



# THE RED PHOENIX

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**FOR THE PROLETARIAT, EVERY DAY IS  
INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY**

# STARBUCKS WORKER: "I WAS FIRED FOUR DAYS AGO FOR BEING A UNION ORGANIZER" (1/2)

By Isabelle B., Oregon. March 27, 2023.

Starbucks Workers United has been organizing for over a year for the purpose of unionizing Starbucks stores around the country. Since their launch, over 300 stores have successfully unionized in the United States. Meanwhile, Starbucks has racked up hundreds of labor violations documented by the NLRB. Amidst the surge of unionization efforts in 2022, Howard Schultz returned to his position as interim CEO of Starbucks, after stepping down in 2017. Upon his return, Schultz claimed Starbucks was "under assault from unionization forces." He has since led an extensive union-busting campaign, including wrongful firings of union organizers, withholding benefits from union stores, and redistricting stores to prevent unions from forming.

None of these efforts have stopped more stores from unionizing each week, or workers from speaking out about their experiences of working at Starbucks.

Within city limits of Portland, OR, 12 Starbucks stores have unionized as of March 25, 2023. One of these locations is the Pioneer Square store, a busy cafe in the heart of Portland, which unionized on March 3, 2023.

Just days after the success, two of the organizers of the union campaign were fired from the Pioneer Square store. However, workers at Pioneer Square still hosted a Starbucks Workers United rally that weekend (March 19), in celebration of their union surviving Howard Schultz's union-busting. At this event, I spoke with Wren (she/her), one of the wrongfully fired organizers.

"I was fired four days ago for being a union organizer at Pioneer Square's Starbucks," Wren said.

Like many other Starbucks workers, Wren reported that unionizing the Pioneer Square store was inspired by a lack of support from management. "When you have a problem, when you need something, it just feels like screaming into the air. No one is there to listen to you, or they tell you to put it in a survey. But something that has shown to actually get their attention is collective action."

As I spoke with Wren outside the Pioneer Square Starbucks, cars slowed to read signs held by the workers and community supporters. Slogans such as "No contract, no coffee" and "Starbucks: STOP Union Busting" were common. The sound of cars honking in support was frequent.



Starbucks workers and supporters during the nationwide strike in March, Hillsboro, OR.

"Before I got fired, I was working there for about ten months," Wren continued. "And in that time, I was written up once for being one to three minutes late when clocking in. And once they can get you on anything at all, they use it to create a picture like you're continuing to do it. And after that, they would write me up on every single human error imaginable, which was how they fired me so quickly [after unionizing] ... And what they have been doing with write-ups is not even discussing it with us or telling us like they are supposed to be doing. Giving a verbal warning – they haven't been doing that either."

Wren is not alone in her experiences, as evident by the hundreds of labor violations the Starbucks corporation is accused of by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Allegation 8(a)(3) concerns "Discharge (Including Layoff and Refusal to Hire (not salting)); Changes in Terms and Conditions of Employment; Shutdown or Relocate/Subcontract Unit Work." The firing of Wren and her coworker, as well as other union organizers nationwide by Starbucks, is illegal, and shows the confidence the corporation has that the capitalist state's legal system will protect them. At the same time, it also shows the power of labor organizing and the agitation of Starbucks workers, as they persist in their struggle for better rights and working conditions.

Just three days after the rally at Pioneer Square and my conversation with Wren, over 100 Starbucks stores across the US went on strike. The strike on March 22 greeted Laxman Narasimhan for his first day sitting as the new CEO of Starbucks. Several stores in Portland and the surrounding area participated in the strike. I attended the picket line of a store in Hillsboro, OR, where I spoke to Aspen (they/them), a union organizer and shift supervisor.

"I have been a partner for three and a half years, at this store for one year, and I've been helping with some of the other folks in our store to lead our unionization. We just won our union election on Friday the 17th," Aspen said.

Like Wren, Aspen said the unionization effort came after lack of support from management, especially since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I really started to see the change in Starbucks in their values, their beliefs, and the way they treated partners right when the pandemic started. The store that I was at really didn't have a lot of support in that area [unionizing], in terms of other people supporting it. Eventually, I transferred to this store and everyone seemed on board for the most part, or at least had some questions that could be answered. So me and one of the other shift leads decided to just start going with it and create some change."

On the topic of Starbucks' union busting, Aspen said, "A lot of [worker organizing] initially was really quiet. Our managers didn't know until the day we actually filed. We noticed a couple things, subtle changes, like a lot more management in the store, district managers, store managers, that aren't always around, spending more time talking with us. 'What can we do to support you? What can we do to help you?' But it's very genuine, more of information gathering than anything... Definitely as a scare tactic, saying, 'You can't get any new benefits coming out now that you unionized.' So anything else that gets introduced in the rest of the company is excluded from unionized stores, as an incentive to keep other stores from unionizing. Now we have to bargain to get those benefits that stores are just getting that aren't unionized."

## **STARBUCKS WORKER: "I WAS FIRED FOUR DAYS AGO FOR BEING A UNION ORGANIZER" (2/2)**

Instead of trying to gain concessions from management alone, the store voted 15-0 to unionize. As for what the Hillsboro store hopes to win with the union in coming months, Aspen said, "Better pay, definitely, a living wage. Where I can put in a full time of work and be able to support myself, not have to worry about needing to pick up extra hours on days off to make ends meet. Same with everybody here. Predictability in schedule, in terms of weekly what our schedules will look like and what times of day we're getting scheduled consistently. Better bargaining in terms of how many sick hours we get, and how much we have to work in order to get our sick hours and vacation hours. Labor on the floor is a huge thing; how many people we have working based on customer sales, because that's our biggest impact at this point. There's not enough people working to support the demands of this business. So things start slipping through the cracks really quickly."

As we spent more time on the picket line, customers continually arrived to find the store closed. Most customers were very supportive of the workers, and left to buy coffee elsewhere. I asked Aspen about what led to the Hillsboro store joining the strike.

"A lot of it was really well timed with our election, our election being the 17th and today being the 22nd. Being able to ride this wave of momentum

of our store's frustrations and the company's workers' frustrations in general. Being here, the biggest thing about today's strike is the change in shift compliment: where they're changing how 'one shift supervisor equals x amount of baristas,' and by changing that factor, they are changing how many people we can have working on the floor at a time, or how much overlap there is between shift supervisors."

Short staffing in the service industry is a widespread issue, and is often caused by companies purposefully understaffing stores to decrease labor costs and increase profits. The result of this is workers taking on more responsibilities than they are being paid for, and drastically increasing the stress of the work they are doing. In the case of the food industry, it also means safety measures can begin decreasing to continue meeting the rate of customer demand.

When asked about any potential changes to Starbucks' attitude towards the union with the change in CEO, Aspen said, "I want to see change, but I'm not hopeful at this point. I really think Starbucks is probably just going to buckle down a little bit harder in their union busting. But, that's fine. I can buckle down too."

Despite wrongful firings, hours being cut, and

Starbucks delaying coming to the bargaining table, the workers who make the company possible are continuing to organize and bring inspiration for workers in other companies to do the same.

"It's not as hard as it looks," Wren from Pioneer Square said. "Unionizing immediately brings you more rights, more protections, you have the potential for so much more. It's definitely worth pushing for. You're not alone. Don't feel isolated. There's people out there who want to support you in this and want things to change."

From Hillsboro, Aspen said, "Strength in numbers, it's really solidarity. Our power is in our labor, and our right to work or not work. Taking that away is the biggest impact we can have as workers, and reminding the rest of your partners of that power is some of the biggest things that can win."

