery is a weapon. Subpoenas, depositions, and document requests should be used to expose how repression is organized, not just to

build a case. Second, hearings are organizing opportunities. Every court date should be paired with public mobilization, turning legal proceedings into moments of political confrontation. Third, settlements must be judged politically. A good settlement contains no gag order, admits no legitimacy to the state's original repressive action, and leaves a public record.

Agreements that restore institutional legitimacy without shifting the balance of power are defeats, regardless of compensation. Transparency, accountability, and structural concessions must be non-negotiable terms.

The Alter case poses these questions in real time. The lesson is to use the state's own procedures to expose its operations while building power outside the courtroom.

When Texas State offered a post hoc "hearing," it was an attempt to launder an illegal firing through procedural form. When administrators upheld the decision, they bet that the process itself would exhaust resistance. The response has moved in the opposite direction. Rather than retreat into litigation, the campaign has expanded outward, using the case not only to fight for reinstatement but also to expose the political forces behind the firing and to build the capacity to resist the next attack.

The lesson is obvious. Private negotiations create settlements. Public fights produce power.

The limits of the courtroom

The most persistent illusion social activists face is that "the law" stands above class struggle. It does not. The law codifies existing property relations and is enforced by courts and police, who answer to the same state.

First, the courts are not neutral. They protect property and class privilege. They do not dispense justice; they manage a crisis. A judge may rule for Alter—and that would matter—but it does not mean the courts are on our

side. It means that, in this instance, the contradictions of bourgeois democracy worked in our favor.

When Cannon wrote that "the power of the workers is the court of last resort," he was not dismissing legal tactics. He insisted that no procedural victory matters unless it is backed by organized capacity outside the courtroom. The rule of law protects the ruled only when the ruled are organized enough to make violations costly. This does not mean refusing to use the courts. It means entering them with clarity: as a tactic, not a strategy; as one front in a struggle that will be decided in unions, workplaces, and the streets.

Second, legal victories do not translate to class power. Even if Alter is reinstated, Texas State remains a capitalist institution. Even if the AAUP secures reforms, administrators will still face donors and political pressure. The point of a defense campaign is not simply to win a better deal, but to build the capacity to fight—and ultimately to challenge the class structure itself.

Third, the state learns and adapts. After the SWP lawsuits of the 1970s, the FBI did not stop spying; it refined its methods. The same will happen here. No defense campaign can permanently restrain repression. At best, it can buy time, create space, and help organize the forces capable of confronting repression and its core roots.

This is why the CDTA's focus on building infrastructure matters more than the lawsuit's outcome. If Alter loses his case but leaves behind a functioning cross-union defense council and a network of organizers prepared to respond to repression, the campaign will have succeeded. If he wins but the organization dissolves, the state will return stronger, and the Left will start from zero.

Conclusion: Building the capacity to fight

The ILD slogan—"An injury to one is an injury to all"—is an organizing

principle. The fight for immigrant rights, academic freedom, Palestinian solidarity, and union organizing is one and the same.

The significance of the Alter and Caravello cases lies in the strategies they have generated. They show how defense campaigns can become sites of political recomposition—bringing together unions, activists, and communities in common struggle. The question is not whether repression will continue—it will. The question is whether the Left will be prepared to respond.

Revolutionary legalism rests on a simple premise: the courtroom is only one battlefield. The decisive terrain lies elsewhere—in the working class's capacity to organize, mobilize, and act collectively. Defense campaigns that grasp this can turn moments of repression into opportunities for growth.

What would it take to build a permanent defense infrastructure today? Not a single centralized organization, but a network: regional defense committees linked through unions, civil

liberties groups, and community organizations, with a shared playbook for rapid response. The CDTA's "patchwork" model—local committees across multiple cities—is a starting point. The next step is to formalize coordination so that when one sector is targeted, others mobilize immediately.

The trial will come. The state will escalate. The university will try to wait out the campaign. But if the networks being built now endure—if unions, academic associations, and community organizations remain active—the outcome of the case will not be the sole measure of success.

The real victory will be the infrastructure that endures when the case is closed. The real victory will be a Left that knows how to defend itself.

The Committee to Defend Tom Alter continues to organize. To sign the statement of support, to request an endorsement from your organization, or to get involved in local organizing, visit defendtomalter.org.

Blanca Missé is an Associate Professor of Cinema at San Francisco State

University. They are an active member of their union (CFA-SFSU) and is affiliated with Workers' Voice.

—Tempest, July 7, 2026

<https://tempestmag.org/2026/07/two-cases-one-tradition/>

1 *pro forma*: Doing something merely to satisfy minimum requirements or as a routine formality.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pro_forma James

2 Patrick Cannon was an American Trotskyist who served as national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from its foundation in 1938 until 1953. Previously a member of the Industrial Workers of the World and the Communist Party of America, he founded the International Labor Defense in 1925 and served as its first national secretary.

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=James+P.+Cannon&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

3 Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were framed-up Italian immigrants and anarchists executed in Massachusetts on August 23, 1927. Convicted of a 1920 double murder and robbery, their case sparked international outrage, becoming a historic symbol of xenophobia and political scapegoating during the Red Scare.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacco_and_Vanzetti

No, Israel Does Not Have “A Right to Exist”

BY CRAIG MOKHIBER

July 11, 2026—News that, in the midst of the genocide in Palestine, the German parliament was this week advancing legislation that would criminalize speech that denies that Israel has a “right to exist,” with penalties of up to five years in prison, came as a surprise to virtually no one.

This is, after all, the same Germany that perpetrated genocide first in Namibia and then in Europe and is now actively and enthusiastically participating in the ongoing genocide in Palestine while brutally repressing all who dare speak out against it inside Germany.

Indeed, alongside Israel and the U.S., the German state today has the dubious distinction of being among those most

captured by Zionist interests and most corrupted by Zionist ideology.

The German state even has an official policy (*Staatsräson*) dedicating the German state to the continued existence of the Israeli regime, and a formal declaration of Israel's “right to exist” is required to acquire German citizenship. (No such declaration of Germany's right to exist is required.)

But the statement that the Israeli regime has no right to exist is not only a legally protected opinion. It is also demonstrably true, as a matter of both fact and law.

Of course, the statement that Israel “has a right to exist” has always been nonsense, unrooted as it is in either law or fact.

But this Zionist claim rings familiar to the ear of people in the West because it has been so often repeated as a pillar of Zionist propaganda, echoed by Western politicians benefiting from Israel lobby bribes, and by Israel-aligned media corporations dutifully buttressing the impunity of the regime.

Ask yourself if you have ever heard a similar refrain asserting Italy's right to exist, or Canada's—or Germany's, for that matter? And yet the claim is constantly made that the Israeli regime (and only the Israeli regime) somehow has such a right.

The most obvious conclusion is that the regime and its proxies in the West are so deeply insecure about the legiti-

macy of the state, given the lawless and bloody history of its founding and expansion, that they have deemed it necessary to impose an enforced (and fictional) orthodoxy, rooted in an idea of Israeli exceptionalism and state-sponsored impunity.

But there is no such right in international law. None.

Inconvenient facts

Indeed, when I first entered the corridors of the United Nations in the 1980s, many states then existed that no longer existed when I left in 2023. Did the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, East Germany, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, and the United Arab Republic have a “right to exist?” No. And neither does Israel.

States come and go, but none of them has a “right to exist.” As a factual matter, this is undeniable.

And yet, some still actively parrot the baseless Zionist fabrication that the Israeli regime somehow possesses it, others accept it without question, some (like Germany) even seek to compel others to declare it, and still others prohibit any attempts to challenge the lie.

There is no “right to exist” for states under international law. Thus, Israel cannot claim such a right.

Of course, states do have some rights. For example, states normally have a right to sovereign equality, to territorial integrity, and to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. But even these rights normally afforded to states are subject to conditions and qualifications, many of which would exclude Israel’s claim to them.

**...you cannot break into
someone’s house and
then claim a right to
self-defense when they
resist you...**

For example, the International Court of Justice has repeatedly found that Israel has no right to claim self-defense in its attacks on occupied Palestinian territories. (In essence, you cannot break into someone’s house and then claim a right to self-defense when they resist you.)

Secondly, except for those agreed in treaties with Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994), Israel does not even have defined borders. Much of the territory claimed and held by the Israeli regime is territory over which it has no legal claim whatsoever, and other territory claimed as part of the state is itself subject to challenge.

The regime can make no legal claims of territorial integrity over lands it unlawfully seized in 1967 and after, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights.

Its 1949 “Green Line” with Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza, is not an international border, but rather an armistice line merely meant to separate forces. The regime cannot claim it as a lawful border.

Moreover, given that the prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force is a *jus cogens* norm (the highest, peremptory rules) of international law and a binding obligation under the UN Charter, it cannot claim any of that land as part of its lawful territory.

Even the land claimed by Zionist forces in 1947 under the UN partition proposal is subject to legal challenge. Given that fact, the UN General Assembly had no authority under its Charter, or more broadly in international law, to overrule the will of the indigenous people or to create a settler-colonial state, and the Zionist forces had no right under international law to deny the self-determination of the Palestinian people or to acquire territory by force.

In fact, the International Law Commission has held that states must not recognize claims based on violations of *jus cogens* and *erga omnes* norms (binding on all states), such as those perpetrated by Zionist forces during the *Nakba*¹ of 1947-48, and by the Israeli regime ever since. In addition, territorial acquisitions resulting from the threat or use of force impose obligations of non-recognition on all states.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has recalled this principle with



Aftermath of an Israeli airstrike targeting the home of the Al-Tawil family in Nuseirat Refugee Camp, Central Gaza, May 26, 2026. (Photo: Hassan Al-Jedi/APA Images)

regard to the Israeli regime's presence in occupied Palestinian territory as recent-ly as 2024, when it found that the occu-pation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip is entirely unlawful, that it must end quickly and completely, and that all states are obliged not to rec-ognize Israel's presence in those territo-ries and to work to end it.

Thus, as Israel has no defined terri-tory, its legal claims to territorial integ-riety are significantly limited. And with-out recognized borders (and here we are not talking about a minor border dis-pute, but rather a lack of definition for most of the state's territory), it even lacks a key criterion for recognition as a state.

To this day, almost thirty UN mem-ber states across Africa, Asia, and Latin America (including some of its closest geographic neighbors) do not recognize the state of Israel, and others have cut off diplomatic relations with the regime during the current ongoing genocide.

No sovereignty without equality

Finally, without lawful sovereignty, there can be no claim to sovereign equality.

Sovereignty, in international law, belongs not to states, but rather to people. The Israeli regime declares itself a "Jewish state," and claims to represent its people.

But it does not represent the inter-ests of non-Jewish persons (Muslim and Christian Palestinians) who are either present or have a right to be present and part of the legitimate poli-ty of that territory.

The ethnonationalist state of Israel can perhaps claim to represent 7.2 mil-lion (Jewish) constituents. It cannot credibly claim to represent the almost 16 million Palestinians who have a right to form part of the polity of that land.

Indeed, even if the regime forcibly settled every Jew on the planet on the land, it would still only represent a minority of the population, *vis-à-vis* the majority of Palestinians.

Excluded variously from equal rep-resentation (1948 Palestinians), any representation (Gaza, West Bank, and East Jerusalem Palestinians), or even the ability to exercise their legal right to return and participate (diaspora Palestinians), are the overwhelming majority of persons who have a right to form part of the polity.

**Judged against the
imperatives of
international law, Israel
is, in the strictest sense
of the term, a rogue
regime, illegitimate in
its founding, and devoid
of all legitimacy in its
conduct ever since.**

Nor can Israel claim legitimate gov-ernmental authority. This is because international law establishes that "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government," which must be "expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage."

Even a cursory examination of inter-national law reveals that, to the con-trary, the Israeli regime should not exist.

Excluding millions of the indige-nous people of the land on the basis of ethnonationalist criteria is a textbook breach of that requirement. As such, the Israeli regime cannot claim legiti-mate governmental authority.

The ICJ has recently affirmed that the regime has no such authority in Gaza, the West Bank, or East Jerusalem. But the unequal terms imposed on Palestinians inside the Green Line, and the total exclusion of those in the dias-pora, make the point equally applicable to the remainder of the Palestinian community as well.

And without that authority, the regime cannot claim legitimate sovereignty.

Similarly, the regime's lawless conduct weighs against claims of sovereignty.

This is because modern conceptions of sovereignty include an element of responsibility (especially *vis-à-vis* respect for non-aggression, human rights, and international law) that a genocidal, apartheid regime with a con-continuous history of aggression, assassi-nations, crimes against humanity, and a chronic scofflaw status in the face of international legal rulings and UN res-olutions cannot claim to have met.

From illusory rights to actual duties

Thus, as a matter of law and fact, the Israeli regime has no "right to exist."

But the analysis should not stop there.

Even a cursory examination of inter-national law reveals that, to the con-trary, the Israeli regime should not exist.

The international community of states has obligations to cease recogni-tion of the regime, to isolate it, and to work for its dismantlement and for the liberation of the Palestinian people from the regime.

Clearly, no one would today argue that Nazi Germany, or Apartheid South Africa, or Vichy France, or Khmer Rouge Kampuchea had a "right to exist." Nor would we entertain claims for eternal colonial regimes in Algeria, India, Namibia, or Kenya. For the same rea-sons, no legal (or moral) argument could justify a right to exist for Zionist Israel.

To the contrary, international law requires that, where breaches of peremptory norms of international law are integral to the creation, expansion, and sustaining of a state (as was the case in apartheid Namibia and Rhodesia), such entities should not be recognized or accepted as legitimate states and should in no way be assisted.

Israel's record is clear. It was found-ed on the breach of two peremptory

(*jus cogens*) norms: the right to self-determination of the people of the land, and the rule on the non-acquisition of territory by force, as well as on the two highest crimes in international law: genocide and aggression.

Since then, it has refused the return of refugees and their compensation, and has continuously expanded its unlawful evictions, land theft, and colonization.

The United Nations and every major international human rights organization have concluded that the Israeli regime is guilty of apartheid and racial segregation, unlawful occupation, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

The regime is now on trial for genocide at the ICJ, charges that the Court has found plausible enough to issue a series of preliminary orders (all of which the regime has ignored.)

And the same Court has found the regime guilty of unlawful occupation, the forced denial of self-determination, the unlawful acquisition of territory by force, war crimes, apartheid, and racial segregation.

And the International Criminal Court has indicted the regime's leaders for crimes against humanity.

For the full eighty years of its existence, the Israeli regime has held the distinction of being in breach of the highest

number of UN resolutions and ICJ decisions of any country on the planet.

Today, the regime is unlawfully occupying Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, attacking Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Yemen, and beyond, and perpetrating genocide in Palestine.

It has carried out assassinations across the region and has admitted to (indeed, bragged about) transnational terrorist attacks with booby-trapped pagers in Lebanon

Judged against the imperatives of international law, Israel is, in the strictest sense of the term, a rogue regime, illegitimate in its founding, and devoid of all legitimacy in its conduct ever since.

To declare that such a regime has a "right to exist" is an affront to generations of its victims, to international law, and to human decency itself. And the threat that it poses extends far beyond Palestine.

The Israeli regime is driven by a deeply racist and fundamentally violent ideology. It is armed with advanced technologies of surveillance and death, holds powerful conventional weaponry, and possesses stockpiles of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

It has declared policies mandating the mass murder of civilians (the Dahiya Doctrine), the killing of its own citizens (the Hannibal Directive), and

the potential nuclear destruction of the world (the Samson Option).

Its spies are active in countries around the globe, and its proxies are actively engaged in corrupting governments and institutions across the West.

Does such a regime have a "right to exist?" No.

In fact, dismantling such a regime and its replacement with a free Palestine with equal rights for all is not only a legal requirement, but also an existential imperative for all of humanity.

Craig Mokhiber is an international human rights lawyer and former senior United Nations Official. He left the UN in October of 2023, penning a widely read letter that warned of genocide in Gaza, criticized the international response and called for a new approach to Palestine and Israel based on equality, human rights and international law.

—Mondoweiss, July 14, 2026

<https://mondoweiss.net/2026/07/no-israel-does-not-have-a-right-to-exist-quite-the-contrary->

¹ *Nakba* [catastrophe] refers to the mass displacement, dispossession, and forced expulsion of an estimated 700,000 to 800,000 Palestinians during the 1948 war surrounding the creation of the State of Israel.



South Africa's Xenophobia Wave

BY TELESUR

July 12, 2026—More than 53,000 foreigners have been processed for deportation and repatriation from South Africa, in an attempt to combat irregular migration and amid escalating tension over the wave of xenophobic attacks in recent months, the South African government reported this Sunday.

“We have continued to facilitate the return of foreigners to their countries, either through deportation or assisted voluntary repatriation,” said the Minister of Justice and chair of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Migration, Mmamoloko Kubayi, at a press conference in Pretoria.

The authorities stressed that repatriation “refers to the act of returning a person to their country of origin,” while deportation “is a formal and legal process by which a government expels a foreigner from its country.”

In recent weeks and until July 11, she specified, “a total of 53,449 foreigners have been processed for deportation and repatriation, mainly Malawians (more than 80 percent), followed by Zimbabweans and Mozambicans.”

Repatriations to countries outside Southern Africa amount to 2,615 and include 431 returns to Kenya, 1,159 to Nigeria, 86 to the Republic of Congo (DRC) and 939 to Uganda.

As of July 8, law enforcement recorded 205 cases and arrested 350 people related to intimidation, vigilantism, and migration-related crimes. Of those cases, a total of 112 are already in court.

The minister asserted that “the management of immigration, border control, deportation, and facilitated repatriation are the exclusive responsibility of the State, and no individual or group has the authority to take justice into their own hands or to intimidate, threaten, or illegally expel any person from any community.”

Tension in South Africa has increased in recent months due to a wave of xenophobic attacks and anti-immigration protests...

In this regard, the IMC condemned the illegal actions of isolated groups that, according to local media, carry out identity checks on foreign citizens in South Africa by searching homes and businesses suspected of harboring undocumented migrants.

Tension in South Africa has increased in recent months due to a wave of xenophobic attacks and anti-immigration protests, which culminated on June 30, when thousands of people took to the streets on a date that organizers had set as the deadline for undocumented immigrants to leave the country.

—teleSUR, July 12, 2026

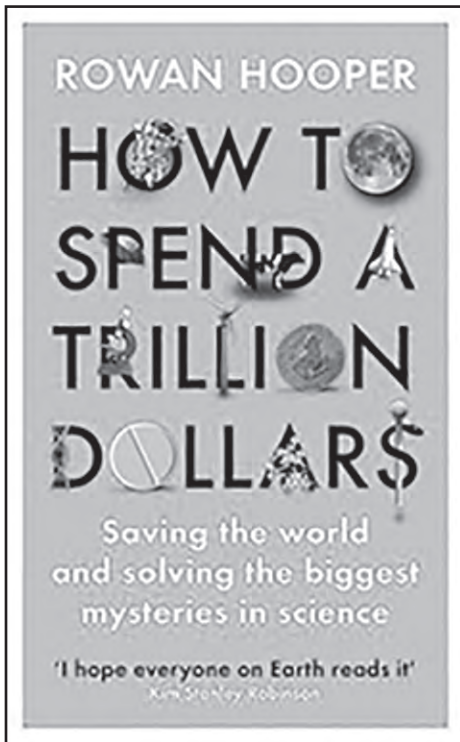
<https://www.telesurenglish.net/more-than-53000-foreigners-deported-from-south-africa-amid-xenophobia-wave/>



Nigerian nationals evacuated from South Africa arrive at Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos, Nigeria, July 9, 2026. Photo: EFE/EPA/Emmanuel Adegbeye

How Communists Would Spend One Trillion Dollars

By JOE ATTARD



June 24, 2026—SpaceX’s Initial Public Offering (IPO) briefly rocketed its CEO Elon Musk into the status of history’s first trillionaire. No mean feat for a man who spends more time inciting far-right riots and sharing memes than actually running his company. This milestone begs the question: what use could a rational society make of such riches?

Right-wing sycophants were quick to praise Musk for becoming the first man to enter the “four comma club.” British media blowhard Piers Morgan posted the following message of congratulations on X (a social media platform that Musk owns):

“Amid all the predictable seething jealousy and bitter resentment to this news, I’d like to congratulate (@elonmusk) on an astounding achievement. He’s got there by being the most driven, creative, hard-working and ambitious business genius in history. Salut, Elon!”

If our readers can prevent themselves from retching for a moment, they will surely recognize this argument. When mere mortals object to the obscene wealth of megacapitalists like Musk, their cheerleaders accuse us of being green with envy at the success of talented people who earned their money through hard work and ingenuity.

In reply, we propose a simple exercise in mathematics. The median net worth of an average U.S. citizen today is \$124,041. Now, this might sound like a fair bit of money. It is approximately eight million times less than one trillion dollars.

So, following Morgan’s logic, either we are to assume that Musk has strived literally millions of times harder than the typical American worker, or he is millions of times more talented and intelligent. Which, given his inane public utterances, we have cause to doubt.

A trillion dollars is an incomprehensible figure for most people. So, let’s try to visualize it. If Elon Musk were to cash out his net worth in the form of single dollar bills and stack them one on top of the other, they would reach a height of almost 68,000 miles, which is over a quarter of the way from the earth to the moon. Meanwhile, his SpaceX company has so far managed to send a rocket a maximum distance of 870 miles.

Which is to say, he would delve orders of magnitude deeper into space by simply sitting on his earthly fortune than by stepping into one of his spaceships.

Putting a price on prosperity

Perhaps a better question than what a trillion dollars looks like is what could be done with it: right here and now? The academic Rowan Hooper has done some of the math in his book, *How to Spend a Trillion Dollars*, released in 2021 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During that crisis, faced with the alternative of complete social collapse, the capitalists opened their wallets. The same governments that had spent a decade carrying out austerity, while insisting there was “no money” for social services, managed to cobble together vast sums of cash to fund the development and rollout of vaccines in record time.

They also kept thousands of businesses from collapse and stopped millions of workers from being hurled into unemployment with stimulus measures and furlough schemes. There is no such thing as a free lunch, and this spending spree helped provoke the inflationary crisis we are currently experiencing. But the point is there are huge resources in society that could immediately be put to good use.



Image: own work

Hooper assumes a hypothetical scenario in which we have a trillion dollars to spend on solving humanity's most-pressing problems. To derive an accurate balance sheet, he looks at technologies and social programs that either already exist, have been trialed, or are currently under development.

His book is far from a finished program for a future socialist society, but some of his proposals offer food for thought—and many come surprisingly cheap!

**For the first time ever,
enough resources exist
to clothe, house, feed
and educate every single
person on the planet.**

For instance, he puts the cost of ending extreme poverty through the immediate transfer of cash and assets (like livestock, tools and machinery) at \$400 billion. Combined with the \$600 billion necessary to roll out universal education, he suggests splurging the trillion on a “ten-year period in which everyone in the world is lifted out of poverty.”

What about curing disease? As a starting point, Hooper estimates that the research, development and distribution of cures and preventative measures for HIV, malaria and tuberculosis might come to the very reasonable figure of \$150 billion. To offer a second opinion, the UN puts the cost of eradicating tuberculosis alone at \$250 billion. A more modest goal that would nevertheless save 1.5 million lives a year and is still well within our budget!