The American Party of Labor has supported Starbucks Workers United in their fight to unionize and have their demands met in a contract since it began, and we will continue our support for as long as Starbucks is operating. Until the capitalist mode of production no longer persists, we will keep pushing for all power to be in the hands of the working class.

## **"THE CITY OF BRIDGES" IN DISREPAIR AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WORKING CLASS**

**By Ryan P., Pennsylvania. April 3, 2023.**

In the east end of Pittsburgh, the Fern Hollow Bridge collapsed on January 28, 2022, just before 7:00 a.m. Ten people were injured, four severely so. This would have been completely brushed under the rug like so many bridge collapses before it if it wasn't for the fact that Joe Biden was planning to give a speech not far from the bridge on the same day about his plan to increase funding for infrastructure renewal. Yet, despite this dramatic event, little has been done in Pittsburgh to rectify this issue while the working class continues to suffer as a result of the neglect.

Bridges and Pittsburgh is an association that has existed almost as long as the city itself. Without bridges, the land Pittsburgh sits on would be a mix of semi-flooded valleys, ravines, islands, and hills. However, it was not until the late 1800s when American capitalists in the steel industry saw new ways to exploit the geographic location of the city that these bridges really started to be constructed at

a rapid rate. Estimates range widely in the number of bridges – upwards of 500 are usually counted – but there are enough that this city gained the reputation of being "The City of Bridges." However, this might not be the case for long as more and more fall in disrepair and collapse.

There's been very little if any of the planned work on the decaying bridges of Pittsburgh according to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. This is the very same commission that Mayor Ed Gainey has always failed to convene a meeting of, despite being obligated by law to do so.

A very recent example of just how horrendous the situation is occurred with the Charles Anderson Bridge located in Oakland Pittsburgh. Drivers who use this bridge can attest to its visibly crumbling state. It should come at no shock that the 85-year-old bridge was set by former Pittsburgh mayor Bill Peduto to receive \$6 million for repairs by 2023. However, current mayor Ed Gainey pushed the bidding for the

funding of this project back to 2025 with no clear explanation given. Then in early February 2023 the bridge was closed after an emergency inspection, to the detriment of the thousands of working class Americans who rely on Anderson Bridge for transport. Whether this emergency inspection and repairs will change or factor into the already planned funding further down the line is unclear.

The reason for all this disrepair is simple: the bourgeoisie are no longer concerned with keeping the bridges of Pittsburgh running because they are no longer profitable, like many under-funded infrastructure projects in America. Therefore it is up to the working class to demand and fight for the state to actually rebuild these bridges that they have promised to build. As the bridges of Pittsburgh fall further into disrepair, let this be a message to all working people that even the streets we walk on are not safe if they harm the capitalists' profit margins.

## "I WANNA SEE FEISTY DISABLED PEOPLE CHANGE THE WORLD"



Judy Heumann, photographed in 1977, featured in a scene from "Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution." (Photo: Hollyn D'Lil/Netflix)

By V. Valentino, California. April 14, 2023.

The founders of this country espoused the idea that every person had the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness – although we understand clearly that this was meant only for a select few. Throughout the history of our nation, many prominent civil rights leaders such as Susan B. Anthony, Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X have endeavored to ensure that this ideal was not reserved for the elite few, but for every human being longing to have a piece of the American dream. One such person was Judith Heumann, who passed away last month at the age of 75. "Disability only becomes a tragedy when society fails to provide the things we need to lead our lives – job opportunities or barrier-free buildings, for example. It's not a tragedy to me that I'm living in a wheelchair." Her actions throughout her life were dedicated to proving this point not only for herself, but for every disabled person in the United States and beyond. This is what prompted her to be regarded as the "Mother of the Disability Rights Movement."

Heumann contracted polio at the age of 18 months which led to her being a full-time wheelchair user for the remainder of her life. The local public school refused to allow her to attend on the basis that her inability to walk made her a fire hazard. Her education was relegated to home instruction twice a week for about an hour each session. Judy was eventually permitted to attend a special school and high school. Her efforts to get a suitable education culminated in her graduating from Long Island University and ultimately earning a Master's in Public Health from the University of California at Berkeley.

Judy attended Camp Jened in the 1960s, a camp for persons with disabilities in the Catskill Mountains of New York. The 1970s saw her return to the camp as a counselor. Several campers would emerge to become the vanguard of the disability rights movement. Their stories were captured for posterity in the documentary Crip Camp, released in 2020. During those years in the 70s, Judy challenged the status quo and sued the New York Board of Education for refusing to give her a teaching license on the grounds that they feared that she could not evacuate herself or her students in case of a fire – the same argument that public schools had used to deny her attendance as a student all those years before. She would persevere and become the first teacher in the state to use a wheelchair. Judy rose to prominence in the disability rights movement after Richard Nixon's veto of the 1972 Rehabilitation Act, which was the first piece of legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disabilities, when she led a protest with other disabled people that shut down traffic in Manhattan. Shortly thereafter, she launched a 26-day sit-in at a federal building in San Francisco to see to it that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act be dutifully revived and implemented. It was this relentless action by Judy Heumann and other

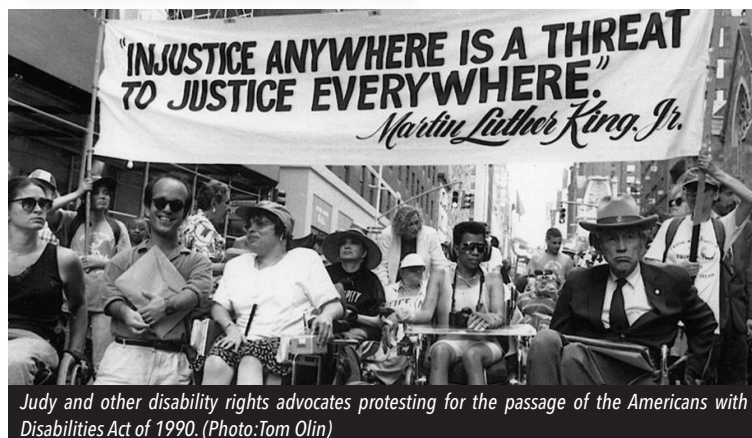
disabled activists which pressured Joseph Califano, the US Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, to sign both the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act on April 28, 1977.

Not content to rest on her laurels, she assisted in founding the first Center for Independent Living in Berkeley, CA, and the World Institute on Disability. Her leadership skills would finally prompt her to move to Washington D.C. in 1993 to serve as the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. She served in this position until 2001.

**"Some people say that what I did changed the world. But really, I simply refused to accept what I was told about who I could be and I was willing to make a fuss about it."**

As humble as her words may be, her efforts improved the lives of millions of people throughout the world. It is because of the persistence of Judy Heumann and other disabled activists that our government was forced to see just how capable persons with disabilities truly are. The disability rights movement grew out of the civil rights movement because disability rights are civil rights!

Judy Heumann deserves to be celebrated as a revolutionary. Her actions changed the level of involvement the government would have in the lives of disabled people thereby vastly improving their quality of life. The "wheelchair symbol" for disability and accessibility is now a familiar sight to people all across the world and serves as a hallmark for the movement that she and her cohorts saw through to victory. Disabled people now have the assurance that they will always be seen and heard lest those who deny them their basic rights are willing to suffer the legal ramifications. It is far from tragic when each of us does according to our ability and is accommodated according to our need. Rest in power, Judy!