Future-proofing measures, such as vaccine development and an expanded immunization program for emerging diseases, represent a \$100 billion investment. While mapping all cell types in the human body and curing damaged cells to extend healthy lifespans amounts to an outlay of just over \$200 billion.

He concedes that free, universal healthcare for all of mankind is outside our speculative budget. Instead, he proposes a trial in a single country with poor health outcomes, to serve as a model: Ethiopia. He suggests the success of this pilot scheme would be enough to convince other countries to invest in similar measures.

All-in-all, the cost of eradicating some of humanity's deadliest diseases and increasing the average global lifespan by a decade, plus rolling out universal healthcare in Ethiopia, leaves us \$140 billion to spare out of our trillion-dollar war chest!

What if we were to prioritize ending the climate crisis? This is one of the more ambitious projects set by Hooper's book.

He estimates that you could just about accomplish a full transfer to renewable energy for one trillion dollars. Promoting biodiversity and reversing the mass extinctions attributable to human activity comes out at around \$860 billion. Meanwhile, removing excess CO₂ from the atmosphere through a combination of long-term investment in carbon capture technologies, reforestation and ocean engineering would amount to just shy of \$750 billion.

So, unfortunately, even if we could send three ghosts to persuade Elon Musk to donate his entire fortune to the betterment of his fellow man, we wouldn't even be able to fully reverse the damage capitalism has inflicted on the planet. Let alone solve all the ills that plague us.

But the good news? Musk's net worth is not even one percent of the total wealth on earth. By the end of 2026, global GDP is projected to reach \$126 trillion. This means that humanity has, at least materially, solved the “problem of bread.” For the first time ever, enough resources exist to clothe, house, feed and educate every single person on the planet.

And as Hooper points out, the benefits of accomplishing this would not

be merely arithmetic. When people are educated, healthy and securely housed, they become much more productive, and capable of contributing far more to society as a whole. The burden of social problems like crime, disease and forced migration also rapidly diminish, meaning fewer resources need to be expended on treating these symptoms.

In other words, if we could grant a decent and civilized existence to the billions of people currently living in a state of backwardness, we would unlock a universe of potential that is currently crushed by poverty. We would be able to raise humanity's cultural sights to unimagined levels. Which begs the question: if Elon Musk can “earn” a trillion dollars, why can't we solve these problems?

Poverty amidst plenty

The answer is that we do not control society's resources collectively. Instead, they are controlled by a tiny *clique* of rich parasites. The world's 12 richest people command more wealth than the poorest half of humanity combined. A dozen individuals have enough money between them to resolve every problem Hooper considers in his book.

**...nobody acquires
a trillion dollars
without leeching
working people
dry.**

The fundamental problem is that capitalism is a system based on the private ownership of the means of production (industry, machinery and raw materials) and investment of capital to generate profit. There is no profit to be made from building hospitals in Ethiopia or investing in research that may or may not result in a novel vaccine. And nobody can compel the capitalists to “waste” their money.

In fact, there is a huge outflow of wealth from the poorest countries to the imperialists in the form of so-called Third World debt. Combined with the direct looting of resources, dozens of poor countries are held in a state of backwardness, unable to develop the infrastructure to meet people's basic needs.

Meanwhile, the capitalists spend far more than Musk's trillion-dollar net worth on arsenals to defend "their" markets and spheres of interest, wreaking destruction and death on countless innocent people. Musk is personally bound up in this orgy of militarism, holding billions of dollars in military contracts through SpaceX.

The reason that so many people react to Musk's fortune with revulsion has nothing to do with envy. They are justifiably disgusted that trillionaires exist alongside record levels of hunger, seemingly endless war, and conditions of squalor for millions of people.

They also understand instinctively that nobody acquires a trillion dollars without leeching working people dry. This feeling is reinforced by the fact that the masses feel poorer every day, while the rich flaunt their billions (or, indeed, trillions.)

Inequality is a feature of capitalism. In volume one of *Capital*, Karl Marx

describes the accumulation of wealth at one pole of society as "at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole." But today, this dynamic has reached truly outrageous proportions.

Since 2020, billionaire wealth has grown by 81 percent. Meanwhile, the spending power of working people has been gnawed away by inflation across the world, while poverty is accelerating in the poorest countries. In other words, there has been a vast transfer of wealth upwards.

The world's 12 richest people command more wealth than the poorest half of humanity combined.

Elon Musk embodies the senile decay of capitalism today. He made a fortune at the head of a company that was a loss-leader for years, propped up by handouts from the U.S. state. He has amassed unfathomable wealth that could be transformative for millions of people. Yet he spends his days sharing

painfully unamusing "jokes" to an audience of bots and bootlickers; and scaremongering about migrants undermining "western civilization", while fomenting racist pogroms in some of the most deprived communities in Western Europe.

That such a man is "worth" a trillion dollars is a shattering indictment of a system whose overthrow is long overdue. But we communists do not want to expropriate Musk's ill-gotten gains alone. We are coming for all the billionaires: those frequent fliers to Epstein's island, who fattened themselves on the blood and sweat of the proletariat.

One limitation of Hooper's book is that he restricts himself to solving problems within capitalism. But if the billionaires' resources were put at the command of a democratically planned economy, we would massively increase the general level of production, giving access to vastly more resources than currently exist.

The expropriation of bloodsuckers like Musk would only be the beginning. But nevertheless, with their trillions, we could change the lives of billions for the better.

—Marxist.com, June 24, 2026

<https://marxist.com/how-communists-would-spend-elon-musk-s-one-trillion-dollars.htm>

Glorifying Rapists

Why do Western men keep glorifying rapists and pedophiles?

BY BETTBEAT MEDIA

Just a rapist

Andrew Tatez, 39, was arrested in Miami on July 19, 2026, alongside his brother Tristan. The Crown Prosecution Service announced seven counts of rape against Andrew, three counts of sex trafficking, three of assault, and 19 charges related to indecent images of a child and extreme pornography. Court filings provided by the Department of Justice allege that two women were strangled unconscious by Andrew Tate and penetrated without their consent. One accus-

er recalled being unsure whether he "was just a rapist or if he would kill her."

Antonio Gramsci¹ understood that the ruling class does not maintain its grip on power through force alone. It manufactures consent. It builds, as he wrote in the *Prison Notebooks*, a cultural hegemony so pervasive that the subjugated classes internalize the values of their rulers as their own. The peasant does not merely obey the landlord. He aspires to become the landlord. He adopts the landlord's cruelties as virtues.

He teaches his sons that the landlord's world is the only world worth wanting. The chains become ornaments. He even builds the reverence into his language—"My Lord," "Your Grace," "Your Majesty"—so that every act of address is an act of genuflection, so that deference is woven into the tongue itself before the mind can question it. The ruthlessness becomes divine.

Gramsci called it common sense: the way ruling-class ideology seeps into everyday life until it becomes invisible,

until it feels like nature rather than architecture. What we are witnessing now, in the elevation of serial predators to the status of cultural heroes, is one of the most grotesque expressions of this principle that the West has yet produced. The mask has come off, the face beneath is deeply depraved, and millions cheer because they have been taught that depravity is beautiful.

Owning women

Andrew Tate has amassed more than ten million followers, most of them boys and young men. He runs an online academy where he claims to teach young men how to get rich and attract women. The curriculum, stripped of its marketing language, is domination. Women as property. Consent as irrelevant. Wealth as proof of biological superiority. He built his fortune, in part, while running a webcam pornography business for about a decade. The pipeline from consuming women on camera to the charges now leveled against him is not a contradiction. It is a continuum.

Andrew Tate is one of the most prominent members of the so-called manosphere, a collection of influencers, podcasters and content creators who helped deliver young male voters to Trump. The transaction could not be more transparent. You deliver the votes of angry young—mostly Western, mostly white—men, you provide cultural cover for a politics of domination, and the state shields you. Don Jr. publicly spoke out against Andrew Tate's detention in Romania, calling it "absolute insanity." The Tates have repeatedly praised Trump and urged followers to vote for him in 2024.

The pattern repeats. In November 2024, an Irish civil jury found Conor McGregor² liable for sexual assault. Nikita Hand alleged that McGregor isolated her in a bedroom at Dublin's Beacon Hotel in 2018, choked her, and raped her, leaving her with visible injuries documented by a sexual assault treatment unit. Ireland's Court of

Appeal dismissed his attempt to challenge the verdict, with the three-judge panel rejecting all grounds. None of it mattered. McGregor, has pivoted to political commentary, including anti-immigration rhetoric and a St. Patrick's Day visit to Donald Trump's White House. He is received at the seat of American power not despite the verdict but because the verdict is itself proof that he is part of the club. He is one of them, just as the visitors to Epstein's island all knew of each other that they loved the same thing.

**The peasant does not
merely obey the
landlord. He aspires to
become the landlord.**

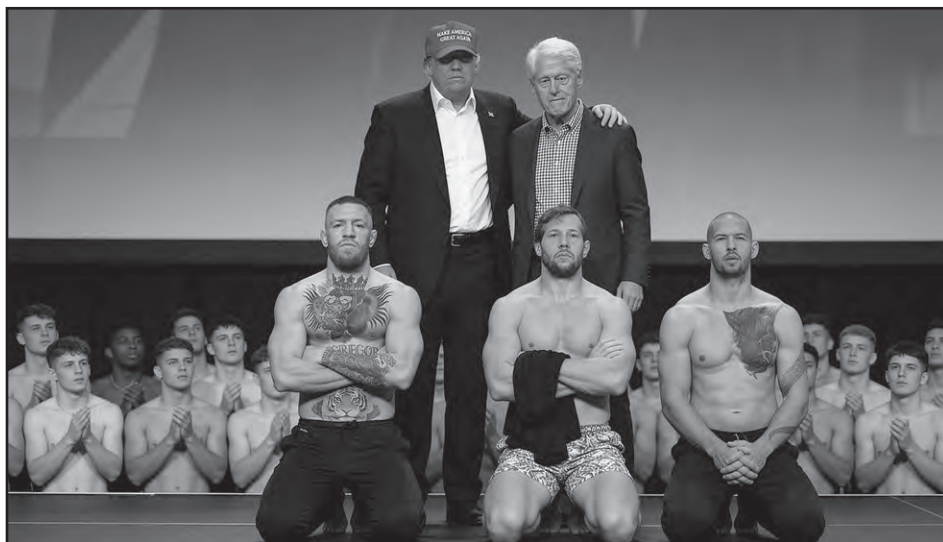
A jury found that Donald Trump sexually abused E. Jean Carroll in the 1990s and later defamed her after she went public. Carroll has been paid more than \$5.6 million as part of the verdict. He owes her, in total, including interest, over \$100 million. The sitting President of the United States. A man found liable by a unanimous jury of sexually abusing a woman in a department store dressing room. Not a fringe figure, not a disgraced outcast, but the

head of state of the most powerful country in human history.

Normalizing the abnormal inside the normal brain

Marx described ideology as the *camera obscura* [the forerunner to the modern photographic camera], the inverted image of the world that makes the unnatural appear natural. The young men who follow Tate, who worship McGregor, who wear Trump's name on red hats, have been fed through a camera obscura of algorithmic precision: the lie that Trump, Tate, and McGregor represent natural manhood, the pinnacles of masculinity.

How did the powerful manage to naturalize abuse, exploitation, and rape as aspirational? Consider the machinery: the bondage and choke pornography that saturates their minds before they have had a first kiss teaches them that women exist to be used. The combat sports spectacles where racial taunts and misogynist provocations—known as the tradition of "trash talking"—are selling points rather than disqualifications teach them that cruelty is entertainment. The cigar-smoking, shiny-shoe wearing, Lamborghini-leaning aesthetic of the manosphere teaches them that the degradation of women is a lifestyle brand, something to aspire to, something that signals arrival.



BettBeat Media

Federal prosecutors noted that Andrew Tate posted a video tour of a \$50 million superyacht, “Obsidian Blade,” reportedly being built for him in Turkey. The violence and the consumption are presented as inseparable, continuously placed side by side, and as a psychologist I know how the brain turns correlation into causal connection. They become two expressions of the same will to power. Millions of boys absorb this lesson before they are old enough to vote.

None of this belongs to one political party or one faction. The rot is structural. Bill Clinton paid Paula Jones \$850,000 to settle a sexual harassment lawsuit and appeared to be a regular on Epstein’s Lolita Express. Multiple women accused him of sexual assault. Joe Biden faced an accusation from Tara Reade. The Epstein client list crosses every partisan boundary. The class that rules does not divide along the lines it draws for the rest of us. Its members share something deeper than ideology: the impunity that wealth purchases, the silence that power commands, and—most importantly—the knowledge that they all share the same appetites of moral depravity, and that they are therefore part of a club that protects its own.

The young man who cannot afford rent is taught to admire the man who owns the building.

Tate’s just unlucky he isn’t part of the Epstein Class

And here is what must be said plainly: the only reason Andrew Tate sits in a cell is that he is not powerful enough. He is an aspirant, not a member. He built his brand on the aesthetics of the ruling class—the yachts, the women,

the contempt for ordinary life—but he did not possess the institutional armor and mega-wealth that genuine membership requires. He did not have the battalions of lawyers, the intelligence contacts, the decades of accumulated leverage that allowed Jeffrey Epstein to operate for years in plain sight. The Epstein circle, whose names remain largely unspoken, whose crimes remain largely unprosecuted, operates in a different stratum altogether.

News of the White House intervention on behalf of the Tates came as Trump was already under fire over his ties to Epstein. The system protects its own, and the Tates were never quite its own. They were useful. They were part of the coalition of hyper-masculine social media voices who helped deliver young male voters to Trump and who helped minimize Trump’s Epstein escapades among their followers. And now that the legal walls are closing in, the administration discards what it can no longer use. The fact that the Tates are being extradited to the UK shows that the Epstein class has no more use for them—except one final act of distraction, in which they become the face of assault and abuse so that the Epstein class does not.

But the culture the machine built persists. The millions of boys who learned at Tate’s digital feet that women are property, that consent is a fiction, that the law is for the weak—they will not unlearn those lessons because their teacher is in handcuffs. They will find the next prophet. The pipeline is self-sustaining, powered by algorithms designed to maximize engagement, which in practice means maximizing outrage, resentment, and the pornographic thrill of watching someone exercise power without consequence.

The perpetual depravity of Western capitalism

The Western system of exploitation is so successful because its mechanisms of control operate not through a visible dictator but through the confusion and

managed bewilderment of the population. The manosphere is one of its most effective instruments. It channels the genuine economic despair of young men—the precarity, the loneliness, the sense of disposability that late capitalism inflicts on those it does not need—and converts that despair into worship of the very class that produced it. The young man who cannot afford rent is taught to admire the man who owns the building. The young man who has never been touched with tenderness is taught that tenderness is weakness. The young man who senses, correctly, that the system is rigged against him is taught to rig it further, in his fantasies, against those even more powerless than he is.

The manosphere is gangster rap for white boys. The aesthetic differs—cigars instead of blunts, Lamborghinis instead of Escalades, crypto instead of crack—but the architecture is identical.

This is not a new technology. The ruling class ran the trial phase decades ago; on the populations it considered disposable. In the late 1980s and 1990s, the music industry (owned by the same Epstein class that now owns the platforms) invested enormously in the promotion of gangster rap. The formula was identical: take communities crushed by deliberate economic abandonment, by the crack epidemic, by mass incarceration, and offer their young men a single aspirational image: the dealer, the pimp, the killer, draped in gold, surrounded by women reduced to body parts, glorifying the very predation that was destroying their neighborhoods. The invisible kids no one in power cared about copied it. They

killed each other. They degraded their sisters. They filled the prisons that enriched the investor class. And no one in power called it a crisis of masculinity. No one launched a moral panic. Because it was working exactly as designed. And as a bonus, the young men were now blamed for their own miserable existence and their own destruction.

The manosphere is gangster rap for white boys. The aesthetic differs—cigars instead of blunts, Lamborghinis instead of Escalades, crypto instead of crack—but the architecture is identical. Manufacture despair. Offer a predator as the only model of escape. Let the desperate destroy each other and those weaker than them. Harvest the profits. The only difference is that the trial phase targeted communities the system had already written off. The rollout targets the sons of the middle class, which is why, for the first time, commentators are treating it as a crisis.

Fairy tales once performed the function of manufacturing aspiration toward the depraved ruling class—but with more elegance. The king was wise and moral. The queen was beautiful and pure. The castle was where goodness lived. The divine right of monarchs was woven into bedtime stories for a thousand years, naturalizing hierarchy so deeply that even revolutions could not fully dislodge it.

But beneath the elegance lay something deeply perverse: these were stories conditioning poor girls to long for the day they would be chosen by kings and princes, narratives designed to teach daughters that it was an honor to be selected for their youth and beauty by a depraved class of child-molesters and rapists, because that is what royalty has always been. Every kingdom in every story was a grooming operation.

The capitalist class learned the lesson and adapted the form. The castle

became the penthouse. The king became the CEO. The divine right became the “grind.”

But the pretense of benevolence has been abandoned. The modern fairy tale no longer requires a happy ending or a virtuous hero. The hero strangles women unconscious. The hero faces dozens of charges. The hero is accused of child molestation. The hero sits in the White House. And the audience (raised on a steady diet of degradation packaged as empowerment) watches and applauds and wants to be just like him.

We will be told, in the coming weeks, that the system worked. That the Tates were arrested. That justice was served. But the arrest of two men does not indict the civilization that crowned them. It does not touch the economic structures that reward predation.

We will be told, in the coming weeks, that the system worked. That the Tates were arrested. That justice was served. But the arrest of two men does not indict the civilization that crowned them. It does not touch the economic structures that reward predation. It does not dismantle the media ecosystems that amplify it or the political systems that protect it. It does not reach the men who are truly untouchable—the ones whose names were in Epstein’s book.

The sacrifice of the Tates, if that is what this becomes, will function as all

such sacrifices function in a system designed to preserve itself: as a pressure valve, a spectacle of accountability that obscures the architecture of impunity. As applying the law only to the common people while the Epstein class sends nine-year-old Eastern European models around the world as birthday presents for eighty-year-old men.

The prophets of all religions understood something that our commentators refuse to acknowledge: the corruption of the rulers and the corruption of the people are the same corruption. I have called it “Trickle-Down Psychopathy.” You cannot produce a predator class without producing a population that venerates predation. You cannot build an economy on exploitation without building a culture that sanctifies the exploiter. The sickness is one sickness. And it will not be healed by handcuffs, or by elections, or by the performative outrage of a media class that platforms the next monster before the cell door closes on the last.

—BettBeat Media, July 24, 2026

https://bettbeat.substack.com/p/why-do-western-men-keep-glorifying?utm_campaign=email-half-

1 Antonio Francesco Gramsci was an Italian Marxist philosopher, journalist and politician. He was a founding member and one-time leader of the Italian Communist Party. A vocal critic of Benito Mussolini and fascism, he was imprisoned in 1926 and remained in prison until shortly before his death in 1937.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_Gramsci

2 Conor Anthony McGregor is an Irish professional mixed martial artist. He is a former Ultimate Fighting Championship Featherweight and Lightweight Champion, becoming the first fighter to hold UFC championships in two weight classes simultaneously.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conor_McGregor

Largest Gathering of Service Members for Antiwar Protest Since Vietnam

By Mike Prysner

July 16, 2026—On July 4, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, more than 500 veterans and military families gathered in the birthplace of the nation to reject what they called the Trump administration's fascist vision for the country's future (including domestic troop deployments and endless war). The coalition—About Face, 50501 Vets, Veterans For Peace, Common Defense, Military Families Speak Out, Fayetteville Resistance Coalition, and Center on Conscience and War (CCW)—marched under the banner Freedom Over Fascism.

Among them in the streets of Philadelphia were at least a dozen currently-serving members of the U.S. military, part of the "Service Members' Antiwar Contingent" organized by the Center on Conscience and War. Several others signed up to attend but were not granted adequate leave to travel from their units.

Most of them are in the process of filing as conscientious objectors. They marched behind banners reading "Service Members Say No To War" and "Conscience Takes Courage."

Consisting of officers and enlisted from the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines,

they constituted the largest gathering of currently-serving military personnel for an antiwar protest since the Vietnam War.

In the mirror of history

During Vietnam, many thousands of service members became active participants in the antiwar struggle. What started as a tiny handful of dissenters in 1966, by summer of 1971 had grown to what the Pentagon estimated as half of all enlisted soldiers defecting to the antiwar movement.

This historic rebellion compelled the U.S. government to abandon the draft and avoid using it again. But the draft was not the sole reason service members refused to kill.

Throughout the so-called War On Terror thousands of service members, who had willingly volunteered for the military, filed as conscientious objectors; many after seeing the reality of war first hand. Others came home to join antiwar protests. Over 1,000 who had fought in Iraq joined Iraq Veterans Against the War under George W. Bush.

Many heroic soldiers in uniform publicly refused to deploy, electrifying the antiwar movement.

But even with those examples, and so many other veterans entering the fight to end the war, it was predominantly recently-discharged service members who joined the demonstrations. While opposition to the war was growing within the armed forces, open participation in protests by active-duty troops was more isolated. While this can partially be explained by fear of reprisal in a more hostile post-9/11 environment, perhaps a bigger factor was that the war still retained majority support up until the election of Barack Obama (who diffused the protest movement by vowing to withdraw.)

Trump's Operation Epic Fury did not enjoy majority support for a single day—and military-age Americans were substantially more likely to oppose the war than the general population. Only 24 percent of Gen Z supported it; the average enlistee and newly-commissioned officer today is of that generation.

A new generation of soldiers of conscience

A notable feature of the July 4 protest is most of the active-duty participants were commissioned officers. Throughout Vietnam and the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), the ranks of resistance were predominantly made up of lower enlisted troops.

Of the more than 50 Iraq war veterans who testified against the war at the 2008 Winter Soldier hearings, only one had been an officer. Most were E-4s (fourth enlisted pay grade in the U.S. military.)

Similarly, during the Iraq war, those who became war resisters were almost all from the Army or Marines—the ones on the ground killing and dying. Today they seem to come equally from all branches.



Image by Center on Conscience and War.

Today's military is not simply a post-9/11 generation, but a post-GWOT generation. Most of the July 4 protest participants currently serving in the military were born after the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

They have grown up with those wars and their lessons: total disasters that turned out to be for nothing, with a devastating humanitarian toll, kept alive endlessly by the lies of those in charge.

They became adults as the Afghanistan war, which spanned their entire lives, ended in defeat. What was all that death and destruction for?

Many began their military training during Israel's war on Gaza. For the first time, the impact of American weapons on civilian populations was in front of their faces day and night. On average, young Americans spend over three hours per day on social media. For 734 days, their feeds contained the most harrowing images to ever cross their phone screen. And they were not separate from it—the institution they served was facilitating the whole thing.

So many soldiers and Marines came home from war to protest against it because of the suffering they saw firsthand. Today's troops can see the same from their barracks room.

Unfavorable views of Israel surged from 41 percent to 60 percent between 2022 and 2026, driven in large part by attitudes of young (enlistment-age) Americans. Service members were part of that demographic.

Then Donald Trump started a new war with a single ally: Israel. They began that war with two clear U.S. war crimes: the bombing of the Minab girls' school, and the sinking of the defenseless IRIS Dena¹.

This killing took place amidst troops patrolling our streets, partially to support ICE as they violated the Constitutional rights of citizens across the country (including killing two Americans), as well as threats to deploy troops to polling places in November. It took place as totally unaccountable strikes in the Caribbean began killing fishermen, farmers and even human trafficking victims.

A flurry of immoral actions shouldered on a generation of service members with distinctly different attitudes than the one sent to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Compared with previous generations, those age 17-29 are markedly more skeptical of military intervention, less committed to maintaining U.S. military dominance, less willing to serve in the armed forces, and more likely to question traditional foreign policy assumptions.

What started as a tiny handful of dissenters in 1966, by summer of 1971 had grown to what the Pentagon estimated as half of all enlisted soldiers defecting to the antiwar movement.

In 2021, 55 percent of young Americans said they felt hopeful about the country's future. Today, only 13 percent think the country is headed in the right direction. Only 15 percent of Americans under 30 trust the federal government to "do the right thing." Only 18 percent of them trust Congress. Only one-in-six report high trust in the Executive branch. As of 2025, 50 per-

cent support "socialism" or "democratic socialism" while only 39 percent say they support capitalism (a six point drop in just five years.)

These feelings, coupled with a punishingly horrifying foreign policy over the last four years, has set a new stage. More service members called us for help filing as COs in March 2026 than ever before. But that may just be the beginning.

The entrance of more troops into an antiwar protest since Vietnam, at a time when there is no major active conflict nor a major antiwar movement—spanning all branches and prevalent among commissioned officers—is a great sign of hope. When the next conflict breaks out, we will see how deep it goes.

Mike Prysner is the Executive Director of the Center on Conscience and War. For media inquiries, contact mike@centeronconscience.org

Help the Center on Conscience and War continue to reach service members by making a donation now:

<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/centeronconscienceandwar/>

—CounterPunch, July 16, 2026

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2026/07/16/largest-gathering-of-service-members-for-antiwar-protest-since-vietnam/>

¹ IRIS Dena was a Moudge-class frigate in the Southern Fleet of the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy. She was named after Mount Dena and was commissioned into the navy in 2021. She was sunk on March 4, 2026, during the 2026 Iran war by the Los Angeles-class submarine USS Charlotte of the United States Navy in international waters near the southern coast of Sri Lanka. She was the only ship to be sunk in active combat by a submarine since 1982.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IRIS_Dena

Latin America's Deepening Organic Crises

By JOSEFINA L. MARTÍNEZ AND MATÍAS MAIELLO

July 5, 2026—The Latin American Right's recent electoral gains are often seen as evidence of an unstoppable "Trumpy" wave. But they are symptoms of a deeper organic crisis marked by polarization, unstable governments, and intensifying class struggle.

A widely held view, especially in the mainstream media, interprets the recent electoral results in Peru and Colombia as though all of Latin America could be painted with the same brush, reducing the region's political landscape to a single story: the rise of the Right. *The Economist*, for example, claims Latin America is "going Trumpy." But what we are actually seeing is massive polarization, which is leading to extraordinarily close general elections.

In Peru, Keiko Fujimori won by a razor-thin margin of 0.3 percent (just 49,641 votes), with the difference coming mainly from overseas votes, particularly those from the United States. Her center-left opponent, Roberto Sánchez, has denounced the results as fraud, calling for protests. Fujimori will be the country's ninth president in ten years, amid a deep political crisis. In Colombia, right-wing Trump admirer

Abelardo de la Espriella won following an extremely polarized election. However, his opponent, Iván Cepeda, has stated he will call for "civil resistance" if the president-elect does not renounce his U.S. citizenship.

Trump's support in Colombia and votes from overseas residents in the case of Peru appear to have tipped the election in favor of the Right by a very narrow margin. However, from 2015 to the present, there have been 25 presidential elections in South America, and in 18 of them—over 70 percent—the respective ruling parties were defeated. The Right's recent electoral victories must be understood within this polarized, contradictory context in order to draw lessons for how to defeat these reactionary forces.

Internal divisions and organizational crises

The Latin American landscape is rife with deep contradictions.

In Peru's rural and working-class heartland, a majority voted for Sánchez in the runoff, with support as high as 80 percent. Fujimori, meanwhile, won support on the coast, including the

capital of Lima. These divisions are shaped by social, national-Indigenous, and peasant community demands. Fujimori is the heir to her father's brutal authoritarian neoliberalism, while Sánchez draws inspiration from former president Pedro Castillo, a rural teacher who, despite his moderate agenda, was ousted by the Right in December 2022 and is currently in prison.

Fujimori's arrival in office exacerbates, rather than resolves, this division. And runoff elections favor heterogeneous coalitions of voters who are motivated more by opposition to the other candidate than by firm political or ideological commitment to the one they support. In Fujimori's case, she received only 17 percent of the vote in the first round. Between them, the two candidates did not exceed 30 percent in the first round, highlighting this crisis of representation.

Colombia saw a similar pattern of geographic and social division. The country's central regions supported de la Espriella, while the poorer outlying areas and cities like Bogotá leaned toward Cepeda. A few days ago, a journalist from the newspaper *El País* warned that if de la Espriella implements a "chainsaw"-style austerity plan, it could reignite a cycle of protests as intense as the one experienced between 2019 and 2021.

The case of Bolivia, meanwhile, illustrates a similar scenario following the offensive launched by the Paz administration, marked by the division between the Andean west—where El Alto served as the epicenter of the rebellion—and the east, home to the agro-industrial elites who exert pressure from the right.

To understand all this, it is useful to revisit Antonio Gramsci's concept of "organic crisis." These crises affect not only the economy or a specific govern-



Keiko Fujimori (left): Peruvian politician and President-elect of Peru. Abelardo de la Espriella (center): Colombian lawyer, political figure, and President-elect of Colombia. Rodrigo Paz (right): Bolivian senator and President of Bolivia.

ment, but the entire social, political, and economic order. The key is that the ruling classes lose their ability to govern through consensus, paving the way for solutions by force. Gramsci noted that:

“At a certain point in their historical lives, social groups become detached from their traditional parties. In other words, the traditional parties in that particular organizational form, with the particular men who constitute, represent, and lead them, are no longer recognized by their class (or fraction of a class) as its expression. When such crises occur, the immediate situation becomes delicate and dangerous, because the field is open for violent solutions...”

The point is that the Right is failing to reconfigure the balance of power to the extent it needs to. What we see, instead, is a very rapid erosion of right-wing governments, like José Antonio Kast's in Chile, Javier Milei's in Argentina, and Rodrigo Paz in Bolivia. And all of this is taking place against the backdrop of Trump's own weakening.

Faced with the crises of “progressive” movements, right-wing forces come to power but then lose momentum very quickly and struggle to govern. This pattern repeats itself throughout Latin America. However, the mass movement has not yet managed to impose its own solution to these crises either.

Strategic lessons from the rebellion in Bolivia

Bolivia is the most explosive manifestation of this deep-seated crisis. After more than fifty days of peasant and popular rebellion, the government declared a three-month state of emergency, which it intends to maintain for three months. This is a direct attack on democratic freedoms and the right to protest, carried out through the militarization of the country using police and the Armed Forces. Paz remains in power thanks to the betrayal of the leadership of the Bolivian Workers' Center (COB), Bolivia's largest labor confederation, which entered into

negotiations with the government while leaving the militant peasant blockades isolated.

These scenarios reveal the underlying organic crisis and highlight the need to shift the balance of power. In Bolivia, attempts were made to do so, both by the Paz government and by the mass movement. The government tried to persecute the leaders—including figures like COB Executive Secretary Mario Argollo—and, in places like San Julián, attempted to break up the blockades by attacking them head-on with the police and the parastatal gangs of the *Unión Juvenil Cruceñista* [Santa Cruz Youth Union, a far-right movement based in Santa Cruz, Bolivia].

The struggle to combine popular rebellion with the general strike—in order to tip the balance of power in favor of the workers, peasants, and peoples of the region—is becoming a central issue.

But the government was brutally defeated. It had to stop persecuting Argollo and stage a pathetic charade of “dialogue” at the Central Bank so that the COB leadership would publicly betray the movement. This allowed it to demobilize the movement, but it did not resolve the problem of the balance of power needed to push forward with the restructuring demanded by imperialists.

That said, the mass movement also failed to shift the balance of power in its favor. We witnessed a very significant process of self-organization—one that was anti-bureaucratic and led by peasants and precarious workers—but without the large contingents of “formal” mining and factory workers join-

ing in. A decisive test of the bureaucratic leaderships was laid bare, but that fragmentation has not yet been overcome to combine the popular rebellion with a general strike.

We can take strategic lessons from the rebellion in Bolivia. Among them is the central obstacle of corporatism within the union leaderships. The COB bureaucracy never actually carried out the general strike voted on at the May 1 town hall meeting. This meant that large contingents of miners and factory workers continued to produce and export goods without affecting capitalists' profits, while Paz, through partial concessions, sought to demobilize sectors one by one.

A positive lesson is the potential demonstrated by anti-bureaucratic and self-organizing movements. In El Alto, blockade committees emerged that rejected the tepid leaderships and established mechanisms of direct democracy—supply committees, communal kitchens, and self-defense committees—which, had they developed further, contained the seeds of territorial power, a tendency toward dual power capable of uniting the countryside with the city.

These and other elements—such as the issue of hegemony linked to the popular organization of food distribution—emerge as burning issues for the movement as it faces the next waves of a conflict that, far from resulting in a decisive government victory, has instead left us with a sort of temporary suspension of a conflict of which, by all indications, we will see new chapters.

These strategic issues raised by the Bolivian uprising can point the way to defeating these right-wing forces in Latin American countries.

For example, in the case of Peru, the question of how to build an alliance between workers and Indigenous and peasant farmers is key, just as in Bolivia. This issue came into sharp focus during the uprising against the *coup* by

right-wing Dina Boluarte in late 2022. At that time, after dozens were killed by the repression and numerous marches to Lima, the main labor federation was forced to declare an “indefinite general strike,” but did nothing to ensure it took place, which allowed the regime to survive. This same issue arose in Colombia, during the so-called national strikes of 2019 and 2021.

U.S. hegemonic decline and the albatross of Trump’s support

To understand the depth of these organic crises facing Latin America, we must also understand the critical situation facing President Trump and U.S. imperialism itself.

As Martin Wolf notes in the *Financial Times*, the United States no longer serves as a stabilizing power in the world order, similar to what befell the United Kingdom around 1900. University of Chicago political scientist Robert Pape emphasized that Trump is racking up defeats and has yet to come to terms with the drastic shift brought about by the war in Iran, which has left the United States weakened in the Middle East. Meanwhile, the editorial of the latest issue of *Foreign Affairs* is dedicated to the question of whether the United States can remain the world’s leading military power if it does not

quickly adapt to the new realities revealed by the war in Iran. These analysts offer a telling snapshot of the crises plaguing Trump and U.S. imperialism.

These crises exist amid polarization and new political phenomena within the United States itself. In New York, three candidates supported by Mayor Zohran Mamdani and the Democratic Socialists of America won their Democratic primaries. These candidates—Brad Lander, Claire Valdez, and Darializa Avila Chevalier—are known for their opposition to the genocide in Gaza, in contrast to representatives of the Democratic establishment, who unconditionally defend the State of Israel and receive funding from the Zionist lobby.

The contradiction is these candidates are running as Democrats—part of the party of the imperialist regime from which, obviously, capitalism cannot be defeated. But their victories signal something important: mirroring the radicalism of Trump and other right-wing forces, phenomena on the international Left are also emerging. These have distinct characteristics in different countries—including youth sectors within Die Linke in Germany, leftist sectors in the United Kingdom like Your Party, and also in Argentina, with the political movement centered

on Myriam Bregman of the Party of Socialist Workers (PTS)—a sister organization of *Left Voice*—and the Left and Workers’ Front—Unity (FIT-U).

Against this backdrop, a serious problem arises for the entire regional right wing that embraces Trump—whether de la Espriella, Kast, Milei, or Paz. Trump’s support, which in many cases was key to these right-wing figures’ victories, is becoming increasingly less useful to them in governing. Moreover, it could backfire on them—like a lead-weighted life vest—if Trump loses control of both chambers of Congress in the United States in the November midterm elections.

Latin America’s internal crises are bringing into sharp focus the prospect of decisive clashes to determine the balance of power. Class-struggle testing grounds, like Bolivia, are key to drawing conclusions about what lies ahead in order to defeat these right-wing forces and imperialism. The struggle to combine popular rebellion with the general strike—in order to tip the balance of power in favor of the workers, peasants, and peoples of the region—is becoming a central issue.

—*Left Voice*, July 5, 2026

<https://www.leftvoice.org/beyond-trumpification-latin-america-organic-crisis/>

Class War in Sugartown

By JOE ALLEN

July 31, 2026—Crockett, California is located on the Carquinez Strait, a forty-minute drive from Oakland, and popularly known as “Sugartown.” This small, unincorporated town of thirty-two hundred residents is the longtime home of the California and Hawaii Sugar (C&H) refinery, one of the last cane sugar processors in the western United States. For more than a month starting on June 15, ninety-three warehouse workers represented by Local 6 of the

International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) were on strike against a straight up union-busting effort by the refinery’s owner ASR Group, led by the billionaire Fanjul family. Members of Local 10 of ILWU, who unload the ships of cane sugar, joined their sister local’s picket line soon after it went up, the latest in the union’s long tradition of honoring picket lines.

On July 27, the ILWU and C&H released a joint statement:

“ILWU Local 6 represents approximately 100 warehouse workers at C&H in Crockett, California, who have been on strike since June 15, 2026. The parties have been far apart on a number of issues. The parties met with a federal mediator several times in July but were unable to reach agreement. ILWU Local 6 and C&H have agreed to a sixty-day period through September 30, 2026, during which executives from C&H and the ILWU’s International Officers will

participate in negotiations in an effort to reach an agreement that is good for the workers, the company, and the community. In a showing of good faith, ILWU Local 6 has agreed to return to work during this period.”

“Everybody’s positive, everybody believes it’s the right thing to do,” Cesar Garibay, a negotiator for Local 6 and warehouse worker at C&H, told *SFGate*. “We’re confident that something will be reached before September 30.” What can be reached with C&H is still to be seen and whether that is acceptable to the membership is another question. While C&H has withdrawn its declaration of an “impasse,” meaning it no longer declared its “last, best, and final offer,” it is unlikely to budge on major economic and healthcare issues.

Just a week before the ILWU announced its members were returning work it issued a public statement on the state of negotiations:

“ILWU Local 6 would like to set the record straight. While C&H Sugar professes its commitment to the community, its actions during these negotiations say otherwise. C&H has turned its back on generations of workers who spent their lives making the company profitable and who live in the very community C&H claims to serve. For two months, the com-

pany has repeated the same ‘take it or leave it’ offer to the Union: workers must accept a new contract that slashes overtime, sick leave, and retiree benefits, while offering wage increases that don’t come close to making up for the benefits taken away.”

Chief steward and 25-year veteran employee, Otis Brown said, “C&H’s behavior at the bargaining table has been insulting. They’ve threatened us and treated us like we don’t understand basic math, like how overtime works. They told us after one bargaining session that they would not change their offer, and that C&H could take away whatever benefits it wanted. Now, a month into the strike, C&H’s chief negotiator refuses to show up in-person to face the workers he’s hurting with these takebacks.” The ILWU highlighted the example of retired worker Larry Morrison, who worked at C&H for forty-three years. “He is now at risk of losing the retiree medical coverage he earned over his career if C&H gets its way and breaks its promise to workers,” the union said.

Strikers faced mass arrests by the Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Department and at least two picketers were hit by scabs driving their cars through the picket line, with one strik-

er going to the hospital. Meanwhile, two hundred and fifty production workers at the refinery, represented by the Sugar Workers Association (SGA), who are affiliated with the Seafarers International Union (SIU), crossed the ILWU picket line for the duration of the strike, that allowed a low level of sugar refining to continue. Scabs were also bussed in by non-union limousine services, and according to one witness I spoke to, a frustrated scab bus driver threatened strikers, who were slow-walking, which is perfectly legal in California, through a crosswalk that delayed the arrival of scabs and disrupted refinery operations.

The militancy of the strikers clearly unnerved C&H, in a company statement they fumed:

“Since the strike began, some union members have attempted to block employees and contractors from entering our facility to perform their work and earn their pay. ILWU members have sought to prevent the movement of trucks bringing raw material to the refinery and those carrying our products to customers who depend on them. They have jumped onto moving vehicles, slashed tires, cut off trucks on the highway, damaged tractor trailers coming to our plant, and attempted to block a bulk



Picture from ILWU Facebook page.

cargo ship from docking at our refinery using a small fishing boat.”

Sugartown

While Crockett leans heavily on its long-standing connection to the refinery, it also wants to shift its image. The local Chamber of Commerce is trying to promote the town as an arts and restaurant scene, but for a large part of the 20th Century, Crockett looked and felt like a quaint company town. *SFGATE* writer Erin Hallisy wrote back in 1995:

“For decades, Crockett prospered under the benevolent leadership of the California and Hawaiian Sugar Company, which built many of the houses in the hilly community overlooking the Carquinez Strait. C&H built clubs, swimming pools and athletic facilities, kept up the town’s parks and sponsored Christmas parties and other festivities. At one time, nearly all of the workers at the red-brick refinery lived in town, but over the past 20 years, workers gradually moved out, finding newer and better housing in Vallejo or neighboring towns in Contra Costa County. Now, about ten percent of the employees live in Crockett, but many of the homes are still occupied by retired sugar workers who have maintained friendships with, and loyalties to, their successors on the sugar line.”

Many C&H workers may not live in Crockett, but they still have deep family connections to the refinery, following in the footsteps of grandparents, parents, siblings, and cousins with the expectation of good paying and steady jobs. One striker, Kendra Sparks, started working at the refinery at eighteen, and stayed for thirty years at the C&H warehouse, told the *Bay Area Current*, “There was such a sense of pride in working here. Everybody knew what good jobs they were. The town itself had a lot of pride as being home to C&H sugar, too. But that definitely took a sharp [turn].”

Beginning in the 1980s through the 1990s, C&H began to shrink the workforce and curtail benefits. The work-

force declined from 1,500 people in 1986 to about 490 to 500 people today. Things took a turn for the worse in 2006 when American Sugar Refining (ASR) bought C&H Sugar. According to the *Bay Area Current*: Almost immediately upon company acquisition, ownership rolled back benefits. In the 2009 contract negotiated between C&H and ILWU Local 6, workers were told that anyone hired after that year would not qualify for previously-guaranteed retiree health or pension benefits. It was a sacrifice workers made with the chips they had on the table. “Me and another 60 or so guys in here don’t have pensions,” said Manny Loera, a belt foreman who has been working in the factory for 11 years. “We’ll be working until we can’t, really.”

Meanwhile, working conditions in the refinery have gone from bad to worse. Edgar Thompson, an ILWU Local 6 bargaining committee member said, “I started working here as a summer laborer in high school. Thirty-seven years later, C&H’s offer feels like a slap in the face. I work 16-hour shifts to keep the refinery running. Now, the Company wants to take away the retirement health benefits I’ve worked so hard for. We show up five, six, or seven days a week for this Company. I’ve worked 19 days straight before with no days off. So, I just can’t understand why they say they need to cut our limited sick leave and overtime pay too.”

Working conditions like these spurred—with the added dangers of COVID-19 pandemic—the strike wave that ran through the food processing and distribution industries to the industrial core of the U.S. economy from 2021 onward. Rank and file workers repeatedly voted down union recommended contracts and stayed out on strike to eliminate two-tier wage structures, inferior pensions, and endless shifts and work weeks, dubbed “suicide shifts.” While food processing and retail workers were risking their lives and health on the jobs, Corporate

America and its CEOs were raking in record profits and pay.

The Brothers Fanjul

C&H Sugar is a link in the vast sugar empire of the Fanjul family, known as ASR Group. If you were to ask your average acquaintance if they ever heard of the Fanjul family or the ASR Group, they would probably scratch heads and say no, but if were to ask if they know Domino, C&H Sugar, Redpath, or Florida Crystals, they will likely say yes. ASR Group owns them all and more, including the American subsidiary of the British conglomerate Tate & Lyle. The Fanjuls are the literal personification of “Big Sugar” in the United States, led by the brothers Alfonso “Alfy” and José “Pepe.” The Fanjul family can trace their origins in the sugar business back to the ownership of sugar plantations in early 19th Century Cuba. A 2004 *New York Times* profile of the Fanjul brothers revealed:

“Starting in the 1850’s, the Fanjuls’ ancestors began buying land and consolidating their control of Cuba’s sugar business. By the turn of the century, they were among the country’s dominant producers. It was a wildly lucrative business, and one built on the backs of poorly paid, landless farm workers. Money from sugar built an extravagant mansion that Mr. Fanjul’s maternal grandfather, Jose Gomez-Mena, stocked with fine European art, including dozens of Sorollas¹. In 1936, Mr. Fanjul’s father, Alfonso Fanjul Sr., married Mr. Gomez-Mena’s daughter, Lillian, uniting two of Cuba’s largest sugar fortunes.”

Cuba didn’t officially abolish slavery until 1886. After the Cuban Revolution of 1959, huge estates like the Fanjuls were targeted for expropriation and the Fanjuls fled to the United States and began to rebuild their sugar empire over the decades to their dominant position today. The Fanjul brothers have been major political players in Florida and national politics. The same *New York Times* profile gave us some

idea of their political operation twenty years ago:

“Pepe Fanjul, who has lavishly contributed to Republican candidates, and Alfy, who has done the same for Democrats, describe themselves as close brothers who maintain their political differences. Other political analysts attribute their bipartisan fund-raising to a calculated strategy of making sure that all political bases are covered.”

Sugar is a heavily subsidized industry that has made the Fanjuls billionaires with an estimated worth of \$4 billion. They are personal friends of President Donald Trump and live near his Mar-a-lago estate. According to *Forbes* magazine, “The Fanjul family has been wooing politicians for decades, but their bet on the Trump administration is their best yet, after

the president added tariffs for foreign competitors and pushed Coca-Cola to use its cane sugar to make American soda great again.”

The bloody history of sugar hovers over the C&H refinery, who source some of their sugar cane from the Negros Occidental province of the Philippines, which has seen some of the deadly repression by the country’s military against the local population with 19 people killed in April 2026, including a Filipino-American. Many Filipino activists joined the ILWU picket lines as news of the strike spread in the Bay Area. “What we’re seeing is a similar situation: folks in the Bay Area are fighting for their livelihood just as much as folks back home are fighting for their livelihood as sugar cane workers,” said Ricky Pataksil of Defend Negros Northern California.

The C&H Sugar strike was shaping up to be the most politically significant strike in the country. If the ILWU returns to the picket line in sixty days they deserve wide support.

Joe Allen is a former Teamster. He has written for Counterpunch, Rebel, Tempest, Jacobin, Socialist Worker, and the International Socialist Review.