Judy and other disability rights advocates protesting for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. (Photo: Tom Olin)



From left, Judith Heumann, Nicole Newnham, James LeBrecht, Sara Bolder, Andraea LaVant, and service dog Gofi LaVant arrive at the Oscars in Los Angeles, Apr. 2021. (Photo: Pool/Reuters)

## NAZI HOMESCHOOLING IN OHIO



School children at a "Reich founding celebration," Germany, 1934.

By Robin H. and June Vass. March 9, 2023.

Last month, CNN reported that the Ohio Department of Education was investigating an online homeschool network that was promoting "a white supremacist curriculum." This network, Dissident-Homeschool, shares their curriculum in a group that they host on the online platform, Telegram.

The story broke when the Anonymous Comrades Collective, which operates with the goal of "exposing Nazis, racists, and fascists," published an article

to expose Dissident-Homeschool in late January. Dissident-Homeschool is an online channel run by two self-described National Socialists, Logan and Katja Lawrence, which provides pro-Nazi homeschool curriculum. These two individuals also encourage parents to indoctrinate their children into Nazi ideology, to isolate their children from opposing views, and to connect and meet with other like-minded families by hosting and attending "pool parties" – a term borrowed from the National Justice Party to describe secretive meetups for white nationalists.

Not only does Katja Lawrence share contact information for The Right Stuff, the organization that founded the NJP, but the party itself has posted updates to the group. According to the Anti Defamation League, the National Justice Party supports the murderer Kyle Rittenhouse, upholds white supremacist beliefs such as the "Great Replacement" theory, and claims that Jews are responsible for the problems of the United States. The aforementioned "theory" has inspired terror

attacks including the Christchurch shooting, the Buffalo shooting, and the Tree of Life Massacre.

The investigation into Dissident-Homeschool conducted by the Ohio Department of Education found that no rules or laws were broken according to the state's standards for homeschooling.

In light of the issues of homeschooling and of child indoctrination by dangerous reactionaries, the working people of the United States must demand reforms to improve the quality and accessibility of education and the removal of elements of prejudice and racism. It is our duty to establish more thorough standards for homeschooling, to increase funding for education at the federal level, and to provide avenues for teachers, students, and families to voice their needs and concerns regarding curricula and policies. These structural reforms can serve as a step toward high quality socialized education, not only for the sake of younger generations but for the safety of all Americans who are endangered by the ignorance that breeds fascist violence.

## WHY IT MATTERS: SECTION 230 AND THE U.S. SUPREME COURT

By Mike B., Ohio. March 13, 2023.

As the United States Supreme Court contemplates a ruling in the case of Gonzalez v. Google, both pundits and politicians still struggle to predict how a ruling could lead to new restrictions on online communication. At issue is the current interpretation of the 1996 Communications Decency Act (47 U.S.C. § 230). This provision, commonly referred to as Section 230, has protected big tech for decades. It shields companies from liability related to user-generated content on the platforms and servers which comprise the Internet as we know it, including message boards, blogs, and social media.

A liability is ostensibly created when user-generated content may be considered harmful, as in content that may cause financial damages or incite violence or illegal activity. In simple terms, an individual or group posting potentially harmful content to a platform like Facebook or Twitter, is currently the sole party liable for damages and penalties. Companies like Facebook and Twitter are not liable for hosting – or even promoting – the content at present. The Gonzalez case effectively seeks to upend this arrangement.

Tech giants like Google and Meta are hardly sympathetic entities by any stretch of the imagination. But a significant change to Section 230 will likely impose direct and indirect consequences upon most people who rely upon Internet

communication and platforms for interaction and employment. Perhaps most critically, a ruling in favor of Gonzalez will almost certainly have a "chilling effect" that motivates tech companies to severely curtail and regulate online content. That includes dissenting opinions, advocacy, and activism that run contrary to profit-oriented motivations and/or pro-government sentiments. Under increased threat of financial liability, it is further conceivable that tech companies may be more likely to provide the private and personal data of its users to government entities for undue scrutiny and investigation.

It's important to note that "prominent" Trumpite legislators Josh Hawley and Ted Cruz both support changes to Section 230. Hawley has gone so far as to file an amicus brief in the Gonzalez case that seeks to influence the Court's ruling. In the brief he asserts that the use of proprietary algorithms by online platforms and the indifference of big tech to the rampant presence of illegal content online, indicates that the Internet has evolved well beyond the framework of Section 230. Moreover, Hawley hints that further cases in the vein of Gonzalez will surely follow should the Court fail to act in the present matter.

Of course both American tech companies and the U.S. government have sided with the far-right time and again over the course of recent decades, promoting and amplifying the rise of neo-fascism in America. Moreover, multi-billionaire Elon Musk

has now acquired Twitter, one of the most popular and influential social media platforms in the world. As such, it is evident that even without the tipping point of a case like Gonzalez v. Google (or Twitter, Inc. v. Taameh, a similar pending matter before the Supreme Court of the Ninth Circuit), corporate interests have already cast their lot with the far right, typically justifying their entanglements as a defense of so-called "free speech."

Irrespective of how the U.S. Supreme Court rules in Gonzalez v. Google, one thing is for certain: changes are likely on the way with how most of humanity communicates, informs, and organizes via the Internet. Moreover, these changes will be crafted and implemented by groups and individuals whose primary objectives are to maintain their concentrations of wealth and power at the expense of everyone else.

In previous eras of great upheaval and broad social change, everyday people found it necessary to circumvent constraints on media and develop new methods of communication and interaction to organize and advance meaningful social change. Given the extraordinary developments of the present day, it is important to be prepared for new challenges and to adapt and survive accordingly, and that's precisely why this matters.

## "THE WANTON CRUELTY IS THE POINT" OF 6-WEEK ABORTION BAN



Gov. Ron DeSantis at the 2021 Student Action Summit, Tampa, FL.

**By Benjamin J. Rizzo, Florida. March 23, 2023.**

The Florida Legislature began its annual session on March 7, and with it came the introduction of new measures by that body's overwhelming right-wing majority to achieve their long sought goal of virtually eliminating reproductive rights in the Sunshine State.

In the House, Republican Reps. Jenna Persons-Mulicka and Jennifer Canady are the sponsors of HB 7, which, when it goes into effect, would ban abortions in Florida after the gestational age of 6 weeks (down from the cut-off of 15 weeks that was passed by the Legislature in 2022). The Senate companion bill is SB 300, sponsored by Republican Sen. Erin Grall, and with the same exact provisions as the House measure. Given the composition of forces in the Legislature, this measure is guaranteed to pass and be signed into law by Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has already stated that he will do that.

This legislation would end almost all abortions in Florida. It "means many pregnant people will never have the option to have an abortion," said Laura Goodhue, executive director of the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates. "Moreover, between the 24-hour mandatory delay and two appointment requirements [under state law], even patients who realize they are pregnant before six weeks may be unable to access abortion care before they run out of time.

"We are already seeing the toll that a 15-week ban is taking on the health and well-being of pregnant people and their families in Florida," said Goodhue. "Further restricting abortion before the Florida Supreme Court has even weighed in on the last ban can only create worse outcomes.

"Evidence shows that when people are denied abortions, their long-term well-being and that of their children, if they have them, suffers," Goodhue said. "That burden falls disproportionately on Black and Latino communities, who, because of systemic discrimination in employment, housing, and public resources, are more likely to have low incomes and struggle to access health care. Abortion bans like the bill introduced today perpetuate these cycles of inequality."

The impact of this new measure would be felt not just by Floridians but by people from southeastern states who in recent years have flocked to Florida to escape their states' harsh abortion laws and obtain the care they need. (Until the spring of 2022, abortion was allowed in Florida up to 24 weeks of gestation.)