—Medium, July 31, 2026

<https://joeallen-60224.medium.com/class-war-in-sugartown-by-joe-allen-b012532e07ba>

¹ Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida (February 27, 1863 – August 10, 1923) was a Spanish painter. Sorolla excelled in the painting of portraits, landscapes, and monumental works of social and historical themes.

Solidarity Strikes and Taft-Hartley’s Long Shadow

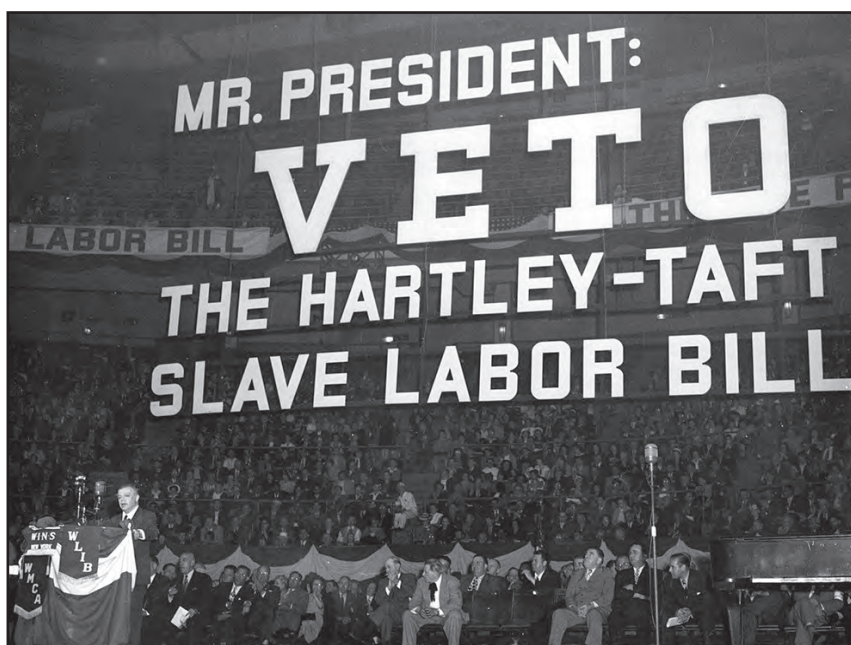
By HAYLEY BROWN

June 30, 2026—This week marks the anniversary of the enactment of one of the most consequential pieces of labor legislation in U.S. history. The Labor Management Relations Act, better known as the Taft-Hartley Act, was passed over President Truman’s veto on June 23, 1947, and substantially narrowed the forms of collective action protected under federal labor law. The Taft-Hartley Act provided employers with a myriad of new legal weapons while suppressing some of organized labor’s most powerful tactics, dramatically reshaping the U.S. labor landscape. Most of the provisions in the Taft-Hartley Act remain in effect nearly eight decades later.

For most private-sector workers, one of the costliest parts of the Taft-Hartley Act is its prohibition on secondary or “solidarity” actions. In a secondary action, workers at one company strike, picket, or boycott to support workers at another. Secondary

actions enable workers across a supply chain to join forces and exert pressure, giving employees across different shops

more leverage together than they would have individually. The Taft-Hartley Act, however, largely confined legal



David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union speaks against the Taft-Hartley Act, May 4, 1947. Photo: The Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archive, Cornell University. CC BY 2.0

protections for strikes and picketing to actions directed at the “primary employer” involved in the labor dispute. Twelve years later, Congress would add Section 8(e), the “hot cargo” provision, which blocked unions from negotiating contractual solidarity with their employers. In practice, this meant unions could no longer blunt the Taft-Hartley restrictions through contract language requiring their employer to avoid doing business with a company involved in a labor dispute.

The ability to withhold labor is the backbone of worker organizing; without it, workers have little leverage when negotiating with their employers.

The Taft-Hartley Act’s restrictions on secondary actions represented a major change to the New Deal-era National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which contained no such ban. The restrictions on solidarity strikes carry particular weight. The ability to withhold labor is the backbone of worker organizing; without it, workers have little leverage when negotiating with their employers. Solidarity strikes expand that leverage by making it harder for an employer to isolate a single bargaining unit, reroute work, or otherwise keep production moving despite a strike. Strike action of all kinds is associated with growth in union membership.

Workers in countries where solidarity actions are permitted have used them to great effect. In Finland, for example, striking postal workers found reinforcement from rail and aviation workers, among others. Solidarity actions disrupted rail, aviation, ferry, bus, and port operations, culminating in a successful agreement that preserved workers’ pay and conditions in their next contract.

While not the only factor, restrictions on solidarity actions almost certainly contributed to the weakening of organized labor in the U.S. Solidarity actions reinforce the idea of a labor movement that encompasses the entire working class, rather than siloing workers by employer or industry. The Taft-Hartley Act’s rules against solidarity actions weakened workers’ negotiating power. They also helped chip away at the burgeoning class consciousness that had powered many of the pre-1947 solidarity actions the Act was intended to curb.

Solidarity strikes would be especially useful now, given the Trump administration’s attacks on federal workers. The administration has attempted to remove collective bargaining rights for thousands of federal workers, a move which is still being fought in the courts. More recently, President Trump issued an executive order removing civil service protections for many federal workers, effectively converting about 8,000 employees to “at-will” status. Given that federal workers make up an outsized share of the labor movement, this would have been an opportune moment for private-sector unions to engage in solidarity actions to protect the movement as a whole.

As one of the most effective mechanisms for workers to build power, unions are essential to that agenda. Unions are broadly popular in the U.S., and strong majorities agree that declines in unionization hurt both the country and working people. The U.S. labor movement, however, is hamstrung by a system that is rigged against workers from the start. The Taft-Hartley Act helped rig that system and continues to reinforce it decades later. Its prohibitions against solidarity strikes were a political response to a labor movement that had demonstrated the capacity to disrupt entire industries. That is the kind of labor movement that the U.S. needs today.

Hayley Brown is a Research Associate at the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

—CounterPunch, June 30, 2026

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2026/06/30/solidarity-strikes-and-taft-hartleys-long-shadow/>

The U.S. labor movement, however, is hamstrung by a system that is rigged against workers from the start. The Taft-Hartley Act helped rig that system and continues to reinforce it decades later.

An Injury to One Is an Injury to All

Solidarity and the Fired Four campaign

BY TATIANA COZZARELLI

The following speech was delivered at the Labor Notes Higher Education Workers meetup. In it, a CUNY graduate student and Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) member speaks about the Fired Four campaign and the joint picket with Starbucks workers as an example of labor solidarity in action. The CUNY Fired Four are four adjunct faculty members who were fired last summer in retaliation for their Palestine solidarity activism. Three have since won reinstatement through collective organizing and sustained pressure, but the fight continues until the fourth is reinstated and all retaliation against pro-Palestine activists is defeated.

Thanks so much to *Labor Notes*. It's an honor to share the stage with these panelists.

My name is Tatiana, I'm a grad student at CUNY, a member of the PSC, and a member of the reinstate the CUNY Fired Four organizing committee. I'm also a member of Left Voice.

The CUNY Fired Four are four CUNY adjuncts who were fired last summer, over the heads of the recommendations of their departments. What unites these four adjunct professors is their tireless organizing for the liberation of Palestine, union activism, and activism alongside students. Their precarious status as adjuncts made them easy targets for the administration.

The campaign for the reinstatement of the CUNY Fired Four, which you can follow on Instagram, Reinstatement the CUNY Fired Four, has included multiple tactics, from the grievance process to activism. We protested, we made t-shirts, and we held dance party fundraisers. But I want to share a bit about one action in particular.

In the winter of last year, Starbucks Workers United went on strike across

the country, protesting the continued lack of a contract. The Fired Four immediately saw the connections: many CUNY students are Starbucks workers and Starbucks workers have been on the front lines of the struggle for Palestine. But most importantly we know that the working class is connected—that if one of us wins, all of us win.

Starbucks workers have been on the front lines of the struggle for Palestine. But most importantly we know that the working class is connected—that if one of us wins, all of us win.

So, in the dead of winter, during finals week, as the campaign for the Fired Four seemed to have stagnated,

we proposed a joint picket with Starbucks workers. It was co-sponsored by two chapters of our union and other groups including the student union. It was a really successful end of the year action, which brought dozens of students and PSC members—including our union leadership—as well as dozens of Starbucks workers to raise awareness of both struggles. It was part of an attempt to make the Fired Four campaign not only a CUNY issue, but an issue for the labor movement as a whole—and to show that the issues affecting Starbucks workers are connected to our struggle at CUNY.

It was an expression of deep working-class solidarity—and of building that muscle. It's the kind of solidarity that has an enormous amount of power, which on a much larger scale, the heroic anti-ICE struggle in Minneapolis showed.

Really the lesson from this action is to connect. To connect with students, connect with staff, with workers outside of the university, to connect issues



Demonstration to reinstate the CUNY Fired Four. Photo: PSC CUNY

and struggles that seem disconnected. Because in this context of imperialist war, capitalist crisis and attacks by Trump if you scratch the surface, it's easy to see that it is all connected, and we need each other to win.

As of now, three of the Fired Four have been reinstated. And this is a huge victory of this struggle that has been led by the CUNY PSC and has helped build and strengthen our union.

But one has yet to be reinstated. The Fired Four campaign is now a campaign for the Fired Fourth. She has been banned from working on all CUNY campuses. This isn't an isolated example of repression, and we must continue the fight against repression of all those who have organized against the genocide in Palestine. Right now, I'm thinking of the Swarthmore Nine¹, students who are facing felony charges, I'm thinking of the Michigan Eight²,

who were arrested by the FBI—and I'm talking about attacks on leftists like Tom Alter³ in Texas.

We are in a political context where we are experiencing large scale attacks: on immigrants, the Palestine movement, on workers, continued genocide in Palestine and imperialist intervention around the world, on the teaching of history, Black struggle, queer studies, and on universities as a whole. These are attacks by the Trump administration but also supported and often enacted by Democrats and liberal university administrators. We need each other, we need to show up united, as the working class to fight back. As the Minneapolis teacher said yesterday, no one is coming to save us. But we can save each other and re-imagine universities not as repressive businesses, but as public, free, and run by and for working-class and oppressed people.

—Left Voice, July 3, 2026

<https://www.leftvoice.org/an-injury-to-one-is-an-injury-to-all-solidarity-and-the-fired-four-campaign/>

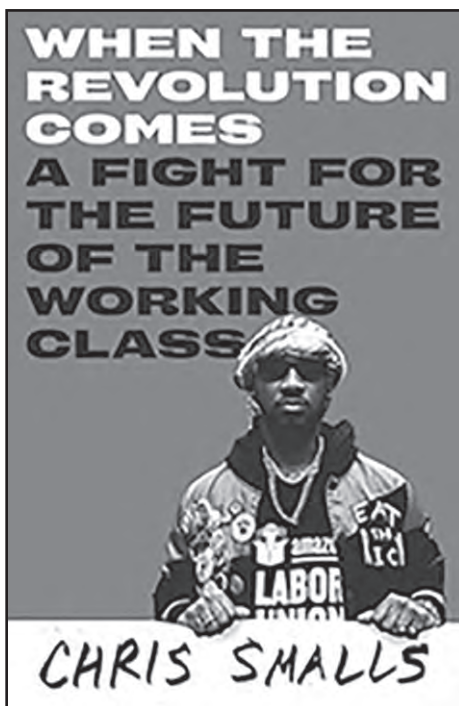
1 The "Swarthmore 9" refers to nine activists who were arrested and charged with misdemeanor trespassing after refusing to dismantle a pro-Palestinian encampment at Swarthmore College in May 2025

2 Eight pro-Palestinian activists affiliated with the University of Michigan were indicted on federal charges in June 2026 for allegedly orchestrating a criminal intimidation campaign against university administrators, law enforcement, and Jewish community leaders to force the school to divest from Israel.

3 Last September, Texas State University history professor and socialist activist Tom Alter was fired without due process after giving a talk about resisting U.S. imperialism at an online conference on socialism. (Read "Two Cases, One Tradition" elsewhere in this issue.)

Attack on Class Independence in the Labor Movement

BY LUIGI MORRIS



Pantheon

On June 4, 2026, *Jacobin* published a review of Chris Smalls's memoir, *When*

the Revolution Comes: A Fight for the Future of the Working Class. The review, titled "The Rise and Fall of Chris Smalls," by Annie Levin, is less concerned with fostering discussion about rank-and-file organizing, workers' democracy, or the actual state of organizing at Amazon than with fitting the Amazon JFK8 organizing experience into Jane McAlevey's organizing framework. This framework's tactics and strategy are part of a broader political approach that seeks to make unions the social base for reinvigorating the Democratic Party rather than agents of working-class destiny.

Back in 2020, Amazon workers on Staten Island made national headlines when Chris Smalls and a group of fellow Amazon workers—many of whom continue organizing in the union today—organized a walkout to protest the JFK8 facility's handling of the pandemic. This

occurred at a time when more than 6,000 workers and their families were being exposed to a deadly virus.

For many, the organizing effort was a life-and-death issue. The workers' outspoken denunciation of Amazon policies during the pandemic and their labor action stood out amid the passivity and complicity of many union leaderships, which allowed business to continue as usual while the most precarious workers risked their lives and the lives of their loved ones.

Amazon workers joined nurses' protests demanding adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safer working conditions. They even organized a May Day action—at a time when May Day organizing was far from popular in New York City—to unite Amazon workers and healthcare workers. Together, they argued that the front lines of the pandemic were not only in hospitals but

also in workplaces like Amazon warehouses, to which thousands of workers commuted daily from every corner of New York City and New Jersey, spreading and being exposed to the virus.

While Smalls was undoubtedly a central leader, the organizing campaign relied on many rank-and-file workers who took the struggle into their own hands. The movement was never simply about Smalls himself. He and his coworkers expressed a broader shift in consciousness among precarious sections of the working class—workers who did not want to die on the job and who believed that, after being deemed “essential,” they deserved respect, compensation, and safe working conditions.

Smalls’s contribution to the labor movement helped articulate a narrative that resonated with some of the most oppressed sectors of the working class. He seized the momentum created by the pandemic, connected the Amazon struggle to broader social movements—especially Black Lives Matter—and challenged many of the conventions that dominate union-organizing orthodoxy.

Unfortunately, Levin’s book review repeatedly centers Smalls’s background and personality—a common experience for many Black organizers—rather than the extensive organizing work behind the Amazon campaign or the significance of his political positions. It emphasizes his image—describing him as “flashy,” “charismatic,” and “a rapper,” highlighting his gold grilles and chains, and mentioning his previous work as a party entertainer—as though these traits constitute his primary contribution to the labor movement. In doing so, the article minimizes his more radical political perspective and the collective organizing that made the union campaign at JFK8 successful.

Chris Smalls and Amazon Labor Union (ALU)

From the 2020 walkout to the union victory in 2022, a small group of Amazon workers, with few resources,

organized a worker-led grassroots campaign to unionize JFK8. Big unions rejected their initiative, and the Democrats ignored them. They made enormous efforts to connect with the rank-and-file—from distributing food outside the warehouse and setting up a table to talk with workers almost every day to translating their flyers into multiple languages. They didn’t wait for a “supermajority;” instead, they relied on their organizing efforts, their organic connection to the workplace, and the momentum of a political moment shaped by both the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. The key was not Smalls’s background as a “party promoter,” as Levin writes, but the fact that he and the ALU organizers were tireless workplace organizers who forged organic trust and solidarity with their coworkers in a moment of unprecedented societal upheaval.

This framework’s tactics and strategy are part of a broader political approach that seeks to make unions the social base for reinvigorating the Democratic Party rather than agents of working-class destiny.

This momentum helped propel the ALU’s historic victory. Of course, history is made by people, and in this Chris Smalls, along with many other Amazon workers, played a leading role in organizing the first unionized Amazon warehouse in U.S. history—something that established business unions and pro-Democratic Party organizations had failed to accomplish even to this day, six years later. Those who could only imagine working-class organizing through a narrow manual struggled to understand how it happened.

At the same time, the process contained contradictions from the beginning. Although it was rooted in widespread opposition to Amazon’s exploitation and was based on broad rank-and-file participation, it never developed sufficiently democratic structures for self-organization and collective decision-making. It makes a huge difference when the rank-and-file is organized through assemblies in which workers can share their grievances, ideas, and demands. Even if the rank-and-file’s decisions differ from those of the leadership, the labor movement is only strengthened when workers take ownership of the process, assume responsibility for making decisions, and take the reins of the struggle into their own hands.

This stands in stark contrast to strategies in which workers are treated as a mass to be manipulated in support of the Democratic Party’s agenda. At the time, however, *Jacobin* appeared less concerned with those shortcomings. There was no problem as long as Smalls and the ALU were sharing stages with Bernie Sanders and appearing at Labor Notes conferences.

In the years since the pandemic, no additional Amazon warehouses have been successfully unionized. Why is this? We might consider the difficulties of the contract fight at JFK8, which still grapples with high turnover, union busting, and worker firings, among other attacks. We might also think about the relationship between the ALU’s struggle and other organizing drives. Yet Levin’s review focuses on one single factor: Chris Smalls. Sure, he made tactical mistakes and offered little space to discuss the overall strategy, but the author, throughout her lengthy *critique*, doesn’t seriously discuss the many other organizing attempts against the giant Amazon that also suffered setbacks: Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union’s (RWDSU’s) defeat in Bessemer, Alabama; the limitations of the Teamsters Amazon

Division in establishing a strong presence inside Amazon warehouses; the Teamsters' relationship with Donald Trump and Sean O'Brien; the inability of the UPS contract fight to inspire Amazon workers on a broader scale; or the role of progressives whose focus remains centered on legislative strategies rather than organizing from below.

Amazon organizing and class independence

Levin's review criticizes Smalls for not aligning himself more closely with Democrats like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), Bernie Sanders, and Zohran Mamdani. This reflects a broader political orientation within *Jacobin* and the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA): tying the labor movement to the party's left wing. Ultimately, the goal seems to be less about building labor as an independent force for social transformation and more about using unions as sources of pressure, resources, infrastructure, and electoral support for a political realignment within the Democratic Party.

Progressive Democrats such as AOC and Jamaal Bowman voted to impose a contract on rail workers that those workers had explicitly rejected. Mamdani endorsed Governor Kathy Hochul while she was calling for replacement workers (scabs) to undermine the largest nurses' strike in New York City history. Sanders and union leaders such as Shawn Fain rallied labor support behind "genocide Joe" Biden and later Kamala Harris, despite policies that many workers viewed as contributing to political disillusionment and creating opportunities for the Right to strengthen.

And yet *Jacobin's* answer is to criticize Smalls for not thanking AOC for getting him out of jail after he was arrested at the Met. Do we really imagine that asking someone who sailed in solidarity with Gaza and was imprisoned and tortured by the Israeli military should be grateful to politicians

who supported funding for the Iron Dome and continue to defend Israel's right to exist and defend itself?

Why not use a platform like *Jacobin* that reaches more than one million readers to demand that O'Brien, Fain, progressive unions, and organizations such as Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) take direct action in solidarity with Gaza?

Smalls has been organizing in solidarity with Palestine. He joined the Global Sumud Flotilla, which attempted to break the siege and deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza. He also traveled to Italy to bring greater visibility among U.S. audiences to the historic strike by Italian dockworkers in solidarity with Gaza.

...the labor movement is only strengthened when workers take ownership of the process, assume responsibility for making decisions, and take the reins of the struggle into their own hands...

It is no coincidence that *Jacobin* recently published an article by leaders of TDU outlining their strategy. In discussing the future of the labor movement and the role of a prominent figure such as O'Brien—who spoke at the Republican National Convention, praised anti-immigrant politicians, and has not taken any action against the genocide in Gaza—TDU leaders argue that union activity and politics should be treated as separate spheres. As TDU leader Antonio Rosario explains, "If you're against Trump, I am personally 100 percent with you. But TDU is not for that." TDU endorsed and campaigned for O'Brien without criticizing any of his reactionary actions.

According to this view, one can fight for a militant union while supporting a pro-Trump union leader, and union organizers shouldn't challenge the political positions of their leadership. This creates a false division between union organizing and politics, as though politics begins and ends with elections and as though workers are limited to choosing between Democrats and Republicans. It ignores the possibility of building a working-class political alternative that is independent of both parties and the possibility of using working-class power to fight for the rights of the immigrant, Black, queer, and feminized working class.

On the one hand, *Jacobin* appears to believe that Smalls deserves an entire article criticizing him for not supporting progressive Democrats. On the other hand, it seems acceptable for TDU not to challenge O'Brien and his support for the Trump administration. The lack of a compass is striking.

Teamsters and Amazon

It's true that Smalls eventually lost much of his connection to the rank-and-file. After stepping away from day-to-day Amazon organizing, the slate associated with him was defeated in the union's leadership election, and the new slate, ALU Democratic Reform Caucus, gained the leadership of the union.

One contradiction of the ALU's strategy under Smalls was that it relied on a combination of factors: widespread hatred of Jeff Bezos, the symbolic impact of the JFK8 union victory, Smalls's public profile, and support from progressive Democrats. There were rallies featuring Sanders and other Democratic politicians held outside JFK8, and the relationship between Smalls and Sanders was particularly close.

All that gave the illusion that more warehouses could be taken, starting a domino effect. Without sustained rank-and-file organizing, workers' democracy, and political independence, however, it is impossible to defeat a trillion-dollar corporation.

But the wrong lesson would be to reduce the obstacles facing Amazon unionization to Smalls's leadership, an alleged lack of "structure tests," or the need for a closer relationship with the Democratic Party. For the new leadership of Amazon Labor Union-International Brotherhood of Teamsters (ALU-IBT), the central challenge is to deepen rank-and-file organizing, empower workers involved in the union, and create democratic spaces for discussion, debate, and collective decision-making. The pressure, instead, is often to orient the union toward elected officials and electoral priorities, compounded by the top-down Teamsters union bureaucratic structure and leadership—a pressure that will continue to grow under Mamdani and the new layer of DSA elected officials.

If there is one aspect of Smalls's leadership that TDU and *Jacobin* are unlikely to criticize, it was his final major action as union president. As he prepared to leave office and became increasingly disconnected from organizing efforts at JFK8, he initiated the process of merging with the Teamsters before any meaningful discussion or debate had taken place among the membership. By the time members voted on the proposal, the machinery driving the merger was already well underway.

At a moment when workers should be drawing lessons from both the strengths and weaknesses of the early organizing efforts at JFK8 and throughout Amazon, the conclusion cannot be to place the labor movement in a Democratic Party straitjacket or force organizing into the rigid schemas favored by McAlevee's followers.

Far from that, the labor movement is entering a new period. In that sense, Levin's article contradicts all the lessons we should be taking from advanced examples like the Minneapolis labor and community struggle against ICE, Trump, and the complicity of their Democratic mayor and governor.

The workers' movement and the Democratic Party

Levin mentions that Smalls "blames the two-party system for the state of the American labor movement," but she does not offer her own analysis or counterarguments. Yet Smalls goes beyond merely criticizing the bipartisan system—the two parties of the billionaires. He also advocates for a Labor Party that breaks with the capitalist class and builds an organization of our own. On that point, I could not agree more: we need a new party of the working class, for the working class.

The Democratic Party—often described as the graveyard of social movements—and its close relationship with the union bureaucracy have a long history of attacking working-class interests. Large sections of the working class see it as simply the other party of the *status quo*. Recent research conducted by Leopold [Les Leopold, author of *The Billionaires Have Two Parties, We Need A Party of Our Own*.] found that, among more than 3,000 workers in the Rust Belt, 57 percent supported the creation of a new political organization independent of the two traditional parties. There is growing dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party, to the point that even some *Jacobin* writers have begun engaging with the possibility of a third-party alternative.

The key questions are not only "bread-and-butter" issues but also struggles around immigrant rights, Palestine, and other major social questions affecting working people. This runs counter to the dominant sentiment among *Jacobin*'s class reductionists, who focus on an affordability agenda and argue that taking up issues such as race, gender, and imperialism divides the working class, rather than recognizing and fighting for the strong connections between these struggles.

The recent electoral successes of DSA candidates express opposition to the genocide in Gaza and a broader

discontent with a system that allows the rich to get richer while working-class people struggle to make ends meet. Yet working-class organizations should not be appendages of the Democratic Party. If anything, the challenge for the labor movement is to connect the struggle on the shop floor with the need to build our own political alternative to the Democrats.

What is needed is a political project that fights to democratize unions, relies on the self-organization of the working class, maintains class independence, promotes international solidarity, and addresses the major issues affecting working people as a whole from an anti-capitalist and socialist perspective.

—*Left Voice*, June 30, 2026

<https://www.leftvoice.org/jacobins-piece-on-chris-smalls-an-attack-on-class-independence-in-the-labor-movement/>

Ultimately, the goal seems to be less about building labor as an independent force for social transformation and more about using unions as sources of pressure, resources, infrastructure, and electoral support for a political realignment within the Democratic Party.

Only Organizing Will Halt Trump's War on Immigrants

By JUSTIN AKERS CHACÓN

On June 30, 2026, the Supreme Court ruled against President Donald Trump's effort to end birthright citizenship for the children of undocumented people born inside the United States. In a six-to-three decision, which included Trump-picked, right-wing justices Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett, the majority upheld that birthright citizenship was guaranteed under the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment. The other Trump appointee, Neil Gorsuch, sided with the minority.

This is the third court ruling in U.S. history that has affirmed birthright citizenship in some way against challenges from white nationalists. The 1898 ruling in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, reaffirmed that the U.S.-born children of noncitizen Chinese parents were citizens. In the 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* case, the Court again fended off another challenge by Texas public school officials who tried to remove undocumented schoolchildren from the rolls. They claimed that undocumented peo-

ple were "foreign nationals" and therefore not "guaranteed equal protection of the law" since they were not under "U.S. jurisdiction." The court rejected their claim and again re-affirmed birthright citizenship.

The main force of opposition to Trump's war has to come from the organized working class resisting the attacks by ICE around the country.

The failed claim that noncitizen people are not covered by constitutional protections because they are not under "U.S. jurisdiction" is the same line of argument Trump pursued during his first term. The difference this time is that Trump was banking on a majority right-wing Supreme Court—

three of whom he appointed—to pass it based on loyalty to Trump himself, as much as on ideological grounds.

Trump's strategy was based on a plan to radically reshape the federal judiciary and install a solidly MAGA-aligned core of judges that could enable his administration to push through reactionary policy shifts by validating his authoritarian "rule-through-executive-order" method. During his first term, Trump named 234 judicial nominees to seats on the most critical benches across the country, including 54 who "reshaped the ideological makeup of federal appeals courts and three who drove a generational shift in the highest court in the land."

Into his second term, Trump is poised to potentially appoint 300 more federal judges as part of his effort to refashion the judiciary into a compliant and enabling force. This will set the stage for ending birthright citizenship under more favorable conditions. The defeat of his effort is attributable not to the public opposition from Democrats, who remain tacit and on the sidelines of the issue, but from within the ranks of the Republican Party itself.

The Trump regime's attack on migrants, refugees, and undocumented people has been the central political strategy of the MAGA movement to activate and mobilize white nationalism, to tear down the existing legal architecture of past civil rights gains, and to weaponize the state to attack political opponents and repress popular resistance. Anti-immigration politics and campaigns have become dominant in U.S. politics as a result of surging white nationalist politics that have entered into the mainstream, most recently with the effort to dismantle birthright citizenship.



Demonstrators rally in support of birthright citizenship outside the Supreme Court as Donald Trump attends oral arguments in Washington, D.C., on April 1, 2026.

Trump first announced his crusade to end birthright citizenship during his first presidential primary campaign. During his first term, Trump claimed he was in the process of drafting an executive order to declare the end of birthright citizenship through presidential decree. However, the order was never issued, as mass opposition to his policies weakened his administration and he failed to follow through with his major anti-immigrant initiatives. For instance, when Trump forced a shutdown of the federal government in early 2019 to force Democrats to fund his plan to expand the border wall, President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA Sara Nelson threatened to organize a general strike of airline workers to close airports across the country. Trump folded.

Nevertheless, he was given a second opportunity to revive these initiatives in his second term.

Surge in white nationalism targeting immigrants

The overturning of birthright citizenship has been a goal of the far right within the state since the advent of the so-called “war on terror” after 9/11 and the full-spectrum authoritarian turn against immigrants. Then-President George W. Bush and a Republican-controlled Congress oversaw the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in 2003 and further initiated a now more than two-decades’ long bipartisan buildup of the world’s largest anti-immigrant state-repressive apparatus engineered into policy through hundreds of restrictive and punitive laws and executive orders passed through the federal and state governments.

State policy facilitated a surge in white nationalist and far right political movements against immigrants across the U.S. Gun-toting Minutemen groups organized “migrant hunts” at the Mexican border, in immigrant neigh-

borhoods, and at sites where day laborers congregate to look for work; anti-immigrant think tanks such as NumbersUSA, the Center for Immigration Studies, and the Federation for American Immigration Reform, as well as political action committees like “Americans Against Illegal Immigration” sprang to life, bombarding the public with racist and xenophobic propaganda, and political opportunists of all partisan stripes hitched their wagons to the anti-immigrant crusade.

President Barack Obama and the new Democratic majority in Congress walked back their pledge and followed the Republican playbook in building up the immigrant state repressive apparatus—significantly increasing funding for ICE and Border Patrol and ramping up detention and deportation.

21st-century attempts to end birthright citizenship

Far right and openly racist agitator and opportunist Representative Tom Tancredo (R-Colorado) led an effort in Congress to organize the growing core of anti-immigrant Republicans into an anti-immigrant congressional caucus deceptively named the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus. The caucus’s goal was to promote racist and xenophobic politics, push restrictive and punitive laws to criminalize undocumented workers, and turn public opinion against immigrants. In its founding document, for instance, the group

declared: “With the events of September 11th, in the second session of the 107th Congress, the caucus continued to establish and emphasize the link between open borders, unregulated immigration and the potential for terrorism.”

Their efforts culminated in a push through the Republican Party to platform the goal of ending birthright citizenship.

Ultimately, they met fierce resistance from the mass immigrant rights movement that developed and spread across the country in 2006—which effectively blunted the far-right campaign and enabled the Democrats to take back Congress and then the presidency by 2008 with the promise of granting citizenship to the undocumented. Yet, once in power, President Barack Obama and the new Democratic majority in Congress walked back their pledge and followed the Republican playbook in building up the immigrant state repressive apparatus—significantly increasing funding for ICE and Border Patrol and ramping up detention and deportation. While Obama created Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals through executive order before leaving office, it excluded most undocumented people, reinforced the “good immigrant/bad immigrant” narrative of who deserves citizenship, and was rescinded for new applicants by Trump once in office.

Joe Biden was also elected in 2020 making the same campaign promise for legalization, only to again shift to anti-immigration once in power. For example, Biden maintained Trump’s invocation of the Title 42 health provision of the Public Health Service Act of 1944, which allowed U.S. authorities to expel migrants at the border without allowing them to seek asylum based on the racist notion that they “spread disease.”

In both cases, the failures of the Democratic Party resulted in Trump, who capitalized on the demoralization of the Democratic Party base. Trump went on to build the whole “MAGA” brand by deploying the most venal,

hateful, cruel, and deadly measures against immigrants, while building up the state repressive forces against immigrants to an unprecedented level.

Upon taking office for his second term on January 20, 2025, one of his first acts was to issue Executive Order 14160, officially titled “Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship,” which aimed to stop recognizing these U.S.-born children as citizens—ending birthright citizenship. This is a core policy objective of Project 2025, which is the far-right playbook that Trump has followed page-by-page during his second term.

Division in the Republican Party

The split within the Trump-aligned ranks in the Supreme Court that have emerged in the ruling on birthright citizenship can be attributed to larger divides emerging within the Republican Party on the question of immigration. The dominant Trump wing of far right, neo-fascist, and reactionary white nationalist forces now in control of the party and state have pursued more extreme and punitive measures to try to detain and expel a large share of the immigrant population from the country.

This has produced tensions within the sectors of the capitalist class that want and need to maintain access to a large pool of undocumented labor, albeit one still criminalized and without citizenship, making it harder to form or join unions, and therefore more vulnerable and exploitable. These opposing views of “how far to go” in the pursuit of anti-immigrant policies before harming the interests of capitalism itself are now coming out into the open. This tension is revealing itself in how more representatives within the minority wing of the Republican party, that

directly administer the political interests of capital first, are pushing back against what they consider the impacts of Trump’s policies that have become detrimental to the capitalist class. Ending birthright citizenship would undoubtedly have a seismic impact on the capitalist economy. More workers without status would leave the country, and fewer would migrate into a caste-like existence in the U.S. as permanent laborers without any rights. The U.S. capitalist class does not appear willing to risk such a drastic loss in profit.

Trump went on to build the whole “MAGA” brand by deploying the most venal, hateful, cruel, and deadly measures against immigrants, while building up the state repressive forces against immigrants to an unprecedented level.

Building an immigrant rights movement to stop Trump

Despite the opposition from the minority wing within his own party, Donald Trump and his MAGA movement will not give up on the matter and will likely shift strategy to again pursue the effort to end birthright citizenship. For example, while the measure didn’t pass this time around, right-wing Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas, Brett Kavanaugh, Samuel Alito, and Neil Gorsuch stated that

“they did not see birthright citizenship as a constitutional right for certain groups,” potentially foreshadowing another approach that Trump could take. Trump himself declared he would “go to Congress next” to find a way to end birthright citizenship.

For Trump to retreat, there would need to be an opposition that is able to counter his narratives and demonstrate power on a meaningful scale. The leadership of the Democratic Party has shown that it is not that opposition. Even as we approach the midterm elections, the Democratic Party has not unified around an alternative program or plan to challenge anti-immigrant policy.

The main force of opposition to Trump’s war has to come from the organized working class resisting the attacks by ICE around the country. For example, the mass resistance of people from Minneapolis to “Operation Metro Surge” in early 2026 developed into neighborhood defense groups against ICE raids and kidnappings and culminated in a mass strike on January 23 that shut down large parts of the economy, ultimately forcing a retreat and withdrawal of the ICE surge. Building protest movements, anti-ICE defense committees, workplace and neighborhood support networks, and mutual aid campaigns, and by organizing working-class power into sustained political movements that include walk-outs, shutdowns, and strikes are the only way that we can beat back and weaken Trumpism and bring an end to his reign of terror against immigrants.

—Truthout, July 1, 2026

<https://truthout.org/articles/birth-right-ruling-wont-halt-trumps-war-on-immigrants-only-organizing-will/>

Trump's Attack on Temporary Protected Status

BY STEPHEN PRAGER

June 25, 2026—The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday cleared the way for the Trump administration to deport hundreds-of-thousands of Haitian and Syrian residents from the U.S. after stripping them of their Temporary Protected Status last year.

In a six-to-three decision, the high court's conservative majority ruled that the Department of Homeland Security was able to strip status from 350,000 Haitians and 6,000 Syrians—including many who'd lived in the U.S. for years—after they'd been given protection because Department of Homeland Security (DHS) deemed their home countries unsafe to return to.

"Hundreds-of-thousands of people who hold legal status, who registered with the government, passed background checks, and paid fees to do so, now face losing their ability to work and being torn from their families and homes," explained Todd Schulte, the president of the immigration and criminal justice reform advocacy group Fwd.US.

A federal judge temporarily delayed the administration's TPS terminations in February, blocking what advocates feared would be a flood of immigration agents to areas with many TPS recipients. The judge said DHS had not followed the legally required steps to determine whether Haiti and Syria were safe enough for people with temporary status to return.

The State Department currently advises Americans not to visit either country for any reason, as Haiti is in the midst of a brutal gang war that has displaced more than 1.4 million people, and Syria has been in an ongoing state of unrest since the civil war began in 2011.

Echoing the lower court, Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan pointed out in her dissenting opinion that the only consultation within DHS on the condi-

tions in these countries took place in a brief email exchange between a DHS aide and a State Department official, who said that there were no "foreign policy concerns" with terminating their status, but provided no evidence to declare that the two countries were safe.

The justice likewise noted that the stripping of status for Haitians was likely arbitrary and unconstitutional, based in part on "racial animus." She noted that President Donald Trump has made many statements about Haitians "so repellent and racially inflected that the majority declines to put them in print."

Kagan listed several of them, including Trump's nonsensical rant that Haitians were "eating the pets" of residents in Springfield, Ohio; his claim that Haitians living in the U.S. "probably have AIDS"; and his description of Haiti as a "shithole country." She also noted his comments about immigrants more broadly, including that they are "poisoning the blood" of the nation.

"The statements fairly shout, in their racial undertones and overtones alike, that race entered into the president's resolve to remove Haitians from this country," Kagan wrote.

In the majority opinion, Justice Samuel Alito sidestepped the question of whether DHS has properly considered the conditions in Haiti and Syria,

stating that the TPS statute allows "no judicial review of any determination... with respect to the... termination" of a designation. He said that meant the court could not review either the final decision to terminate status or any of the individual decisions leading up to it.

He did acknowledge the question of racial animus and admitted that things Trump has said "would have scandalized the public just a short time ago." But he said that "none of the cited statements" from Trump were "overtly racial, and in substance all expressed policy views that could rest on race-neutral justifications."

The Trump administration has declined to renew TPS for all 13 countries for which it has come up for renewal during his second term. Alito said that since the administration has declined to renew TPS for every country, not just Haiti, the evidence was "insufficient to show that the termination of Haiti's TPS designation was based on the race of the Haitian people."

Thursday's ruling was yet another validation of Trump's efforts to end TPS by the Supreme Court, which last year ruled that he could similarly strip status from around 350,000 Venezuelan nationals.

But advocates have pointed out that the administration's case this time was substantially weaker.



Members of the National TPS Alliance rally at the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, DC, on April 29, 2026.

Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, a senior fellow at the American Immigration Council, said it was “very important for people to understand that the Trump administration did not win a decision today saying that they had lawfully ended TPS.”

“Instead,” he said, “what the Supreme Court held was that even if the Trump administration had openly ignored the law in making TPS decisions, courts cannot stop them.”

Nicolette Glazer, a California-based immigration attorney, said the court had basically determined that “a DHS secretary can end TPS at whim and neither statutory nor constitutional theory applies to curb administrative xenophobia.”

Sending people back to disaster

“Make no mistake about what this is,” said Amina Barhumi, the executive director of the Muslim Civic Coalition. “Temporary Protected Status exists because it is not safe to send people back to war and disaster. This decision does not change those dangers—it simply turns its back on the people fleeing them.”

Schulte said it was a “heartbreaking, terrible decision that defies common sense.” He added that “the administration simply broke the law in the way it terminated TPS.” Now, he said, the lives of “hundreds-of-thousands of people who have lived here for decades... are in chaos.”

While the Trump administration has often portrayed immigrants and refugees as parasites, Schulte argued that the “economic damage” of the decision would be felt far beyond the families facing deportation.

“Haitian TPS holders contribute nearly \$6 billion to the U.S. economy each year, and 200,000 of them work in industries already facing labor shortages, including healthcare, agriculture, and manufacturing,” he said. “An estimated 25,000 U.S. citizen children of Haitian TPS holders will be pushed into poverty when their parents lose work authoriza-

tion. Employers will lose trained, dedicated workers they cannot easily replace. The real-life impact of this ruling is profound, cruel, and heartbreaking.”

Some members of Congress pledged to take action to defend TPS recipients in light of the decision.

Representative Sylvia Garcia (D-Texas) called on Congress to pass the American Dream and Promise Act, which would create pathways to permanent legal status for TPS holders, as well as holders of the similar Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), and those who were brought to the U.S. unauthorized as children and received protection under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

The real-life impact of this ruling is profound, cruel, and heartbreaking.

“TPS holders followed the rules. They registered with the government, passed background checks, renewed their status, worked legally, paid taxes, and raised their families here,” Garcia said. “Their reward should not be a deportation notice.”

Senator Ed Markey (D-Mass.), who spoke outside the court on Thursday, said the ruling showed that “the far-right MAGA majority on the court cannot stand.” He said, “We need to win back the House and the Senate and expand the court.”

“This is not over,” Markey added. “It is our responsibility to protect TPS holders and provide this vulnerable group with a pathway to permanent citizenship. I will not stop fighting.”

Even Representative Mike Lawler (R-NY), a strong supporter of Trump, said that while he “never disputed the ability” of Trump to end TPS, he “strongly disagree[d] with ending Haitian TPS at this time,” saying that

“the situation on the ground in Haiti is a humanitarian and political disaster and continues to warrant an extension.”

Lawler noted that “roughly one-third” of Haitian TPS holders “work in our healthcare system” and said “shutting off TPS will create a crisis” in hospitals, nursing homes, and for people with disabilities.

“I’m asking the administration to allow for an orderly process by which Haitian TPS holders can maintain their work authorization while their immigration cases are adjudicated over the next six months,” he said, adding that the Senate should consider his legislation with Representative Laura Gillen (D-NY) to temporarily extend TPS protections.

He said the administration needed to “allow for a stable government to be established with a free and fair election, creating the conditions for a safe return for Haitians.”

Representative Analilia Mejia (D-NJ), a member of the House Homeland Security Committee and Border Security and Enforcement Subcommittee, said the TPS ruling, and another ruling on Thursday allowing the administration to turn back asylum seekers at legal points of entry, “should alarm every American.”

“The 14th Amendment promises due process and equal protection under the law. Those rights do not disappear because a president decides an entire community has become politically convenient to target,” she said. “When the government can deny one group a hearing or strip away protections they have relied on for years, it is not just immigrants who lose. It sends a dangerous message that constitutional rights can be discarded whenever those in power find it politically useful.”

Stephen Prager is a staff writer for Common Dreams.

—Common Dreams, June 25, 2026

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/supreme-court-tps-ruling>

Capitalism Fans the Flames of the Climate Crisis

BY EMMA LEE AND M. CARLSTAD

July 24, 2026—More than 900 wildfires have been raging across Canada, primarily in Alberta, British Columbia, Northwestern Ontario, and Saskatchewan. In Northwestern Ontario, where nearly 200 fires have been burning, community members have reported thick air, the constant smell of a campfire, and ash falling from the sky. Last Monday, July 13, a freight train was engulfed in flames, and workers had to request an emergency rescue.

Smoke from the wildfires has poured over the Canadian border, with dense clouds hanging over cities in the U.S. Midwest and Northeast. There have also been more than a dozen fires in the northern state of Minnesota due to extreme heat, dry conditions, and strong winds.

Indigenous communities, such as the *Namaygoosisagagun* (Collins) First Nation in Northwestern Ontario, have been hit the hardest by the wildfires. Of the more than 3,000 people who have had to be evacuated and the tens-of-thousands more on evacuation watch, a disproportionate number are First Nations who have been affected by the fires. Although First Nations account for only five percent of Canada's total population, their evacuation rates were eight times higher than the general population during the 2023 wildfires and 80 percent live in fire-prone regions. Officials estimate that more than 1,600 First Nations residents have been displaced by wildfires this season, and many received no emergency alerts from the government. Moreover, residents were denied assistance because the national government does not recognize it as a First Nation, according to Meaghan Daniel, a lawyer who represents Collins First Nation.

Meanwhile, throughout Canada, the government has passed laws that crim-

inalize cultural burning practices that use controlled fire as a traditional land management practice that reduces the risk of uncontrollable wildfires.

There are innumerable other cases of oppressed and working-class communities bearing the brunt of climate disasters. When wildfires spread across parts of Los Angeles last year, incarcerated people from nearby prisons fought the fires with limited protective gear and extremely low pay. At the same time, the LA Fire Department was underprepared for the emergency after the city budget slashed their funding while increasing the police budget by millions.

On top of the devastating effects faced by those on the front lines of the flames, the poor air quality disproportionately impacts working-class and oppressed communities. According to a 2024 study, communities of color “endure nearly eight times higher rates of pediatric asthma and 1.3 times higher risk of dying prematurely from exposure to pollutants.” This is part of the ongoing

legacy of redlining and systemic racism in the country that has pushed working-class communities of color closer to highways, factories, and other polluted areas. And unhoused populations are often left without protection and with nowhere to turn during climate crises.

Capitalism is fanning the flames

These wildfires are part of a broader global climate crisis. In Texas, multiple people have died from record-breaking floods. In Europe, heat waves, wildfires, and storms have resulted in thousands of unnecessary deaths. In the Greater Horn region of Africa, intersecting crises caused by imperialist war and capitalist-driven climate change threaten the populations of multiple countries, including Sudan and Ethiopia, as they already face acute hunger and violent conflict. These fires and extreme weather events show that the climate crisis knows no borders.

While thousands were evacuating from their homes and millions more



Photo: Alberta Wildfire Service

choking on the smoke, Donald Trump took to Truth Social on July 17 to say he plans to hold Canada responsible for the United States “being unnecessarily invaded by filthy, polluted, and unhealthy air.” He apparently didn’t see the irony in denouncing such an “invasion” while the U.S. has been initiating imperialist interventions from Venezuela to Iran. (Let’s not forget that the U.S. military is one of the largest greenhouse gas emitters and contributors to climate change.) Trump complained about the air quality to Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney during the World Cup final in New Jersey on Sunday, July 19, from their FIFA-gifted seats.

Rather than acknowledging that the climate crisis and wildfires are driven by capitalism, right-wing U.S. politicians are claiming they are exclusively a forest-management issue that Canadians should have to pay for in tariffs. On Monday, July 20, as part of a larger trade-war escalation, Trump slapped 50-percent tariffs on Canada that will take effect on August 19.

Trump, who has taken an ax to the already inadequate climate protections, cannot be taken seriously as he blames Canada for the smoke. Since returning to office, he has withdrawn the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement, expanded oil and gas drilling, fast-tracked new fossil fuel infrastructure, weakened environmental regulations, and moved to dismantle the federal government’s authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. All the while, he continues to champion an “energy dominance” agenda that puts the profits of oil and gas companies ahead of the future of the planet. Meanwhile, his administration is pulling back from energy efficiency efforts as the war on Iran, data centers, and heat waves are raising energy prices. Trump’s climate denial may be especially brazen, but he is only the most extreme expression of a capitalist system that prioritizes profit over human life and the environment.