"It is hugely problematic if Florida increases even more its limitations on access to abortion. It's the third-largest state in the country. It's a place where people can travel from other states," Nancy Northup, head of the Center for Reproductive Rights, told The 19th News. "It's of huge concern."

HB 7 and SB 300 contain several other draconian provisions in addition to the ban on abortions after six weeks:

- They impose burdensome requirements on survivors of rape and incest (although it does allow them to have a termination up to 15 weeks of pregnancy). Patients would have to provide documentation right before having their procedure, such as "a copy of a restraining order, police report, medical record, or other court order or documentation proving that she (sic) is obtaining the termination of pregnancy because she (sic) is a victim of rape or incest."
- They prohibit doctors from prescribing abortion-inducing pills over the Internet via telehealth, which makes it more difficult for pregnant people to obtain these medications.
- Performing an abortion would be a third-degree felony, punishable by up to five years in prison. Examples of third-degree felonies in Florida include aggravated stalking, theft of a vehicle or firearm, and trespassing while armed.
- An abortion which results in the "death of the woman (sic)" would be a second-degree felony, punishable by to 15 years in prison. Examples of second-degree felonies in Florida include extortion, vehicular homicide, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. In actuality, abortion has a far lower mortality rate than childbirth, according to a 2012 study published in the Open Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology.
- The measures would allow terminations after six weeks if two doctors "certify in writing that... the termination of the pregnancy is necessary to save the pregnant woman's (sic) life or avert a serious risk of substantial and

irreversible physical impairment." No mention is made, however, about how a low-income person without access to healthcare or the means to pay for doctors' visits out of pocket is supposed to exercise their rights under this provision.

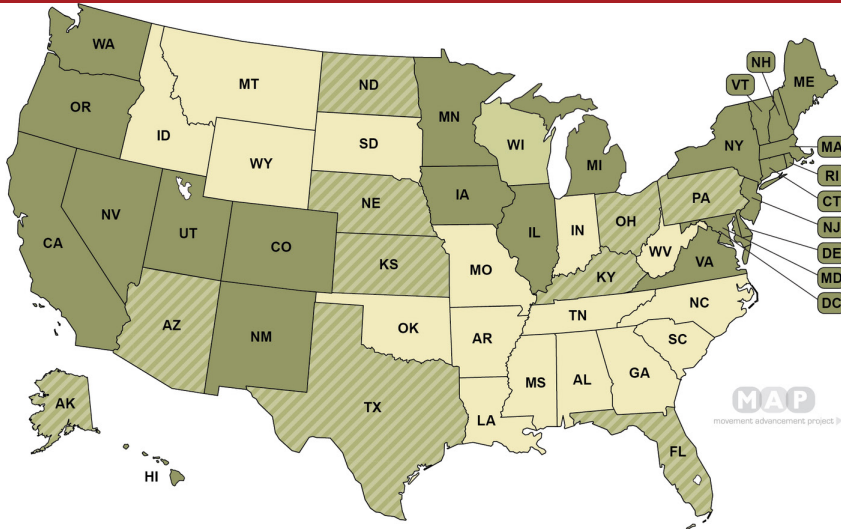
A spokesperson for SWAN (Stand With Abortion Now), an Orlando-area clinic defense organization, reacted to the introduction of this measure:

"This bill is likely to pass due to the Republican majority in the Florida legislature. The bill itself is among the most draconian in the nation, outlawing self-managed abortion [pills], an incredibly safe and effective mechanism for terminating a pregnancy. It also makes assisting a person seeking an abortion in-state a crime as well. The bill purports to include exceptions for rape, incest, and the life of the pregnant person. However, as has been demonstrated time and again, these 'exceptions' exist to garner political tolerance for the subjugation of women and others who can become pregnant, not out of any practical purpose. Exceptions in all instances remain nearly impossible to obtain. Every sponsor and supporter of this ban understands that and does not care. Like so many of the things Florida Republicans and ex-Gitmo torturer Ron DeSantis propose and pass, the wanton cruelty is the point.

"However, SWAN remains committed to being on the ground and fighting for reproductive healthcare access for all Floridians, particularly the population we serve in Central Florida. At our core we are an anti-fascist organization, and while we don't expect our task to be easy, we do intend to take on the growing fascism of Ron DeSantis and his cronies to the best of our abilities. We will need assistance and solidarity from groups across the nation and globe, some of which we've already been able to accumulate, harness, and direct toward providing care and protection for our community. We will need support and understanding from all people who seek to end oppression as we continue our essential work.

"Ron DeSantis can and will remain a cretinous human being, a wretched pox on the history of this state and of humanity. He can and will continue to push for the eradication of equality, kindness, and community across the state. SWAN volunteers face disgusting Christofascists outside of our clinics nearly daily. As such, we remain unwavering in our support for abortion rights. We are committed to the fight until the very end – and after – for ourselves, our communities, and our freedoms."

# TRANSGENER WORKERS AT AN INTERSECTION OF EXPLOITATION



As a result of a June 2020 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, people in all states can seek recourse for employment discrimination based sexual orientation and gender identity through the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and federal courts.

- State law explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (23 states, 3 territories + D.C.)
- State explicitly interprets existing prohibition on sex discrimination to include sexual orientation and/or gender identity (10 states)
- State law explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation only (1 state)
- No explicit prohibitions for discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in state law (16 states, 2 territories)

(Movement Advancement Project. "Equality Maps: Employment Nondiscrimination Laws.")

**By Leonard Zorfass, New Jersey. March 10, 2023.**

Transgender workers face significant challenges in the workplace, and one of the most pressing issues is the wage gap. Despite equal qualifications, experience, and productivity, transgender workers are paid less than their cisgender counterparts. This wage gap is a clear and measurable example of the exploitation of transgender workers under capitalism, creating a material basis for social chauvinism.

According to a report by the National Center for Transgender Equality, nearly one in five transgender individuals have experienced workplace discrimination, including being denied a job or promotion, being harassed or bullied, and being paid less than their cisgender peers. This discrimination leads to significant economic insecurity for transgender workers, who are more likely to live in poverty and experience homelessness than cisgender individuals due to reactionary social organization and practice inherent to the capitalist system.

The wage gap for transgender workers is particularly pronounced for trans women of color. A study by the Movement Advancement Project found that transgender women of color earn just 32 cents for every dollar earned by white cisgender men. This disparity is the result of multiple forms of discrimination and chauvinism, including racism, transphobia, and sexism.

The wage gap for transgender workers can also be attributed to the way in which capitalism exploits marginalized groups for profit. Capitalism is built on the exploitation of labor, and transgender workers are seen as a source of cheap labor. This is because transgender individuals face significant barriers to employment, such as discrimination, harassment, and lack of access to education and healthcare. As a result, they are often forced to accept low-paying jobs with few benefits and little job security.

Furthermore, capitalism reinforces gender norms and stereotypes, which contribute to the discrimination and marginalization of transgender individuals. The gender binary is a product of bourgeois ideology, originating with the material organization of private property, which seeks to divide and control the working class by creating false divisions based on gender, race, and nationality. By perpetuating the idea that there are only two genders, bourgeois ideology perpetuates the marginalization and oppression of transgender individuals.