Meanwhile, Mark Carney, despite acknowledging that the wildfires are a result of climate change, has green-lighted a new pipeline in Alberta, which would move one million barrels of oil daily from landlocked Alberta to the southern coast of British Columbia. The oil and gas sector is Canada’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. His rhetoric may differ from Trump’s, but both defend an economic system that subordinates the health of people and the planet to corporate profits.

These fires and extreme weather events show that the climate crisis knows no borders.

Capitalism is to blame for the destruction of our planet, and it’s working and oppressed people who pay the price. We may physically live on the same planet as Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and the rest of the ruling class, but we are not all in this together when it comes to climate change.

Under capitalism, the ruling class is not only destroying the planet but also using its nearly unlimited resources to ensure that they don’t have to face the consequences of the climate catastrophes they’ve created.

If their homes burn down, they can buy more. If the planet becomes unlivable, they’ll try to colonize a different one. It is the working class and poor of the world who are being forced to face these consequences instead.

Workers need an emergency plan

Workers have the necessary tools and technology to address climate disasters at our fingertips: at factories that build weapons and warplanes, we could instead be producing aircraft and equipment for fighting fires. Oil and energy production that fuels private jets, billionaires’ estates, and the advertisements that

shine 24/7 in Times Square could be under the control of the workers in those sectors, who could ensure that energy is allocated by need, not for profit.

The same workers whose labor keeps society running have the knowledge, technology, and power to confront the climate crisis at its source. Instead of allowing corporations and politicians to organize production around profit, workers could fight to redirect industry toward human need—converting factories that produce weapons into equipment for disaster response, placing the energy sector under democratic workers’ control, and expanding the resources needed to prevent and respond to climate disasters.

But no such plan will be implemented by the politicians who defend the fossil fuel industry or the corporations that profit from environmental destruction; it will have to be fought for. There is a burning need to reignite a mass climate movement that unites with the workers’ movement, the environmental movement that has been protagonized by the youth, and beyond.

Unions have a crucial role to play by taking up the fight for climate justice as a working-class issue—organizing workers to demand the resources needed to protect communities, defend workers facing increasingly dangerous conditions, and challenge production organized for profit instead of human need. By linking workplace struggles with the fight against climate change—alongside fighting imperialism and deportations—the labor movement can confront the climate crisis at its root.

The climate crisis cannot be solved by the same capitalist system that created it. It requires a working-class emergency plan that puts people and the planet before profit.

—*Left Voice*, July 14, 2026

<https://www.leftvoice.org/capitalism-fans-the-flames-of-the-climate-crisis/>

Mumia Abu-Jamal Seeks UN Intervention After 44 Years Behind Bars

By Ed Pilkington

As he approaches the 45th anniversary of his incarceration in December, the Black radical writer and prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is taking his claim that he has been subjected to arbitrary imprisonment for a crime that he did not commit to a new tribunal: the United Nations in Geneva.

On Tuesday, July 28, 2026, Abu-Jamal, 72, lodged a petition with the UN's working group on arbitrary detention, a body within the Human Rights Council. It marks the latest attempt by the internationally-renowned prisoner and prolific author of 15 books to seek relief, having exhausted all domestic channels through state and federal courts.

In a telephone interview with the *Guardian* from Mahanoy correctional institution in Pennsylvania, where he is being held on a life sentence with no chance of parole, he said the appeal to the UN was part of his personal and legal efforts to keep hope alive.

"Hope is an element of struggle, is it not," he said. "As we used to say in the old days, *'La luta continua'*."

The hope that this former Black Panther might one day walk free from Mahanoy is slim. He is serving a life sentence without any possibility of parole. In Pennsylvania, life without parole means just that: there is no accounting for rehabilitation, age or health, and any prisoner serving it will die behind bars no matter his or her circumstances.

Abu-Jamal was convicted in 1982 of a crime for which he has always protested his innocence—the first-degree murder of a police officer, Daniel Faulkner, in Philadelphia. Since then, he has become a lightning rod for both left and right.

For progressives, he is arguably the most celebrated political prisoner in America today. For the law-and-order crowd, led by the Fraternal Order of Police that has pushed relentlessly for his maximum punishment, he is nothing other than a cop killer.

Despite the long odds, Abu-Jamal is doing all he can to stay upbeat. "I've rarely, if ever, placed my hope in courts of law," he said. "But I do trust in people, as people are the ones who build movements and make change."

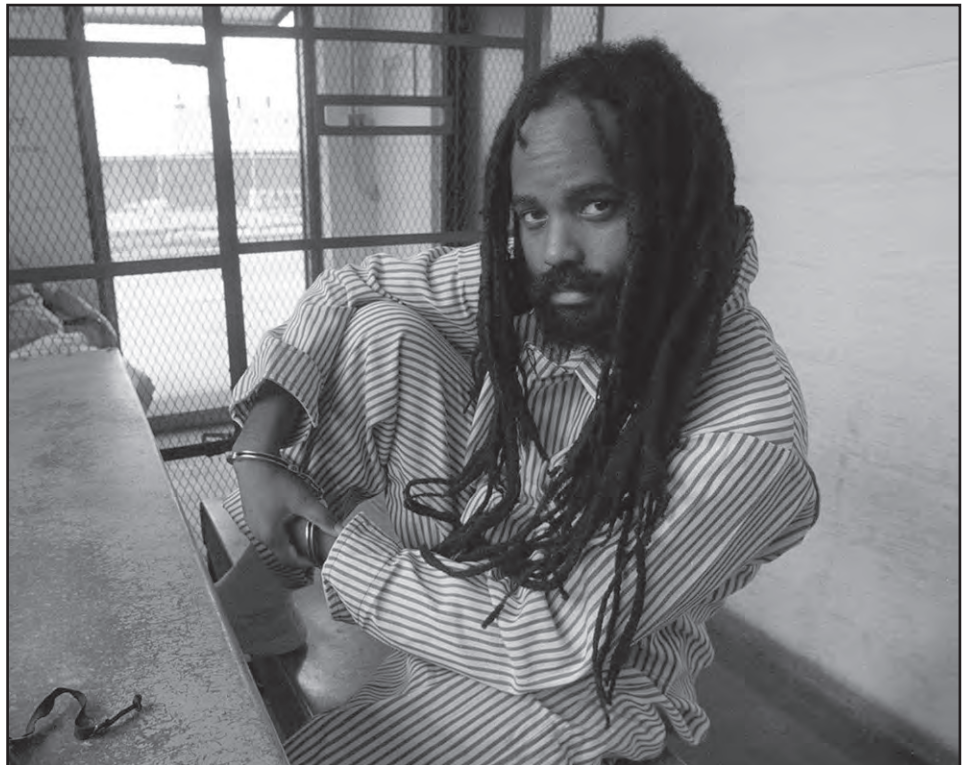
Tuesday's newly-lodged petition calls on the UN to take a stance over what it says are the many injustices against Abu-Jamal during his original trial and in the decades of unsuccessful appeals that have followed. His legal team—led by Bret Grote of the

Abolitionist Law Center, joined by the ACLU and the Center for Constitutional Rights—argues that he has endured multiple violations of international law.

The document describes how the prosecutor excluded almost all Black jurors from his 1982 trial. During jury selection the prosecutor scrawled in his notebook the letters "B" and "W" over jurors' names, to denote Black and white.

He then threw out 71 percent of all potential Black jurors, and just 20 percent of all non-Black candidates. The result was a jury of 12 that had only two Black members—in a county that was almost 40 percent African American.

The trial judge, Albert Sabo, the petition goes on, was perhaps the most prolific death penalty judge in the country. He presided over 31 capital



Former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, seen in this photo shortly after his arrest and conviction 44 years ago. Photograph: April Saul/April Saul / Philadelphia Inquirer

cases ending with death row, all but two of the defendants from minorities.

Shortly before trial he was overheard saying: “I’m going to help them fry the nigger.”

The UN’s rapporteur on arbitrary detention is also being asked to consider how new evidence only disclosed to Abu-Jamal’s defense team in 2018 raises serious doubts about the credibility of the state’s main eyewitness, Robert Chobert. Weeks after the trial concluded, Chobert wrote to the chief prosecutor inquiring about “the money owed to me.”

One of the main thrusts of the petition is that Abu-Jamal’s current sentence, life without parole—is in itself a form of arbitrary detention in breach of international rules. The sentence has been dubbed “death by incarceration,” but Abu-Jamal thinks of it as “slow death row.”

He said: “It is death row without a specific date of execution. Or execution through time.”

Life sentences

He said he was struck by the contrast between America’s fondness for life sentences—more than 200,000 people are on them, about one in seven of all prisoners—and the approach of other advanced countries such as Norway. When Anders Breivik committed the deadliest mass shooting by a single person in modern times in Oslo in 2011, killing 77 people, he was sentenced to the country’s maximum penalty—21 years, extendable on review every five years thereafter.

Breivik is unlikely ever to be released, but the system has not irrevocably slammed the door on him. “Such a response would be impossible, unthinkable in any of our 50 states,” Abu-Jamal said.

The UN working party has no direct enforcement powers within the US. But his legal team are calculating that a strong condemnation from the world body would support the push back home for a retrial or a commutation of his sentence.

At the very least, Abu-Jamal welcomes the chance to present the facts of his case to experts who have not come under the intense political pressure faced by elected judges (all Pennsylvania’s judges are elected). He remembers being “flabbergasted” in 1995 when he learnt that four out of the seven justices on the state supreme court had been endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police.

**“I’ve rarely, if ever,
placed my hope in
courts of law,” he said.
“But I do trust in people,
as people are the ones
who build movements
and make change.”**

“Presenting my claims to the UN will be one of the first times that judges will be hearing them without a vested interest,” he said.

Abu-Jamal was 14 when he was literally booted into the Black liberation struggle. It was 1968 and he was at a protest in Philadelphia against the segregationist presidential candidate George Wallace when a Philadelphia police officer kicked him in the face.

A year later he co-founded the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther party and became a regular contributor to the party’s newspaper. From there he built a successful career as a writer and broadcaster, serving as president of Philadelphia’s Association of Black Journalists.

All that came crashing down when he was arrested in the early hours of December 9, 1981. He was supplementing his income by cab driving and happened to be passing the corner of 13th and Locust Streets just when his brother William Cook was being detained in a traffic stop by police officer Faulkner.

A shootout ensued. Abu-Jamal was shot in the chest. Faulkner was struck multiple times and died in hospital hours later.

A political prosecution

At trial, the state accused Abu-Jamal of murdering Faulkner. The prosecutor presented the jury with samples of his Black Panther writings to suggest an antipathy towards police, and on the back of that plus the questionable testimony of Chobert and other state witnesses he was convicted and sentenced to death.

He remained on death row for 28 years until 2011 when he was switched to life without parole after a court found his original capital sentence unconstitutional.

As has been the case throughout his incarceration, he did not discuss the specifics of the charges leveled against him with the *Guardian*. But he did talk about the toll that decades behind bars has had on him and on his family.

There has been the toll of distance, of separation, from his burgeoning family of four generations. How many great grandchildren does he have?

“I don’t even know, but it’s quite a few.”

Being Abu-Jamal, he puts the pain of forced isolation in a political context. “The state creates a system of solitary confinement for people on death row to dehumanize them to the people who love them. You cannot touch this person.”

In one of his best-known books, *Live From Death Row*, he recounts the agonizing prison visit from his young daughter Samiya early on in his incarceration. He recalls that moment again during our conversation, speaking in a voice that is at times so soft it is barely audible.

“She rushed in, her eyes lit up, and she looked at me, and she was confused because of the glass between us. She ran to the glass, this little girl, and began hitting it, shouting: ‘Break it! Break it!’ It tore my heart.”

Since then, he has had time to develop strategies for overcoming the barriers to human contact. “What I learned,

you know, over these long years, is how to make people kind of feel you without being able to touch you.”

How do you do that?

“I just talk to people as earnestly and as deeply as I can, to make contact with them without making physical contact. It’s a way to defeat the dehumanization process.”

One thing that buoyed him up over the years was the avalanche of global support from people concerned about his plight. When he was facing execution, the *New York Times* reported that he was the “world’s best-known death-row inmate,” and his cause was adopted by a slew of celebrities such as Maya Angelou, Spike Lee and Paul Newman.

He routinely received 50 or more letters from supporters each week. Now that number has dwindled, he said, to ten or 12. He thinks the slump is partly because the prison mail system has become more restrictive.

But it’s also because the shift from the death penalty to life without parole has to some degree taken him out of the limelight. “Some people seem to believe that because I’m off death row, now I’m home. They don’t know. They don’t get it.”

The sentence has been dubbed “death by incarceration,” but Abu-Jamal thinks of it as “slow death row.”

Though his international profile may have receded, last month he was still made an honorary citizen of the Paris suburb Saint-Denis. A road there was named after him at the height of his death row ordeal in 2006.

Were he ever to be released, that would be one of his first ambitions. “I’d like to walk on my street in Saint-Denis. And I’d like to visit Ghana. And I’d like to teach somewhere,” he said.

After a pause, he added that he would also make a beeline to the graves of his mother Edith and wife Wadiya, both of whom have died during his time behind bars.

Reading and writing

Books—reading and writing them—have been his prime survival tool throughout the near half-century of his imprisonment. “Books have been my closest friends for decades,” he said. “Most of what I’ve done in prison is read, and you have to read in order to write—to cultivate ideas and produce works.”

Books—reading and writing them—have been his prime survival tool throughout the near half-century of his imprisonment.

Even that has now become a struggle. For most of last year he was functionally blind as a result of his eyesight deteriorating over the past eight years.

It is one facet of the immense physical toll that 28 years in solitary confinement on death row has extracted. He puts his fading sight down to a series of health crises that began with a severe skin rash, led to diabetes brought on by heavy steroids, and culminated in a diabetic coma.

At every step he has had to fight for even basic medical care. That included a two-year court battle to get medication for hepatitis C which was withheld on grounds that he was “not sick enough.”

It took him most of last year to wrestle the prison authorities into having his cataracts removed. During the two spells in which he was hospitalized for congestive heart failure, he was shackled for days to his medical bed.

Whatever you think of Abu-Jamal—whether you place him in the political

prisoner or the cop killer category—his punishment does not include the annihilation of his health. Nor does it require the deprivation of the one activity in captivity that he holds most dear.

“When you cannot read, that is extremely painful,” he said.

It’s a form of punishment in itself.

“Yes,” he said. “The very nature of imprisonment is punishment on all levels. It may not be written in an order from a court, but it is the practice—these are cruel places.”

Despite his impaired vision, he is compelled to finish his latest book which he is submitting for a PhD. It is an exploration of the writings of the Algerian revolutionary Frantz Fanon, focusing on his treatise on anti-colonialism, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

“I must finish it. I am determined to finish it. And I am closing in.”

It must be difficult, producing such a complex work with blurred vision on top of the daily burdens of incarceration.

“Yes it is,” he conceded. “But difficult is not impossible. You do what you must do.”

—*The Guardian*, July 28, 2026

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jul/28/mumia-abu-jamal-un-jail>

Write to Mumia at:
Smart Communications/PADOC
Mumia Abu-Jamal #AM-8335
SCI Mahanoy
P.O. Box 33028
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

“The very nature of imprisonment is punishment on all levels. It may not be written in an order from a court, but it is the practice—these are cruel places.”

Minnesota Activists Defend Anti-ICE Protesters

BY IBRAHIM HIRSI

July 1, 2026—Minnesota activists and scholars are decrying the recent federal indictment of 15 people who took part in demonstrations against the Trump administration's aggressive immigration crackdown in the Twin Cities metro region earlier this year.

The indictment accuses the protesters of surveilling federal agents, disrupting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations, and training people on how to delay or prevent arrests, among other allegations. It also alleges that the defendants are members of antifa-linked groups like the Black Cat Worker's Collective, which prosecutors describe as an organization committed to "militant class struggle" and "revolution." According to the indictment, "militant class struggle" includes activities such as "digital campaigning, community organizing, and physical confrontation."

The defendants include a college professor, a union carpenter, a healthcare worker, a special education teacher, union members, and community organizers.

Civil rights attorney and activist Nekima Levy Armstrong told *Truthout* that the defendants are being targeted for exercising their constitutional rights to protest and assemble. She called the charges "farcical" and part of "a familiar pattern where the federal government is hell-bent on punishing protesters and those who speak out against the authoritarianism and fascism of the Trump administration."

Armstrong herself faces a separate federal charge stemming from an anti-ICE protest inside a church during a Sunday service in January. The Department of Justice, which called the protest a violation of religious freedom, has charged her and more than three dozen others for allegedly carrying out a "coordinated takeover-style attack" on Cities Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. However, video clips of the event appear to show activists peacefully chanting "Justice for Renee Good" and "ICE Out" as they protested what they viewed as a glaring contradiction: One of the church's pastors, David Easterwood, was both preaching the

Gospel and allegedly serving as acting director of a local ICE field office.

Others who were charged along with Armstrong include local journalist Georgia Fort and former *CNN* journalist Don Lemon, both of whom were at the church covering the protest.

But in recent weeks, federal prosecutors have dismissed or reduced dozens of charges against indicted protesters. At least 15 cases have been dropped entirely, while others—including that of Isabel "Isa" Lopez—have been downgraded from felonies to misdemeanors. Last week, attorneys for Armstrong and 32 other co-defendants asked a federal judge to dismiss charges tied to the church demonstration, arguing that the indictment does not "allege a single fact that any defendant used physical force against another person, issued a threat of violence to anyone, or fully blocked ingress to or egress from the church, as is required by the charged statutes."

David Schultz, a political science professor at Hamline University in Minnesota, told *Truthout* that the charges against the 15 anti-ICE protesters reflect what he sees as a broader campaign against Donald Trump's political opponents. The charges, Schultz said in an email, resemble the Trump administration's allegations against prominent national leaders, including Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and former FBI Director James Comey.

"The pattern is to use the machinery of government to intimidate individuals, even when the legal basis for the investigations appears weak or nonexistent," Schultz said. "The objective is often less about obtaining convictions than about intimidation and harassment."

JaNaé Bates Imari, executive director of Faith in Minnesota, a faith-based political grassroots organizing group, echoed Schultz's sentiment, noting that



Demonstrators march during the nationwide "Stop ICE Terror" rally through downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota, on January 20, 2026.

the indictment was indeed aimed at intimidating protesters whose only crime was peacefully confronting immigration agents who, in the nation's largest crack-down, pursued immigrants and refugees—including naturalized citizens and permanent residents—across the city.

The defendants, Imari told *Truthout*, have been criminalized for “blowing whistles and showing up when their neighbors are being kidnapped, and for writing down license plates of people who are doing the kidnapping.”

Imari's Faith in Minnesota is one of 50 organizations—including religious, labor, and other groups—that issued a statement condemning the indictment of the protesters. “When self-serving politicians are losing, they lie, lash out and attempt political repression,” the statement reads in part. “They will do whatever it takes to seize and hold power, including trying to silence our voices and keep us from voting.”

Similar organizations, affiliate groups, and individual supporters have already taken steps to defend the indicted protesters in various ways. People have turned out in large numbers at defendants' court appearances to show solidarity. Legal organizations, including the Minnesota chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, have provided legal representation. Thousands of individuals have so far raised over \$342,000 in legal funds.

The cases in Minnesota come amid a broader national pattern of ICE pro-

test prosecutions. Recently, federal judges sentenced eight activists for participating in an anti-ICE noise demonstration in Texas. Prosecutors claimed that the protesters had links to antifa, which the Trump administration labeled as a domestic terrorist group. One of them, Benjamin Song, who was convicted of firing shots and injuring a police officer during the protest, received a 100-year prison sentence. Song argued that he acted to prevent police brutality and pointed out in a statement that while he opposed fascism, he was not a member of an antifa group because antifa is not an actual organization. The others received sentences ranging from 30 to 70 years.

In Minnesota, the indictment of the 15 anti-ICE protesters mainly revolves around digital communications and planning related to organizing demonstrations; it does not accuse the defendants of causing physical harm to agents. “Peaceful protest is protected by the First Amendment, and discussions about how to organize and conduct those protests are likewise protected,” Schultz said. “Those activities generally fall squarely within the rights of free speech and assembly.”

Whatever the case, Minnesotans continue to exercise their rights to protest and assemble despite the federal government's crackdown on protesters in the state and across the country.

This became clear, Armstrong said, at the initial court appearance for the

defendants. Supporters filled the largest courtroom in St. Paul to capacity, she said, with many more waiting outside. “So, it just shows that people are resilient, that people see what is going on in these attempts to silence our voices and to intimidate us,” Armstrong added. “They are refusing to capitulate to Donald Trump, even knowing that there may be consequences at the hands of this president and his administration.”

This is not the first time that a U.S. government—local, state, or federal—has used its power to pursue dissent. In recent years, pro-Palestinian and Black Lives Matter protesters on college campuses and in the streets have faced harsh punishment at the hands of law enforcement and the courts, reflecting a pattern seen throughout U.S. history.

“Historically, conspiracy charges have frequently been used against progressive organizations and movements in the United States,” Schultz said. “Labor unions, socialists, and members of the Communist Party were all, at various times, prosecuted under conspiracy theories in efforts to suppress their political activities. Over time, the courts repeatedly recognized that much of this conduct constituted protected speech and protected political association under the First Amendment.”

—*Truthout*, July 1, 2026

<https://truthout.org/articles/minnesota-activists-prepare-to-defend-anti-ice-protesters-from-federal-charges/>

Professor Faces Prison in “Antifa” Case

BY SAM LEVIN

July 28, 2026—Erik Davis was driving to a medical appointment in St. Paul, Minnesota, on June 16, when federal agents surrounded his car.

“They hauled me out ... and put me in a belly chain,” recalled the 53-year-old. He was arrested on the spot on charges of being part of a “conspiracy”

to “impede or injure” Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers.

Davis, a college professor and father of two, was one of thousands of Minnesotans who had rallied earlier this year when the Trump administration launched an aggressive crackdown on immigrants in the Twin Cities.

Now the government alleged that he and 14 others used “force, intimidation, and threats” to prevent officers from carrying out their duties.

In its 94-page indictment, the government has argued that Direct Action Minnesota, the loose coalition of organizers that Davis was connected with, con-

spired to obstruct federal law enforcement and had “ties” to “antifa.” The prosecution follows a pattern seen in other cases against demonstrators this year, with the government highlighting the comments and actions of some activists in the coalition to paint all 15 defendants as agitators pursuing violence against ICE.

One such case in Chicago spectacularly collapsed last month. Demonstrators in Texas were recently convicted of terrorism charges and sentenced to decades behind bars, though in that case one protester shot and injured an officer. Prosecutors have not alleged any specific injuries to officers in Minnesota.

Civil rights advocates have said these prosecutions, even when unsuccessful, are part of an effort to criminalize lawful community organizing, weaken movements opposing deportations and turn the lives of activists upside down.

Davis, the government says, has attended and facilitated meetings about protests and discussed his “anti-authoritarian” ideology with other activists. He is not accused of violent acts, taking any specific actions at protests nor having any encounters with ICE agents.