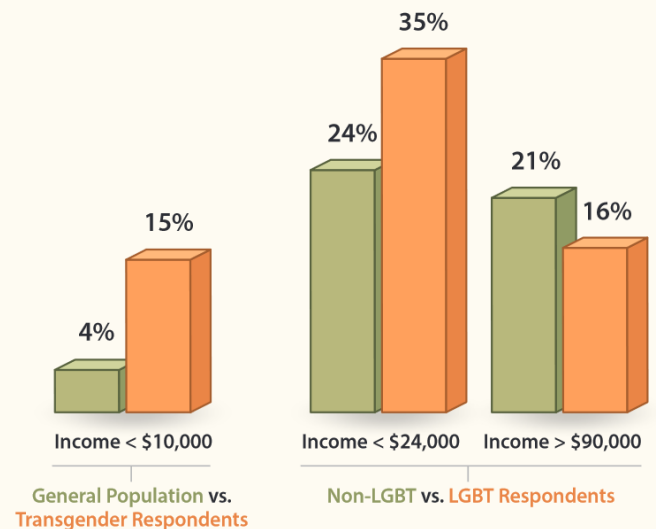
To address the wage gap for transgender workers, it is necessary to challenge

the underlying political-economic system that perpetuates discrimination and exploitation. This requires a radical reorganization of our economy and society, to one that is based on the principles of equality, justice, and solidarity. This means creating a society in which everyone has access to quality education, healthcare, and housing, regardless of their gender identity or expression.

It also means recognizing the intersectionality of oppression and the ways in which capitalism reinforces multiple forms of discrimination. This requires building solidarity across different movements and struggles, including the labor movement, the feminist movement, and the LGBTQ+ movement into a modern revolutionary Communist movement.

The wage gap for transgender workers is a clear example of the exploitation of marginalized groups under capitalism. As class conscious workers we must challenge the underlying economic system that perpetuates discrimination and marginalization. This requires building a movement for social and economic justice that recognizes the intersectionality of oppression and works towards a more just and equitable society for all.

**Figure 5: Transgender People More Likely to Report Lower Wages**



(Movement Advancement Project and Center for American Progress. February 2015. *Paying an Unfair Price: The Financial Penalty for Being Transgender in America.*)

## IT CAN HAPPEN HERE: THREE L.A. MUSEUMS SHINE SPOTLIGHTS ON THE HOLLYWOOD BLACKLIST'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY (1/2)



Members of the Hollywood Ten and their families in 1950, protesting the impending incarceration of the ten, from the documentary *Legacy of the Hollywood Blacklist* (1987).

**By Ed Rampell, Red Phoenix guest contributor, California. April 17, 2023.**

Three museums are commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Hollywood Blacklist, the darkest period in Tinseltown history. What happened during this period of rightwing repression? As actor Humphrey Bogart put it: "We saw it—and said to ourselves, 'It can happen here.' We saw American citizens denied the right to speak by elected representatives of the people! We saw police take citizens from the stand like criminals, after they'd been refused the right to defend themselves. We saw the gavel of the Committee Chairman cutting off the words of free Americans. The sound of that gavel, Mr. Thomas, rings across America, because every time your gavel struck it hit the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."

Bogie asserted this in a "Hollywood Fights Back!" radio program in 1947, which is heard in Judy Chaikin's 1987 documentary *Legacy of the Hollywood Blacklist*, screened 75-ish years later on March 26, 2023 at the Hollywood Heritage Museum as part of a program of the same name. The Emmy Award nominated nonfiction film is narrated by Burt Lancaster, who had also participated in the "Hollywood Fights Back!" broadcasts, organized by the Committee for the First Amendment, composed of La-La-Land leftists and liberals who opposed the Blacklist.

Chaikin's 60-minute documentary chronicles the motion picture purge, when hundreds of talents were subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee to testify about subversion

and Communist infiltration in Tinseltown. (Some artists – including Maltese Falcon author Dashiell Hammett, poet Langston Hughes, folksinger Pete Seeger and *Spartacus* author Howard Fast – were also summoned to appear before Senator Joe McCarthy's Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.)

On October 27, 1947, John Howard Lawson became the first member of what came to be known as the "Hollywood Ten" – seven screenwriters, two directors and one producer – to provide testimony to HUAC. They declined to answer questions regarding their union and political ties, including the million-dollar query: "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" Standing on their First Amendment right, the Ten believed this prying into personal affiliations was unconstitutional governmental meddling. In particular, the filmmakers were concerned that if they answered the Committee's inquiries about themselves, they'd then open themselves up to being asked about the associations of friends and colleagues.

But the Hollywood Ten's refusal to be Quislings to HUAC's quizzes, in sometimes testy testimony broadcast coast-to-coast on live radio, came at a high price. The Ten were charged with contempt of court and they were all forced to pay fines and serve up to a year behind bars in the land of the free. In addition to their imprisonment, movie moguls announced studios wouldn't employ "Communists," who were banned from working in the motion picture industry. In 1951 a second wave of blacklisting erupted when prominent actor Larry Parks became the first of around 300

more members of the creative community to be blacklisted, mainly for refusing to recant their own political activities and name the names of other suspected radicals.

Chaikin's excellent *Legacy of the Hollywood Blacklist* chronicles all this, mainly from the point of view of the wives and children of the persecuted talents who paid such steep prices for not becoming informers. After the screening of the documentary at the Hollywood Heritage Museum, board member Julie Fleischer, who produced the event and is a script supervisor of TV shows including *Will & Grace*, *The Big Bang Theory* and Paramount's *Frasier* reboot, moderated a panel that included Chaikin and some of her film's interviewees and other children of blacklisted artists. They included:

Becca Wilson, daughter of Oscar-winning screenwriter Michael Wilson (who was denied screen credits for co-writing 1957's *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and 1962's *Lawrence of Arabia*); Vicki Crawford, daughter of Oliver Crawford (who wrote *Star Trek*); Michael Collins, son of screenwriter Richard Collins (who co-wrote 1944's *Song of Russia* and named 26 names in his HUAC testimony) and actor Dorothy Comingore (who co-starred in 1941's *Citizen Kane* and wouldn't inform to HUAC). The panelists recounted the toll that persecution took on their families. Becca remembered watching a movie her father wrote at a theater and how he cried at the end when the credits rolled – because his name was omitted.

From the Museum's floor, Andy Parks, son of actors Betty Garrett and Larry Parks, recalled the heartbreaking March 21, 1951 testimony of his father who pleaded with the Committee: "I will tell you everything that I know about myself... I would prefer, if you will allow me, not to mention other peoples' names. Don't present me with the choice of either being in contempt of this Committee and going to jail or forcing me to really crawl through the mud to be an informer... I don't think this is American... [It] is more akin to what happened under Hitler... So I beg of you not to force me to do this..." Despite cracking under pressure and divulging others' names, HUAC spitefully blacklisted Larry Parks anyway.

Located across from the legendary Hollywood Bowl, in a barn converted into a movie studio by Cecil B. DeMille to shoot a Western in 1914, what's now the Hollywood Heritage Museum is a reliquary of artifacts from the days of silent movies and Hollywood's golden age, a veritable shrine to La-La-Land lore and moving picture pioneers. But Becca



## IT CAN HAPPEN HERE: THREE L.A. MUSEUMS SHINE SPOTLIGHTS ON THE HOLLYWOOD BLACKLIST'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY (2/2)

Wilson warned that the Blacklist, which started three quarters of a century ago, is not just ancient history. Striking a cautionary note, Becca quoted from her father's 1976 acceptance speech for the Writers Guild of America's Laurel Award:

"I feel that unless you remember this dark epoch and understand it, you may be doomed to replay it. Not with the same cast of characters, of course, or on the same issues. But I see a day perhaps coming in your lifetime, if not in mine, when a new crisis of belief will grip this republic; when diversity of opinion will be labeled disloyalty; and when extraordinary pressures will be put on writers in the mass media to conform to administration policy on the key issues of the time, whatever they may be. If this gloomy scenario should come to pass, I trust that you younger men and women will shelter the mavericks and dissenters in your ranks, and protect their right to work. The Guild will have the use and need of rebels if it is to survive as a union of free writers. This nation will have need of them if it is to survive as an open society," insisted Michael Wilson.

As portents of a "gloomy scenario" in our own time, Becca Wilson cited "books banning" and the fact that Donald Trump's "first consigliere" was none other than witch-hunting Senator McCarthy's righthand man, Roy Cohn, one of the Red Scare's most despicable grand inquisitors.



An anti-Communist picket against the film *David and Bathsheba*. The film's writer, Philip Dunne, and one of its stars, Gregory Peck, were targeted by the HUAC. (Photo: AP)

Along with the Hollywood Heritage Museum's Rudolph Valentino and Mary Pickford, et al, memorabilia, screenwriter/director Allison Burnett loaned HHM historic Blacklist mementos exhibited in display cases to enhance the Legacy screening and panel. Ken Levy, son-in-law of screenwriter Robert Lees, who wrote comedies such as 1948's *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, gushed that

the Museum's sold-out show was "one of the best Blacklist events I've ever attended." In 2017, Levy co-organized the 70th anniversary commemoration of the Hollywood Blacklist at the Writers Guild theater in Beverly Hills, which featured TV/movie actors and relatives of persecuted talents reenacting blacklisted HUAC testimony.

Another relative of a purged screenwriter attending the Legacy program was Nancy Escher, daughter-in-law of Dalton Trumbo, who won an Academy Award using a pseudonym for 1956's *The Brave One* and is widely acknowledged as the scribe who broke the Blacklist, when he received screen credits for 1960's *Exodus* and *Spartacus*. On April 29, Escher is introducing that epic drama about the gladiator-led slave revolt against the Roman Empire during the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures' "The Hollywood Ten at 75" film series, which is dedicated to the recently deceased Blacklist historians Victor Navasky, author of *Naming Names*, and Dave Wagner, co-author of *Radical Hollywood* and *Tender Comrades*.

I'm presenting the April 13-30 screenings of "The Hollywood Ten at 75" movies, which kicks off with a double feature of 1943 World War II morale boosters. *Tender Comrade* stars Ginger Rogers and is written and directed by two members of the Hollywood Ten: Dalton Trumbo and Edward Dmytryk. The desert drama *Sahara* stars Bogie and was written by the first member of the Hollywood Ten to testify, John Howard Lawson, purported leader of the Hollywood branch of the Communist Party. Lawson's granddaughters, Nancy Lawson Carcione and Andrea Lawson, will join me on the Academy Museum's stage for a discussion between the two movies.

The West Coast debut of "Blacklist: The Hollywood Red Scare" is taking place May through September "at the Skirball Cultural Center with newly added artifacts, *Blacklist: The Hollywood Red Scare* shines a spotlight on the proceedings, investigations, motives, and choices of those caught in the crosshairs—including the many Jewish creatives and executives who suffered under and enforced the blacklist. The result is an emotionally complex and compelling exhibition that demonstrates how the politics of Hollywood can shape the entire country. The exhibition is organized by Jewish Museum Milwaukee," according to the Skirball's website.

The educational program includes online classes and screenings of Blacklist-related movies, such as 1973's *The Way We Were*, starring Robert Redford and Barbra Streisand, and aims to: "Explore the

history and impact of the Hollywood Red Scare and its contemporary implications for civil liberties, propaganda, and shifting definitions of American patriotism."

In addition to these three Los Angeles museums, in October 2022 Turner Classic Movies presented "75th Anniversary of the Hollywood Blacklist," airing mostly vintage films for three weeks with a special theme highlighting what Hollywood Ten screenwriter Alvah Bessie called "the Inquisition in Eden." During this dire period U.S. conservative cancel culture ran amok, weaponizing government to persecute those who were considered to be "woke" back in the 1940s and 1950s.

From the Salem witch trials to the Espionage and Sedition Acts to the House Un-American Activities Committee and beyond, the witch-hunters and inquisitors have always been among us. On February 2 - 2023, not 1953 - the House of Representatives passed House Concurrent Resolution 9, "Denouncing the horrors of socialism", with a 328 Yeas, 86 Nays and 14 Present vote, declaring: "Whereas the United States of America was founded on the belief in the sanctity of the individual, to which the collectivistic system of socialism in all of its forms is fundamentally and necessarily opposed: Now, therefore, be it

"Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress denounces socialism in all its forms, and opposes the implementation of socialist policies in the United States of America." On February 7, 2023, the Senate referred the resolution to the Judiciary Committee.

At Capitol Hill, after gun control advocates Patricia and Manny Oliver - whose son had been killed at 2018's Parkland school mass shooting - disrupted a House Judiciary Committee hearing, they were removed from the hearing room. Manny was restrained, cuffed with his hands behind his back and pinned down on the hallway floor by three officers who were then joined by numerous other guards on March 23, 2023. On April 6, 2023, two young Black lawmakers who oppose gun violence were expelled from the Tennessee House of Representatives.

Learning about yesterday's anti-communist Reds-under-the-beds hysteria can empower people today to resist the rising tide of book banning, school curriculum gagging, censorship, disinformation, history denial, expulsions, redbaiting and more. If we don't, as Michael Wilson warned, we "may be doomed to replay it."

## PRIDE: A BRIEF REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY (1/2)

**By the LGBTQIA+ Commission of the American Party of Labor.**

*An Immediate Origin of Modern Struggle, Existence, and Recognition:*

On June 28th, 1970 the very first Pride marches were held in New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago to commemorate the one year anniversary of the now famous six day confrontation with Police at the Stonewall Inn in June 1969. Stonewall Inn was a bar/nightclub popular with LGBTQIA+ peoples in New York City and was one of the few that would openly serve queer peoples after a 1966 ruling in New York state that decriminalized serving alcohol to LGBTQIA+ peoples. However, homosexuality was still considered a crime by New York state law. Police would often arrest or harass LGBTQIA+ peoples due to their own personal prejudices about gender conforming clothing, this practice tied with the formal outlawing of homosexuality created a culture which allowed police to often raid queer spaces like the Stonewall Inn as they were easy targets for police to fill quotas and few people cared about the rights and safety of LGBTQIA+ peoples at the time.

The six day revolt at Stonewall was sparked on the evening of June 28th, 1969 after the police raided Stonewall and, unsurprisingly, used excessive force to detain and arrest many of the people gathered there. After years of raids and victimization at the hands of police the LGBTQIA+ community had finally had enough and began to fight back and struggle for recognition, equality, and liberation. By the morning of June 29th thousands of queer people had entered the streets demanding an end to the oppressive laws and violent police raids. The demonstration lasted for nearly a week and saw much repression and violent attacks from police. It is important to note that every section of the multi-ethnic and multi-national LGBTQIA+ community were victims to these raids, and likewise, every section of the multi-ethnic and multi-national LGBTQIA+ community participated in the struggle against them. There has, in the past, been attempts to mitigate the role played by transgender and gender-nonconforming peoples as well as lesbians and drag queens in the events and aftermath of Stonewall. To let these attempts to mitigate participation and presence does a disservice to the LGBTQIA+ community overall and cannot be allowed to continue.

Since the Stonewall revolt, June 28th, as well as the whole month of June, has been an international time for the recognition of the LGBTQIA+ community and, as a time to feel pride in ourselves

and our existence, honor those who came before us in the struggle for queer rights, and continue the fight until total liberation is reached. Pride has its roots in, and is intrinsically tied to the unapologetic struggle for the recognition and equality of LGBTQIA+ peoples and communities.