Erik Davis, a professor at Macalester College in St. Paul, said the charges were “petty revenge”. Photograph: Eric Ruby/The Guardian

He is facing six years in prison.

“It’s petty revenge,” Davis said. “They’re trying to portray being part of a community as an illegal conspiratorial act.”

Davis, and other defendants interviewed by the *Guardian*, are confident that the case against them will collapse. But the government is trying to send a signal, he said: “This isn’t just about us. It’s about trying to scare everybody who opposes ICE.”

“Everybody wanted to do something”

Davis is a Buddhist studies scholar at Macalester College in St. Paul and has long been part of labor organizing and activism against police violence in the region. When federal agents flooded the Twin Cities in January in a massive effort to round up immigrants, he felt compelled to step up, he said: “It was a federal invasion and terror campaign on our streets. The behavior of these masked thugs was horrific ... they were ripping human beings out of families.”

Outrage and local organizing efforts swelled following the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti. There were rapid response and mutual aid networks, groups documenting ICE sightings, know-your-rights training sessions, food donations for immigrant families trapped at home. And many joined Signal groups with strangers to get plugged in.

“It was astonishing. The overwhelming sense was that almost everybody was opposed and angry and scared, and almost everybody wanted to do something,” said Davis, who joined hyper-local group chats with neighbors.

The indictment does not describe Davis orchestrating any specific protest plans, giving detailed directions to other activists or conducting any violence. It does allege that on January 11, four days after Good’s killing, Davis helped facilitate an “emergency meeting” for residents interested in “resistance to ICE” that featured discussions of protest tactics, like civil disobedience, marches and “blockades” to stop ICE officers.

Prosecutors also cite a post by Davis in a Signal group six days later in which he shared information about upcoming protests and encouraged people to be at a federal immigration building. The indictment further notes Davis suggested people delete the group while on the ground during demonstrations, and that he participated in two additional meetings and a rally.

The indictment accuses other defendants of more serious offenses: eight of the other defendants are said to have participated in an action at a federal building on March 1, where demonstrators held shields and blocked vehicles from entering or leaving a federal building. Prosecutors say “individuals threw projectiles” at local sheriffs during the protest but did not specify if any defendants were involved in that.

Four defendants face charges for separate incidents. One is accused of telling people to get guns in January. One is accused of following an agent in May to Wisconsin, just across the state border. And one is accused of assault and destruction of government property after allegedly knocking paperwork out of an agent’s hand and kicking an officer’s car in May. The indictment doesn’t allege Davis was involved in any of the incidents in March or May.

Across the indictment, there are no allegations of injuries to specific ICE officers, or charges of serious violence like there were in the recent federal prosecution of protesters in Prairieland, Texas, in which one protester shot and injured an officer.

Daniel Rosen, the Minnesota U.S. attorney, said whether the Minneapolis protesters caused physical harm was not the measure of criminality in this case.

Vague “antifa” claims

The broader suggestion of the indictment is that Davis’s statements in Signal chats and meetings, alongside the statements and actions of others, show the groups collectively were conspiring to

oppose the US government's authority and interfere with ICE—and that they were connected to “Antifa groups” that “blend anarchist and communist views.”

At a press conference announcing the charges, Rosen said the prosecution supported the mission of Donald Trump's executive order last year that designated “antifa” a “domestic terrorist organization” responsible for “riots” against ICE. Antifa is not a formal entity, but an umbrella term for a wide array of anti-fascist activism.

To support the alleged “antifa” connection, the Department of Justice (DoJ) has highlighted a photo showing one of the defendants wearing an “I'm Antifa!” sweatshirt. Prosecutors also quoted another defendant's post on Facebook: “YOU WILL NEVER WIN WITH NON-VIOLENCE ALONE.”

The indictment does not cite any comments by Davis about antifa. The charges don't define the relationships of the protesters to one another, nor does it provide evidence that defendants like Davis endorsed the more radical statements or actions of others facing charges.

ICE protesters facing prison in “antifa” case speak out

Authorities say Davis referred to his ideologies as “anarchist,” “broadly anti-authoritarian” and “broadly anti-capitalist” and praised the “revolutionary potential of our organizations” and “militancy” in a Signal message.

Spokespeople for the DoJ in Minnesota declined to comment. A Department of Homeland Security spokesperson declined to answer questions about the case, pointing to an earlier statement saying people who “lay a hand on law enforcement ... will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

Davis said his own political beliefs are focused on expanding equality and people's freedoms and opposing state violence and authoritarianism—far removed, he said, from the stereotype of a violent “anarchist” extremist.

Davis said the meeting he helped facilitate involved more than a hundred participants with a wide range of ideologies—a space for people to come together after Good's killing. “I'm not sure I'm described as doing anything illegal, which makes sense, because I didn't.” He noted it was common for people to delete Signal chats at protests due to concerns about officers accessing phones during arrests.

“It's bewildering. It seemed weird and laughable,” Davis said of the indictment. “It felt like the length of the indictment was a cover for how thin it actually was. I'm a professor. I've seen people pad out papers when they've got nothing to say.”

Facing 26 years in prison

Among the Minnesota protesters facing the most severe charges is Natasha Rakotz.

Rakotz, a 45-year-old home health aide, said it took her a while to get involved in organizing efforts after ICE arrived in the city. She said she wasn't connected to any activist groups and didn't know where to start. But she felt morally obligated: “People say, if it was 1935 Germany, what would I do? I couldn't do nothing. I couldn't sit by and wait for them to kill somebody else. I couldn't sit in my privileged white existence and allow the government to absolutely ravage people that need protecting ... It felt like nobody was going to save us.”

Rakotz eventually linked up with groups monitoring ICE and threw herself into the work. Like Davis, Rakotz faces conspiracy charges. The government says she participated in a Signal chat focused on observing ICE vehicles, talking about what times she would be observing and how she takes photos of license plates. She asked others what they had observed and said she was interested in learning more about civil disobedience.

But in addition, the DoJ says that on May 18, Rakotz followed a federal

immigration officer's vehicle, “brake checked” and “side swiped” the car, “causing a collision.” The indictment does not provide further details.

Rakotz has denied the allegation. State records show local officers called to the scene of the collision cited her for a misdemeanor of allegedly violating her “duty to drive with due care,” a minor offense. A court report said she told an officer she was not following the federal agent and the collision was an accident. She was not arrested at that time.

Eventually, state prosecutors dropped the misdemeanor, saying federal prosecutors were filing charges covering the incident. The U.S. attorney's office has since accused Rakotz of assault on an officer, with a charge alleging “physical contact” and “injury,” though the indictment doesn't identify a victim nor specify the injuries the collision may have caused, and it doesn't detail any damage to the government's car. That charge could carry a 20-year sentence on top of six years for conspiracy.

“I really believe these charges are going to get dropped because they're unfounded and ridiculous,” said Rakotz. “But I feel like the process is the punishment.”

“They're trying to ruin us”

A trial date has not been set and complicated cases like this can drag on for months.

In the meantime, the consequences of the case have been far-reaching for the defendants. “They are trying to ruin our lives ... I try not to remind myself all the time that the consequence of this bureaucracy is my freedom,” said Davis.

Davis worries about impacts on his career. He said he has long strived to keep his academic work and activism separate but now thrust into the spotlight as an alleged “conspirator,” he wonders if his scholarship could be affected moving forward.

He has struggled to sleep, and the case has taken a toll on his personal relationships, he said. The 15 defendants are under a strict “no contact” order with each other, which has meant he has been cut off from several close friends, who are also defendants in the case.

He has worked hard to not dwell on the possibility of being locked up for six years: “I suspect I’m going to be afraid at some point and will have to process that ... but I’ve been able to be unafraid because of the support and solidarity we’ve received.”

Both Davis and Rakotz said they didn’t want the case to discourage others from organizing against ICE and hoped people would stay focused on immigrant communities subjected to ICE enforcement and violence.

“Far more important than anything that happens to us is continuing to organize against the armed masked people in our streets,” Davis said.

Rakotz said she, too, has tried not to think about what a conviction would mean. “I am free right now and I refuse to let this stop me from enjoying life and doing what I can to positively impact the community.”

She paused. “And if I have to go to prison because I did what I could for the greater good, I’m ready and willing to do that.”

—*The Guardian*, July 28, 2026

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2026/jul/28/ice-protests-antifa-minnesota>

The Ways the Government Spies on Our Communications

BY JEREMY BUSBY AND ISABELLA LUCIA MAITINO

August 1, 2026—Congress is grappling with the renewal of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), the controversial program that allows the U.S. government to surveil foreigners and the individuals that correspond with them, including Americans. Its proponents say it’s vital to national security, but civil liberties advocates say it’s unconstitutional.

Section 702 expired on June 12 because lawmakers could not agree on terms for a renewal and, without a permanent director of national intelligence following Tulsi Gabbard’s resignation (until prosecutor Jay Clayton’s recent confirmation for the role), talks about resuming the program—with reforms or otherwise—have stalled.

Section 702, which is considered a counterterrorism mechanism, grants government officials authorization to track foreigners abroad to obtain “intelligence information” in the interest of national security. But when tracking what it deems “intelligence information” about a foreigner, the government also collects ordinary information that has absolutely nothing to do with counterterrorism or security.

Day-to-day communications from law-abiding U.S. citizens get caught up in this web of surveillance without their knowledge or consent, and without a warrant. This information is stored in government databases for years, if not indefinitely. Officials at the National Security agency (NSA), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other agencies can review this information for a wide variety of reasons, including criminal prosecution and immigration enforcement.

At a time when the Trump administration seeks to expand the definition of terrorism to encompass a wide range of

dissenting views, Americans’ fears of abuse of government surveillance of their communications are more justified than ever; 15 activists in Minneapolis were recently indicted based largely on Signal chats¹, for example.

Regardless of what happens with Section 702, the government is still spying on millions of U.S. citizens daily through its system of mass incarceration. These abuses—also conducted using security concerns as pretext—deserve every bit as much scrutiny as the government’s overreach under Section 702. Unseen surveillance has already eroded the privacy rights of millions of incarcerated individuals and those on the outside who communicate with them.

Surveillance of prison communication

The U.S. is the world’s leader in incarceration. According to the Prison Policy Initiative, there are nearly two million people held in the nation’s jails, prisons, and detention centers. Securus and ViaPath are the country’s largest prison and jail telecom corporations. Collectively, they dominate about 80 percent of the U.S. telecom market.

In addition to its contracts with the federal government, this duopoly has agreements with at least 43 different states and over 800 county jails. They facilitate hundreds-of-millions of calls and electronic messages between incarcerated individuals, their legal teams, and loved ones.

Under the guise of security, anyone who utilizes their services is given advance warning that their phone calls could be recorded. What happens to those recordings outside their stated security purposes is largely unknown. Calls between incarcerated individuals and their legal representation are sup-

posedly exempt from this policy. As an incarcerated journalist, all my reporting is surveilled in some way or another.

Just as “foreign intelligence information” is defined broadly under FISA Section 702, “security” is loosely interpreted by Securus and ViaPath. Actions by both telecom corporations reveal “security” to mean anything that advances their profit margins or the U.S.’s expanding police state.

Back in 2018, a *New York Times* investigation revealed that Securus exploited a location-based services program run by cellphone providers Sprint and T-Mobile. It abused the program to illicitly access the customer location information (CLI) of people communicating with incarcerated individuals, without their knowledge or consent.

These acts were illegal. First, Sprint and T-Mobile violated the Communications Act, which requires telecommunications carriers to protect the confidentiality of customers’ information, including CLI. Next, Securus enabled the government to systemically violate the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which protects people against unreasonable searches and seizures.

Most disturbing were the “security” justifications Securus used to collect customer data: expanding law enforcement capabilities, including for non-law enforcement purposes.

Law enforcement agencies used the CLI to track the movements of law-abiding citizens simply because they could. This illegal arrangement with Securus allowed the government to circumvent Fourth Amendment safeguards, as well as federal privacy laws like the Privacy Act of 1974 and its state counterparts, which mandate that consumers be informed in advance before their data is collected by the government. Additionally, consumers should know the purpose of the collection of their data and how the data will be used, protected, and stored.

The CLI debacle was just the start of jail telecom corporations’ race to track Americans in ways Section 702’s proponents can only dream of. Corporations like Securus are investing enormous resources to develop more advanced surveillance capabilities. These intrusive efforts range from the collection of voice prints, signature architecture, hand geometry, fingerprints, facial recognition, biometrics, and eavesdropping spy technologies. ViaPath has been accused of similarly disturbing surveillance abuses.

In 2024, The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, New York County Defender Services, and the law firm Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP filed a class-action lawsuit against the New York City Department of Correction (DOC). According to the complaint, the DOC is responsible for operating a mass surveillance system throughout its jails that violates state, federal, and constitutional law aimed at protecting incarcerated individuals and the community members with whom they communicate.

This lawsuit comes on the heels of a 2021 partial review of New York’s Department of Correction practices, in which it was discovered that thousands of privileged legal telephone conversations between incarcerated individuals and their defense attorneys were illegally recorded and disseminated to prosecutors and law enforcement.

With the help of Securus, the DOC has successfully constructed an unlawful system of mass surveillance by monitoring and recording nearly all incarcerated New Yorkers’ calls. The data collected can be used to track and identify community members.

The result is that certain demographics of New Yorkers—most notably Black, Brown, and low-income communities—bear the brunt of these violations. These communities have historically borne the brunt of New York City’s discriminatory policing and

prosecution and are often unable to afford the bail that would allow their loved ones to fight criminal cases from home. The consequence is that these communities become subject to surveillance in the most intimate ways.

These types of violations are not isolated to Securus, or to New York. In 2015, an anonymous hacker leaked 70 million Securus phone call records across 37 states, including 14,000 privileged legal conversations, which shouldn’t have been recorded in the first place.

This leak also exposed the vulnerable state of Securus’s data storage system. The depth of the personal information collected raises the question: How much of our legally guaranteed right to privacy can be stripped away under the guise of public safety?

While we debate foreign intelligence collection under FISA Section 702, which the government has used to unconstitutionally collect and search Americans’ data, we must not forget another full-fledged constitutional crisis happening on U.S. soil: jail telecom corporations’ data collection under the pretext of security.

—Truthout, August 1, 2026

<https://truthout.org/articles/fisa-section-702-isnt-the-only-way-the-government-spies-on-our-communications/>

1 Signal chat is an instant messaging system focused on user privacy.



Phones at the Bexar County Detention Center, in San Antonio, Texas, on Thursday, May 9, 2019.

Trump's Widening Crackdown on the U.S. Left

Trump seeks the extradition of pro-Palestine activist and donor James “Fergie” Chambers

By MICHAEL ARRIA

July 31, 2026—On July 10, activist James “Fergie” Chambers was arrested in Ibiza, Spain after the Trump administration requested his extradition.

Chambers, an heir to the Cox Communications family fortune, has used his vast inheritance to fund pro-Palestine organizations for years. The indictment accuses him of “international money laundering...with the intent to provide material support to and resources to foreign terrorist organizations.”

Chambers is reportedly being held in a maximum-security prison in Madrid while awaiting an extradition hearing. The process for extradition doesn't include an investigation into the merits of the case but focuses instead on verifying compliance with the principle of reciprocity between the two countries. A Treaty of Extradition has existed between the United States and Spain since 1970.

The case is being heard by Spain's *Audiencia Nacional*, which has 40 days to decide whether or not to grant Trump's request. If the U.S. request is approved, the case will head to Spain's National Court. If it rules that the

extradition is admissible, the final decision on surrender will be made by the Council of Ministers.

“Fergie is being jailed because he uses his wealth to support Palestine and those suffering genocide in Gaza,” wrote Chambers' partner Stella Schnabel in a statement. “In short, he is facing political persecution for having dedicated his life to building a better society, rather than exploiting people and profiting from war. He should be with our family, continuing his important humanitarian and social advocacy work.”

“Fergie is being jailed because he uses his wealth to support Palestine and those suffering genocide in Gaza....”

“The United States is fabricating a narrative of terrorist financing to silence Chambers and his vital philanthropy, to stop aid and solidarity

through fear, and also to justify its repression at home,” said the International Association of Democratic Lawyers in a statement.

Chambers's arrest has been condemned by activists, human rights groups, and lawmakers.

“From the unjust sentences of the Prairieland protestors to the attempt to extradite Fergie Chambers, we must fight back against these attempts to destroy our right to protest and organize,” tweeted Representative Rashida Tlaib (D-MI).

“Fergie Chambers is a well-known financier of solidarity with Palestine, pursued by the USA and now detained in Ibiza,” wrote Irene Montero, a Spanish representative to the European parliament and Podemos member on Twitter. “Spain cannot collaborate with Trump in the persecution of solidarity with Palestine: the Government must protect him and not hand him over to Netanyahu's friends.”

Another member of Podemos, Ione Belarra, said that the government has failed to provide local lawmakers with details of the situation.

“We've spent several days trying to contact the government to prevent the extradition of activist Fergie Chambers, and we haven't even received a response,” tweeted Belarra. “This is the Spanish government's commitment to the Palestinian cause: none beyond the headlines.”

The arrest comes amid a Trump administration-wide crackdown on the U.S. left.

Last month, eight activists were hit with a cumulative prison sentence of 450 years over their connections to a protest at the Prairieland Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas, which led to the nonfatal shooting of a police offi-



James “Fergie” Chambers speaking at an event in October 2023. (Photo: The Berkshire Eagle)

cer. This included a 30-year sentence for Daniel Sanchez Estrada, who was hit with an obstruction of justice charge for transporting a box of leftist zines after the demonstration.

The Prairieland defendants were the first activists to be convicted under the framework of National Security Presidential Memorandum-7 (NSPM-7), a controversial directive issued by President Trump in September 2025 that aims to target nonprofits and activists over alleged domestic terrorism. FBI Director Kash Patel hailed the extreme sentences as proof that the agency is “committed to identifying, locating, and dismantling Antifa and its funding networks across the country.”

“This was used as a laboratory for a larger crackdown on the left,” Chloe Truong-Jones, the Network and Engagement Attorney at Palestine Legal, told *Mondoweiss*. “I think the government has explicitly declared war on the left.”

On July 16, at a Trump event titled “Ministerial on the Resurgence of Political Terrorism,” multiple members of the administration detailed that war to an audience of foreign diplomats.

“We will identify illicit funding, however artfully it is concealed,” Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent told the crowd. “We will dismantle the networks that sustain political terrorism, however respectable their fronts may be. We will pursue those who enable political violence, however distant their jurisdictions.”

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that more left-wing groups will be designated as terrorist organizations soon.

“Here in the United States, we have taken the necessary and essential action formally recognizing left-wing violence as a form of political terrorism that is a direct threat to our national security and the survival of our republican form of government,” explained Homeland Security Advisor Stephen Miller.

In his opening remarks, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that more left-wing groups will be designated as terrorist organizations soon.

Additionally, the GOP-led House Ways and Means Committee has subpoenaed the left-wing media outlet *BreakThrough News*, demanding they hand over internal records.

It’s unclear whether Spain will comply with Trump’s request. However, the country’s President, Pedro Sanchez, has condemned Israel’s genocide in Gaza and publicly opposed the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran.

“This proceeding may require a duration of several months,” sources from Chamber’s legal team told *Mondoweiss*. “Its length is contingent upon the specifics of the case, and it may be further extended if appeals or procedural matters arise.”

Editor’s Note: Mondoweiss has received funding from Mr. Chambers and a foundation that he helped establish.

Michael Arria is a Mondoweiss’ U.S. correspondent. He is the author of Medium Blue: The Politics of MSNBC.

—Mondoweiss, July 31, 2026

<https://mondoweiss.net/2026/07/trump-seeks-the-extradition-of-pro-palestine-activist-and-donor-james->

Continued from page 65

not until he saw the thrones of Europe, one by one, begin to totter, not until he had achieved a glorious immortality.

—*International Socialist Review*, September 1900

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1900/outlook.htm>

1 digitalhistory.uh.edu

2 The Church of the Nazarene is an evangelical Christian denomination that emerged in North America from the Wesleyan-Holiness movement within Methodism during the late 19th century.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_the_Nazarene

3 Wilhelm II was the last German Emperor from 1888 until his abdication in 1918. His fall from power marked the end of the German Empire as well as the Hohenzollern dynasty’s 400-year rule over Prussia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_II

4 The 1900 election was a rematch of 1896, featuring Republican incumbent William McKinley and Democratic challenger William Jennings Bryan. McKinley won a decisive victory due to national economic prosperity and the recent U.S. victory in the Spanish-American War. The central focus of Bryan’s campaign was his opposition to U.S. expansionist policies and the continued occupation of the Philippines. McKinley’s administration, however, promoted America’s growing naval power and global prestige.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1900_United_States_presidential_election

5 The Coeur d’Alene Labor Wars were a series of violent, armed conflicts in the 1890s between striking silver and lead miners and corporate mine owners in northern Idaho. The disputes were triggered by drastic wage cuts, poor working conditions, and the owners’ use of armed guards and labor union infiltration. Tensions exploded in July 1892 when union miners discovered that a Pinkerton detective agent had infiltrated their ranks to spy on them for the Mine Owners’ Asso-

ciation. Strikers engaged in a deadly firefight with armed company guards and dynamited the mill. In response, the governor declared martial law, and state and federal troops were deployed to arrest union leaders and crush the strike.

<https://guides.loc.gov/chronicling-america-coeur-mining>

6 Hanna and Platt refers to the sensational early 1900s legal and societal scandal involving African American real estate mogul Hannah Elias and wealthy white New York City glass manufacturer John R. Platt.

<https://www.librarything.com/character/John+R.+Platt>

7 Richard “Boss” Croker controlled the New York City Democratic Party as the leader of Tammany Hall from 1886 to 1902. He ran a vast patronage network that enriched the organization through corporate kickbacks, municipal appointments, and protection money from vice industries. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Croker

Outlook for Socialism in the United States

BY EUGENE V. DEBS

Eugene Debs, a leading American labor organizer and six-time Socialist Party candidate for president, was just 14 years old when he left school to become a railroad fireman. In the 1890s he became president of the American Railway Union and at the turn of the century helped found the American Socialist Party. In 1918, he was convicted of obstructing the war effort under the World War I Espionage Act and sentenced to ten years in prison. His sentence was commuted in 1921.¹

September 1900—The sun of the passing century is setting upon scenes of extraordinary activity in almost every part of our capitalistic old planet. Wars and rumors of wars are of universal prevalence. In the Philippines our soldiers are civilizing and Christianizing the natives in the latest and most approved styles of the art, and at prices (\$13 per

month) which command the blessing to the prayerful consideration of the lowly and oppressed everywhere.

In South Africa the British legions are overwhelming the Boers with volleys of benedictions inspired by the same beautiful philanthropy in the name of the meek and lowly Nazarene²; while in China the heathen hordes, fanned into frenzy by the sordid spirit of modern commercial conquest, are presenting to the world a carnival of crime almost equaling the “refined” exhibitions of the world’s “civilized” nations.

And through all the flame and furor of the fray can be heard the savage snarlings of the Christian “dogs of war” as they fiercely glare about them, and with jealous fury threaten to fly at one another’s throats to settle the question of

supremacy and the spoil and plunder of conquest.

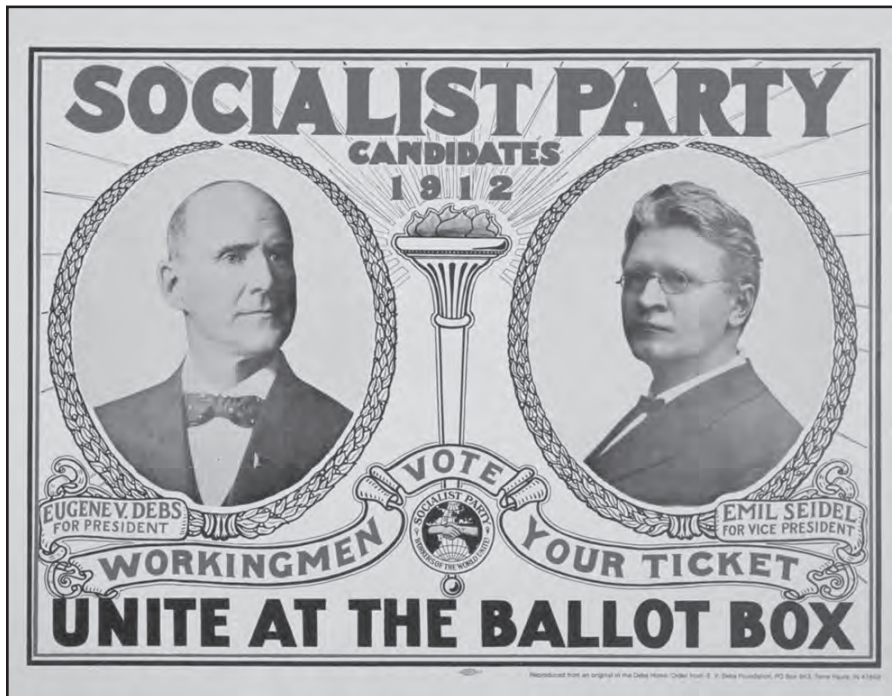
The picture, lurid as a chamber of horrors, becomes complete in its gruesome ghastliness when robed ministers of Christ solemnly declare that it is all for the glory of God and the advancement of Christian civilization.

This, then, is the closing scene of the century as the curtain slowly descends upon the blood-stained stage—the central figure, the pious Wilhelm³, Germany’s sceptered savage, issuing his imperial “spare none” decree in the *sangfroid* [cold blooded] of an Apache chief—a fitting climax to the rapacious regime of the capitalist system.

Cheerless indeed would be the contemplation of such sanguinary scenes were the light of Socialism not breaking upon mankind. The skies of the East are even now aglow with the dawn; its coming is heralded by the dispelling of shadows, of darkness and gloom. From the first tremulous scintillation that guilds the horizon to the sublime march to meridian splendor the light increases till in mighty flood it pours upon the world.

From out of the midnight of superstition, ignorance and slavery the disenthraling, emancipating sun is rising. I am not gifted with prophetic vision, and yet I see the shadows vanishing. I behold near and far prostrate men lifting their bowed forms from the dust. I see thrones in the grasp of decay; despots relaxing their hold upon scepters, and shackles falling, not only from the limbs, but from the souls of men.

It is therefore with pleasure that I respond to the invitation of the editor of the *International Socialist Review*



Campaign poster from his 1912 presidential campaign featuring Debs and vice presidential candidate Emil Seidel.

to present my views upon the "Outlook for Socialism in the United States." Socialists generally will agree that the past year has been marked with a propaganda of unprecedented activity and that the sentiment of the American people in respect to Socialism has undergone a most remarkable change. It should be difficult to imagine a more ignorant, bitter and unreasoning prejudice than that of the American people against Socialism during the early years of its introduction by the propagandists from the other side.

I never think of these despised and persecuted "foreign invaders" without a feeling of profound obligation, akin to reverence, for their noble work in laying the foundations deep and strong, under the most trying conditions, of the American movement. The ignorant mass, wholly incapable of grasping their splendid teachings or appreciating their lofty motives, reviled against them. The press inoculated the public sentiment with intolerance and malice which not infrequently found expression through the policeman's club when a few of the pioneers gathered to engraft the class-conscious doctrine upon their inhospitable "free-born" American fellow citizens.

Socialism was cunningly associated with "anarchy and bloodshed" and denounced as a "foul foreign importation" to pollute the fair, free soil of America, and every outrage to which the early agitators were subjected won the plaudits of the people. But they persevered in their task; they could not be silenced or suppressed. Slowly they increased in number and gradually the movement began to take root and spread over the country. The industrial conditions consequent upon the development of capitalist production were now making themselves felt and Socialism became a fixed and increasing factor in the economic and political affairs of the nation.

The same difficulties which other countries had experienced in the pro-

cess of party organization have attended the development of the movement here, but these differences, which relate mainly to tactics and methods of propaganda, are bound to disappear as the friction of the jarring factions smoothens out the rough edges and adjusts them to a concrete body—a powerful section in the great international army of militant Socialism.

**What the workingmen
of the country are
profoundly interested in is
the private ownership of
the means of production
and distribution....**

In the general elections of 1898 upwards of 91,000 votes were cast for the Socialist candidate of the United States, an increase in this "off year" of almost two-hundred percent over the general elections of two years previous, the presidential year of 1896. Since the congressional elections of 1898, and more particularly since the municipal and state elections following, which resulted in such signal victories in Massachusetts, two members of the legislature and a mayor, the first in America, being elected by decided majorities—since then Socialism has made rapid strides in all directions and the old politicians no longer reckon it as a negative quantity in making their forecasts and calculating their pluralities and majorities.

The subject has passed entirely beyond the domain of sneer and ridicule and now commands serious treatment. Of course, Socialism is violently denounced by the capitalist press and by all the brood of subsidized contributors to magazine literature, but this only confirms the view that the advance of Socialism is very properly recognized by the capitalist class as the one cloud upon the horizon which por-

tends an end to the system in which they have waxed fat, insolent and despotic through the exploitation of their countless wage-working slaves.

In school and college and church, in clubs and public halls everywhere, Socialism is the central theme of discussion, and its advocates, inspired by its noble principles, are to be found here, there and in all places ready to give or accept challenge to battle. In the cities the corner meetings are popular and effective. But rarely is such a gathering now molested by the "authorities," and then only where they have just been inaugurated. They are too numerous attended by serious, intelligent and self-reliant men and women to invite interference.

Agitation is followed by organization, and the increase of branches, sections and clubs goes forward with extraordinary activity in every part of the land.

In New England the agitation has resulted in quite a general organization among the states, with Massachusetts in the lead; and the indications are that, with the vigorous prosecution of the campaign already inaugurated, a tremendous increase in the vote will be polled in the approaching national elections. New York and Pennsylvania will show surprising socialist returns, while Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Kentucky will all round up with a large vote. Wisconsin has already a great vote to her credit and will increase it largely this year. In the west and northwest,



Eugene V. Debs addressing a crowd, circa 1910.

Kansas, Iowa and Minnesota will forge to the front, and so also will Nebraska, the Dakotas, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Colorado. California is expected to show an immense increase, and the returns from there will not disappoint the most sanguine. In the southwest, Texas is making a stirring campaign, and several papers, heretofore Populist, will support our candidates and swell the socialist vote, which will be an eye-opener when announced.

The working class must get rid of the whole brood of masters and exploiters, and put themselves in possession and control of the means of production....

On the whole, the situation could scarcely be more favorable, and the final returns will more than justify our sanguine expectations.

It must not be overlooked, however, when calculations are made, that this is a presidential year and that the general results will not be so favorable as if the elections were in an "off year." Both the Republican and Democratic parties will, as usual, strain every nerve to whip the "voting kings" into line and every conceivable influence will be exerted to that end. These vast machines operate with marvelous precision, and the wheels are already in motion. Corruption funds, national, state and municipal, will flow out like lava tides; promises will be as plentiful as autumn leaves; from ten thousand platforms the Columbian orator will agitate the atmosphere, while brass bands, torchlight processions, glittering uniforms and free whisky, dispensed by the "ward-heeler," will lend their combined influence to steer the "patriots" to the capitalist chute that empties into the ballot box.

The campaign this year will be unusually spectacular. The Republican party "points with pride" to the "prosperity" and the "war record" of the administration. The Democratic party declares that "imperialism" is the "paramount" issue, and that the country is certain to go to the "demnition [damnation] bow-wows" if Democratic officeholders are not elected instead of the Republicans. The Democratic slogan is "The Republican vs. the Empire," accompanied in a very minor key by 16-to-1 and "direct legislation where practical."

Both these capitalist parties are fiercely opposed to trusts, though what they propose to do with them is not of sufficient importance to require even a hint in their platforms.

Needless is it for me to say to the thinking workingman that he has no choice between these two capitalist parties, that they are both pledged to the same system and that whether the one or the other succeeds, he will still remain the wage-working slave he is today.

What but meaningless phrases are "imperialism," "expansion," "free silver," "gold standard," *etc.*, to the wage-worker? The large capitalists represented by Mr. McKinley and the small capitalists represented by Mr. Bryan are interested in these "issues," but they do not concern the working class.⁴

What the workingmen of the country are profoundly interested in is the private ownership of the means of production and distribution, the enslaving and degrading wage-system in which they toil for a pittance at the pleasure of their masters and are bludgeoned, jailed or shot when they protest—this is the central, controlling, vital issue of the hour, and neither of the old party platforms has a word or even a hint about it.

As a rule, large capitalists are Republicans and small capitalists are Democrats, but workingmen must remember that they are all capitalists, and that the many small ones, like the fewer large ones, are all politically supporting their class interests, and this is always and everywhere the capitalist class.

Whether the means of production—that is to say, the land, mines, factories, machinery, *etc.*—are owned by a few large Republican capitalists, who organize a trust, or whether they be owned by a lot of small Democratic capitalists, who are opposed to the trust, is all the same to the working class. Let the capitalists, large and small, fight this out among themselves.

The working class must get rid of the whole brood of masters and exploiters, and put themselves in possession and control of the means of production, that they may have steady employment without consulting a capitalist employer, large or small, and that they may get the wealth their labor produces, all of it, and enjoy with their families the fruits of their industry in comfortable and happy homes, abundant and wholesome food, proper clothing and all other things necessary to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It is therefore a question not of "reform," the mask of fraud, but of revolution. The capitalist system must be overthrown, class-rule abolished and wage-slavery supplanted by the cooperative industry.

There is but one way to relieve poverty and to free labor, and that is by making common property of the tools of labor.

We hear it frequently urged that the Democratic party is the "poor man's party," "the friend of labor." There is but one way to relieve poverty and to free labor, and that is by making common property of the tools of labor.

Is the Democratic party, which we are assured has "strong socialistic tendencies," in favor of collective ownership of the means of production? Is it opposed to the wage-system, from which flows in a ceaseless stream the poverty, misery and wretchedness of

the children of toil? If the Democratic party is the "friend of labor" any more than the Republican party, why is its platform dumb in the presence of *Cœur d'Alene*?⁵ It knows the truth about these shocking outrages—crimes upon workingmen, their wives and children, which would blacken the pages of Siberia—why does it not speak out?

What has the Democratic party to say about the "property and educational qualifications" in North Carolina and Louisiana, and the proposed general disfranchisement of the negro race in the southern states?

The capitalist system must be overthrown, class-rule abolished and wage-slavery supplanted by the cooperative industry.

The difference between the Republican and Democratic parties involve no issue, no principle in which the working class have any interest, and whether the spoils be distributed by Hanna and Platt⁶, or by Croker and Tammany Hall⁷ is all the same to them.

Between these parties, socialists have no choice, no preference. They are one in their opposition to Socialism, that is to say, the emancipation of the working class from wage-slavery, and every workingman who has intelligence enough to understand the interest of his class and the nature of the struggle in which it is involved, will once and for all time sever his relations with them both; and recognizing the class-struggle which is being waged between the producing workers and non-producing capitalists, cast his lot with the class-conscious, revolutionary Socialist party, which is pledged to abolish the capitalist system, class-rule and wage-slavery—a party which does not compromise or fuse, but, preserving inviolate the principles which

quicken it into life and now give it vitality and force, moves forward with dauntless determination to the goal of economic freedom.

The political trend is steadily toward Socialism. The old parties are held together only by the cohesive power of spoils, and in spite of this they are steadily disintegrating. Again and again, they have been tried with the same results, and thousands upon thousands, awake to their duplicity, are deserting them and turning toward the Socialism as the only refuge and security. Republicans, Democrats, Populists, Prohibitionists, Single Taxers are having their eyes opened to the true nature of the struggle and they are beginning to

"Come as the winds come, when
Forests are rended;
Come as the waves come, when
Navies are stranded."

For a time, the Populist party had a mission, but it is practically ended. The Democratic party has "fused" it out of existence. The "middle-of-the-road" element will be sorely disappointed when the votes are counted, and they will probably never figure in another national campaign. Not many of them will go back to the old parties. Many of them have already come to Socialism, and they rest are sure to follow.

There is no longer any room for a Populist party, and progressive Populists realize it, and hence the "strongholds" of Populism are becoming "hot-beds" of Socialism.

It is simply a question of capitalism or socialism, of despotism or democracy, and they who are not wholly with us are wholly against us.

Another source of strength to Socialism, steadily increasing, is the trade-union movement. The spread of Socialist doctrine among the labor organizations of the country during the past year exceeds the most extravagant estimates. No one has had better opportunities than the writer to note the transition to Socialism among

trades-unionists, and the approaching election will abundantly verify it.

Promising, indeed, is the outlook for Socialism in the United States. The very contemplation of the prospect is a well-spring of inspiration.

It is simply a question of capitalism or socialism, of despotism or democracy, and they who are not wholly with us are wholly against us.

Oh, that all the working class could and would use their eyes and see; their ears and hear; their brains and think. How soon this earth could be transformed and by the alchemy of social order made to blossom with beauty and joy.

No sane man can be satisfied with the present system. If a poor man is happy, said Victor Hugo, "he is the pick-pocket of happiness. Only the rich and noble are happy by right. The rich man is he who, being young, has the rights of old age; being old, the lucky chances of youth; vicious, the respect of good people; a coward, the command of the stout-hearted; doing nothing, the fruits of labor."

With pride and joy, we watch each advancing step of our comrades in Socialism in all other lands. Our hearts are with them in their varying fortunes as the battle proceeds, and we applaud each telling blow delivered and cheer each victory achieved.

The wire has just brought the tidings of Liebknecht's death [Wilhelm Liebknecht, was a founder of the Social Democratic Party of Germany.] The hearts of American Socialists will be touched and shocked by the calamity. The brave old warrior succumbed at last, but not until he heard the tramp of International Socialism, for which he labored with all his loving, loyal heart;

Continued on page 61

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Note to Readers:

Socialist Viewpoint magazine has been edited and distributed by revolutionaries who share a common political outlook stemming from the old Socialist Workers Party of James P. Cannon, and Socialist Action from 1984 through 1999.

After being expelled from Socialist Action in 1999, we formed Socialist Workers Organization in an attempt to carry on the project of building a nucleus of a revolutionary party true to the historic teachings and program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

What we have found is that our numbers are insufficient for this crucial project of party building. This problem is not ours alone; it is a problem flowing from the division and fragmentation that has plagued the revolutionary movement in capitalist America and the world since the 1980s.

What we intend to do is to continue to promote the idea of building a revolutionary Marxist working class political party through the pages of *Socialist Viewpoint* magazine. We continue to have an optimistic outlook about the revolutionary potential of the world working class to rule society in its own name—socialism. We are optimistic that the working class, united across borders, and acting in its own class interests can solve the devastating crises of war, poverty, oppression, racism, sexism and environmental destruction that capitalism is responsible for.

We expect that revolutionaries from many different organizations, traditions, and backgrounds will respond to the opportunities that will arise, as workers resist the attacks of the capitalist system and government, to build a new revolutionary political party. Just as we join with others to build every response to war and oppression, we look forward to joining with others in the most important work of building a new mass revolutionary socialist workers' party as it becomes possible to do so.

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Hands Off Cuba

By KEVIN COOPER

This is a message from death row prisoner Kevin Cooper presented by prison phone to a forum July 2, 2026, in Berkeley, California, entitled "Cuba: Proud, Beleaguered, Undaunted. U.S.: hands off Nicaragua, Iran, Palestine, everywhere!" sponsored by Socialist Action.

Good evening. I'm Kevin Cooper speaking to you from this modern-day plantation in Stockton.

I greet all of you in true peace and unity and want our sisters and brothers from Cuba to know that I am in solidarity with you at this most important time in the history of your country.

There are many people across the world in situations like mine who, like me, are in complete support and solidarity with all oppressed people throughout the world, from Cuba to Venezuela, to Palestine and elsewhere

We African Americans, and other oppressed people here in this country can relate to your plight and all the suffering the Cuban people are enduring because of this U.S. government, who has to one degree or another done the same type of dehumanizing things to us as a people.

We understand your pain, your struggle, and your will not to be dehumanized.

We are after all, when all is said and done, sisters and brothers.

Whatever pains you, pains me, pains many of us. When you suffer, I suffer, and many of us also suffer.

When you smile, I smile, we smile, and when you are happy, I'm happy, we're happy.

We are not free in this country called America, or on this planet we call earth if you're not free in Cuba!

Your struggle is my struggle, is our struggle. Especially for your human rights and your right to self-determination.

Like all people, Cubans want to be the ones who determine their present and future, and not to be a stepchild or puppet, or colony of the U.S.A.

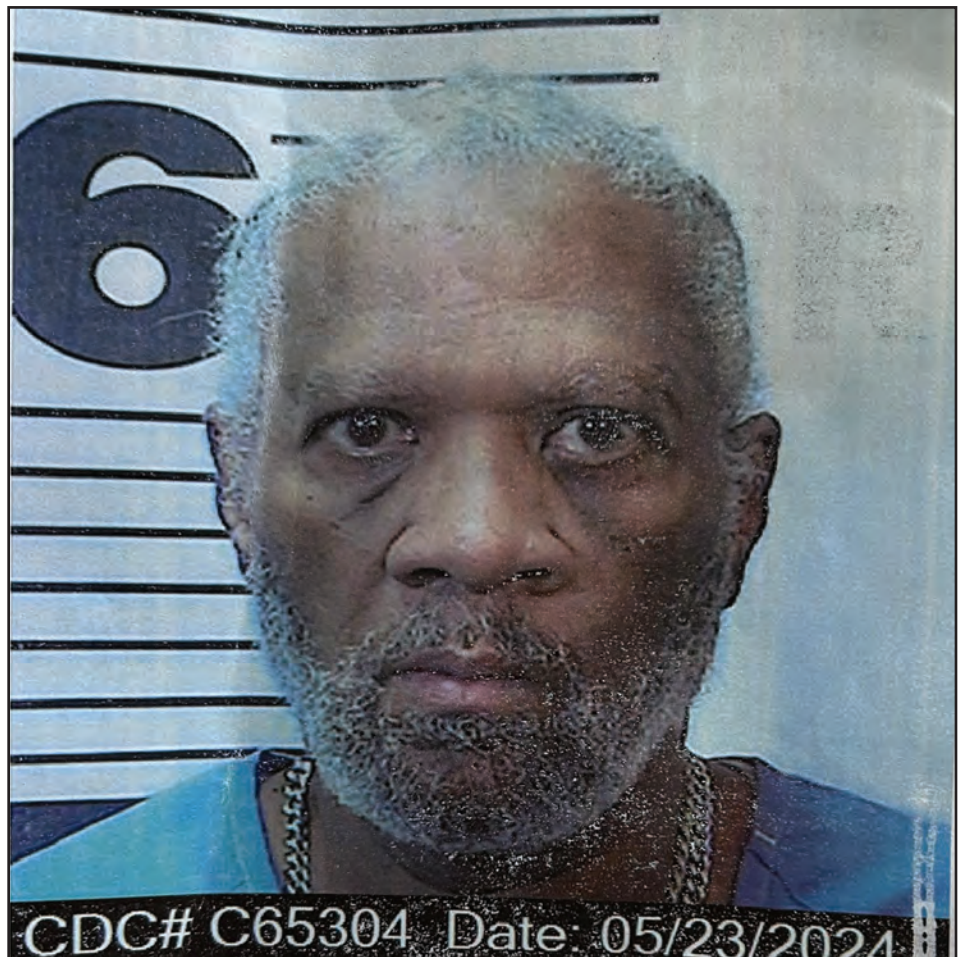
So, it's self-determination today, self-determination tomorrow, and self-determination in the future. I can't believe, as a human being, that the rest of the world does not know or want to

know or care to know about the destruction that the government of this country has done and is doing to Cuba and other places and people throughout this world. I want to believe that if they knew they would do something about it, and until something is done about it, there will be no peace until "peace after revolution."

In Struggle and Solidarity, Kevin Cooper

Write to Kevin Cooper at:
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P.O. Box 213040
Stockton, CA 95213-9040

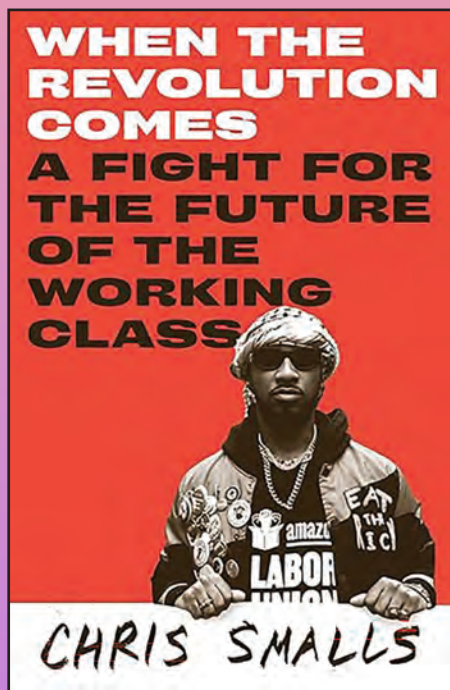
www.freekevincooper.org



Kevin Cooper



Picture from ILWU Facebook page. Read *Class War in Sugartown* on page 34.



Pantheon. Read *Attack on Class Independence in the Labor Movement* on page 40.

On the Front Cover: A sign advocating human needs before profit taped to a flag pole in Pittsburgh,PA. Read *How to Fight Capitalism and Win* on page 4.



Image by Center on Conscience and War. Read *Largest Gathering of Service Members for Antiwar Protest Since Vietnam* on page 30.



Attention Prison Mail Room:



Prisoners retain their free speech rights under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. That means you cannot legally suppress the expression and consideration of ideas. Prison walls do not form a barrier separating prisoners from the protection of the Constitution, according to the *Turner v. Safley* ruling. [482 U.S. 78, 107 Sct 2245 (1987)] If you exclude printed matter on an improper basis, or give a false pretext or rationale for its exclusion, because of the ideas expressed in it, you are breaking the law. The prisoner denied access to material they want to read can bring a civil rights lawsuit against you with cause for seeking punitive damages. In the case of *Police Department Chicago v. Mosley*, 408 U.S. 92, 95, 92 Sct 2286, 2290 (1972) the court found that “[A]bove all else, the First Amendment means that government has no power to restrict expression because of its message, subject matter or content.”