*The Communist Movement and the Cause of LGBTQIA+ People:*

While the communist and Marxist-Leninist movement has not always had the most progressive stance on LGBTQIA+ communities, there is not a single communist today, worthy of the title, who does not fully uphold the fight for LGBTQIA+ rights and liberation.

Around the world today communists are actively engaged in and sometimes play leading roles in the struggle for LGBTQIA+ liberation. It comes as no surprise that LGBTQIA+ peoples are predominantly of the working class and the oppression of LGBTQIA+ peoples is rooted in the oppressive and exploitative system that is capitalism. It is the duty of every communist, of every Marxist-Leninist, to stand with and unite all sections of the working class in the struggle for liberation and socialism. LGBTQIA+ liberation is inseparable from the working class struggle. We in the American Party of Labor are one of many Marxist-Leninist organizations that stand in solidarity with and organize among the LGBTQIA+ community. Many of our international comrades also organize for the rights of LGBTQIA+ workers against social reaction and the domination of the spiritual idealism/pseudo-scientific rhetoric from all sides of the political spectrum. The Communist Party of Spain (ML) organizes nationally with the Trans Obrera Sindicalista, a trade union for transgender workers. The Revolutionary Communist Party of Brazil platforms gender-nonconforming comrades in the video reports of its news organ, A Verdade and openly celebrates Trans Day of Visibility, and the Communist Party of Labor of the Dominican Republic also programmatically asserts its demands for the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The history of LGBTQIA+ rights and the communist movement begins in the year 1898 when August Bebel, a leading member of the German social democratic movement gave the first ever political speech in defense of homosexual rights on the Reichstag floor calling for the removal of German sodomy laws.

The next major step forward was in the aftermath of the Great October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. With the complete overturning and nullification of the Tsarist criminal code homosexuality was

decriminalized. Today, many people cite Article 121 of the Soviet Criminal Code as proof of anti-LGBTQIA+ sentiment within the Soviet state. However, the Great Soviet Encyclopedia is quoted as saying "that Soviet legislation does not recognize so-called crimes against morality" and Article 121 of the Soviet Criminal Code was intended to only punish people guilty of abusing children. The Soviet Union, at the time, like much of the rest of the world, shared the view of leading psychologists in which members of the LGBTQIA+ community were believed to have a psycho-sexual disorder. While it is of the utmost importance to understand this view as wholly wrong, it was the official position of science and psychology of the time. What set the Soviet Union apart and ahead of other countries during this time period was that the Soviet Union aimed at ending the "estrangement" faced by members in the LGBTQIA+ community in relation to society, and provided them with various forms of medical care, while other countries criminalized and brutalized queer peoples. The Soviets, while incorrect about the nature of LGBTQIA+ peoples, treated them with some sense of dignity, a dignity that was absent in most other countries.

However, this view within socialist countries and the communist movement would not remain stagnant as it did in many capitalist countries. As science and psychology developed and began to recognize the rights and natural existence of LGBTQIA+ peoples so did socialist states. East Germany decriminalized homosexuality in the 1980s when their Supreme Court decreed that "homosexual people do not stand outside of socialist society." East Germany was also the first country to openly allow LGBTQIA+ peoples to serve in its military by issuing that soldiers should "deconstruct traditional moral prejudices against homosexuality." East Germany also had a remarkable history of allowing sex change surgeries for peoples who desired them. This profound social change is joined by a long progressive history of queer activism and advocacy in both the German Empire and the Weimar Republic. Physicians like Magnus Hirschfeld pioneered techniques of gender reassignment/confirmation surgery for transfeminine people in particular, with a patient at his Institute for Sexual Research, Lili Elbe becoming the first Transgender woman in history to receive a uterus transplant. Hirschfeld was also an early organizer in the gay rights movement that grew to be incredibly organized in Weimar Germany, even if it was heavily influenced by liberal "respectability politics" in its cultural and political campaigns. This Scientific Humanitarian Committee was also supported by the Communist Party of Germany. The LGBTQIA+ movement was an early target for the ascendant Nazi Party as the Brown Shirt gangs

## PRIDE: A BRIEF REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY (2/2)

burnt down the Institute for Sexual Research in Berlin. Likewise books of biological, cultural and psychological study of homosexuality and gender-nonconforming identity were burnt en masse in the book burnings of the Nazi Party, in particular with the library of the University of Leipzig suffering the loss of its groundbreaking research.

Today, socialist Cuba is a leading force in the world for LGBTQIA+ rights. In 1979, same-sex activity was nationally decriminalized 24 years before the United States. Article 42 of the Cuban Constitution has LGBTQIA+ rights enshrined within it and in 2022 socialist Cuba passed one of the most progressive family codes in history which acknowledges the rights of LGBTQIA+ peoples and established other advancements for women, children, and the elderly. It should also be noted that since 2008 Resolution 126 was signed into law which allowed for Cubans seeking sexual reassignment/gender confirmation surgery to receive those surgeries provided freely

by the Cuban government. Cuba was the first country in Latin America to increase support for transgender and gender-nonconforming peoples to this level and today socialist Cuba is celebrated for having one of the world's most inclusive and LGBTQIA+ friendly medical and health programs.

The presentation of the LGBTQIA+ community and its relation to the communist movement of the last century has been distorted by capitalist academia in an effort to slander the communist history of working people and to demoralize the working masses. We must not allow the capitalists to tell us who our enemies are, or what we can and cannot believe or know. At this moment in history, all the progress made by the LGBTQIA+ community has made for itself under liberal capitalist regimes is facing a vicious attack of the reactionary bourgeoisie, our freedom, our culture and our very lives are being attacked with legislation and terrorists of the far-right in alarming intensity. Vile and baseless

accusations are launched against LGBTQIA+ people, and in particular the transgender community, in order to justify their policies of popular division and the genocide of queer people. The working class in general, and of course LGBTQIA+ people are not ignorant to this backhanded campaign, not foolish enough to be divided or silent when our very rights and lives are threatened once again with the death throes of a decaying ruling class. If the reactionaries of the USA believe they will succeed where their fascist predecessors failed, they are sorely mistaken. The Marxist-Leninist movement, with the LGBTQIA+ movement firmly supported in our revolutionary solidarity, holds up the banner of Pride, of socialism, to the ending of a society built on division, discrimination and dehumanization. We the LGBTQIA+ Commission of the American Party of Labor call all workers and queer people to struggle and advance our rights, and to remember the meaning of Pride.

## WHAT DOES PRIDE MEAN TO YOU?

**Ian Ocx, LGBTQIA+ Commissioner of the American Party of Labor, Texas:** For me Pride is a revolutionary celebration. It is a time for members of the LGBTQIA+ community to come together with all of our beautiful differences and declare our existence and our refusal to live in a society that oppresses us. Pride is a time of strength, it is a time to celebrate the victories that LGBTQIA+ workers have won across the globe and refocus ourselves for the struggles yet to come in our path to complete and total liberation. A liberation that only the establishment of socialism will allow us to achieve. Pride is an act of revolt, Pride is revolution.

**Min A., New York:** To me, Pride is an antidote to shame. To the shame that killed queer people from AIDS in the 80s. It's an antidote to the shame that keeps queer people in the closet. It's an antidote to the shame that drives our people to suicide. In a society that discards everything it cannot turn into money, knowing and being who you are, being proud of who you are, is a revolutionary act.

**Naomi L., Texas:** Pride to me is a declaration of our liberation as whole people, who are able and capable of choosing our lives for ourselves. Pride is a revolutionary celebration of community and love, and a statement of our opposition to "Just the way things are."

**Red N., Maryland:** I have always seen Pride as a challenge. It recalls the revolutionary experiences of proletarians and oppressed that heroically flared

up world wide in the late '60s and throughout the '70s. It began a tradition for the Queer community to struggle for our rights that inevitably led to the security of much of them and are now defending them from the grip of reaction. Do We forget the heroism of our predecessors? Do We let frauds and careerists infiltrate and sanitize Pride? Or do we remember our roots, remember our heroes and fight however we can, every moment we can for the liberation of all Queer people? That is the challenge. The APL rises to it.

**Justine S., Minnesota:** Pride is something I still struggle with - whichever way I turn myself, I can never seem to love myself in the true sense of the word. In the sense of taking care of myself, of standing with my self despite flaws and past mistakes, especially in the sense of seeing myself as worthy of any kind of friendship or comradeship. I can sit in my self-hatred and stew on it all day, or I can act. I can wonder if I'm worthy of my friends' love, or I can simply act as someone who loves and is loved. Revolutionary activity, organizing, all that for me is in some ways teaching myself to practice, rather than just to ponder. In order to lift others up I need to be standing tall myself: that to me is where the revolutionary essence of Pride lies.

**Alexia Paramo, New York:** Pride to me is the emotion between anger and peace. It is the insults I bite back to morph into reaffirmations. It is the constantly cycling oroboros of bodies surfing on my couch. It is the warmth of skin emanating from

-muted sobs. Pride is as beautiful as it is painful, and that's why even though pride is one of the most important unification factors we have right now, the world knows our pride to be sin.

### Jeremy J., Virginia:

You should know Pride is an open door. Access to a way of living you didn't know possible. No more second guessing. No more shame. Pride is an open door, and in the same way you are the keys, made to unlock this life. Warmth, community, and unapologetic self love feel out of reach. But Pride is an open door, and I'll wait for you if you wait for me.

**Ross N., Pennsylvania:** Pride is being proud of who I am, and being comfortable in who I am, too. It is knowing that I have my own unique, queer experience. It is knowing I wouldn't be who I am if I wasn't queer.

**Tano, Texas:** Pride is a rebellion, first and foremost. Pride is where we take our stand, and where, in the face of a reactionary society that at best wants us to remain hidden and at worst wants us exterminated, we boldly proclaim, "No!"



# WHY WERE THE RICH DEPOSITORS OF THE SILICON VALLEY BANK BAILED OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT? (1/2)

By Hari Kumar, international correspondent. April 10, 2023.

The clientele of California's failed Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) was the high tech "start-up" industry in Silicon Valley. Banking is a con industry. After all, if all depositors arrived at the bank at the same time to withdraw their funds, no bank could survive. Yet it is supposed to honor its "promissory" contract to give back to the depositor their deposits. This was what SVB faced. Some of its depositors withdrew their deposits to gamble on risky, high interest rate stocks. The bank could not maintain itself and collapsed. The remaining depositors were left short.

The US government knew if it did support the bank depositor-investors, it could not be publicly called a "bail-out." Why not? The term 'bail-out' "had become a toxic word in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. The depositors would be protected, but the bank's management and its investors would not."

The March 2023 bailout was for the full amount - not simply the \$250,000 normally protected by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), the banking regulator. These rich depositors were 'bailed out' by the US government in full. This includes Pieter Thiel, the multi-billionaire.

Jamie Dimon, chief executive of J.P. Morgan - when asked for his advice by the Biden administration's Deputy Secretary of the Treasury - warned of "potential" for the banking crisis to spread to other banks in a "cascading series of bank failures." And indeed the cryptobank "Signature" bank was also at risk of crashing soon after and was taken into receivership by the government.

What had happened? Clients had deposited in SVB to reap profits with the bank's investment strategy. That was locked into US government fixed, long term bonds, which yielded stable high interest rates. Profit-seeking capitalists realized however that this was a catch in the post-COVID new era when inflation re-emerged.

This resulted from an increase in the money supply following the government pumping money into businesses, but also to the population during the pandemic. Between them, the Trump and Biden administrations put into the economy over \$5 trillion ("almost a quarter of GDP") of which \$1.8 trillion went into households.

It is true that in the current inflation, other non-monetary causes of inflation operate. These include poor supply chains exacerbating supply and demand mismatches, employers wishing to squeeze wages, and businesses like grocery chains using the situation to gouge prices. But there was an undoubted major increase in the money supply.

Attempting to control this money supply, the central banks reverted to their traditional "solution" of raising interest rates. This makes the commodity of money more expensive to buy. As rates steadily rose, the profits from fixed, long-term government bonds (or "Marketable Treasury Securities") fell below those obtained by shorter-term speculative gambling. That led investor-depositors to start withdrawing their deposits from SVB. They switched that capital into lending money for shorter term but higher interest rate loans. The search for "fictitious money profits" - as Marx put it - once more led investors to shift money around in search of extra profit increments.

The same dynamic for the lowered profits on long-term Treasury bonds applies also to other so called "fixed income" bonds. It appears that in total some \$2.2 trillion are "over-valued" currently, again making the economy and many banks unstable.

"Other fixed-income markets like the \$12 trillion mortgage-backed securities market and the \$10 trillion corporate bond market also saw big losses in market value. This is a key reason why banks, which hold such securities, are currently under stress. A recent study found that such assets in the U.S. banking system are overvalued by \$2.2 trillion due to mark-to-market losses." (Beckworth, David. "The Fed Has Overseen a Remarkable Transfer of Wealth From Bondholders to Taxpayers." Barron's, March 22, 2023.)

Actually the amount of holdings by Banks of such "fixed income" markets has soared between 1980 to 2023 from about \$0.5 trillion to \$6 trillion.

There is another feature of what has happened that we should note: the effect of the rising interest rate has also been to diminish the so-called Debt to GDP Ratio. This is shown below, expressed by the amount of 'Marketable Treasury Securities' held as a percentage of GDP.

Marketable Treasury securities as a percentage of gross domestic product



(Beckworth, D. "The Fed Has Overseen a Remarkable Transfer of Wealth From Bondholders to Taxpayers." Barron's, March 22, 2023.)

This is a very new phenomenon as Adam Tooze points out. His depiction from Federal data from the years 1970-2023 makes that case:



This took hold from the post-pandemic period from 2021. The consequence of this is that the government public debt has fallen dramatically. This likely has political value for the Democratic Party at the present time.

We have discussed previously the divisions of interest between banking and financial capital and industrial capital, which remain intense. At the core is an enthusiasm for high interest rates by finance capital, which gains from the higher rates of borrowing capital. But this is contradictory to the interests of the industrial capitalist who borrows capital for reinvesting in new technology and means of production and prefers a lower interest rate.

Ultimately the contradictions of capital continue to grow immensely. Marxists understand that the whole international banking system under capitalism is - like all other features of capitalism - incredibly fragile. Three points can highlight this.

(Continued on next page)

## WHY WERE THE RICH DEPOSITORS OF THE SILICON VALLEY BANK BAILED OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT? (2/2)

First in the US, in emergency moves the government established a "Bank Term Funding Program" to underwrite banks. This defends them against depositor withdrawals by using government loans against their original purchase of long-term government bonds, because the government knows that many banks in the US are "underwater." What this means is they hold large stocks of government bonds that have lost in value as compared to short term "risky" betting investments. That is termed "unrealized losses." On top, the capital the banks hold frequently cannot cover sudden withdrawals – about 10% of banks have less capital than did SVB. The total unrealized losses at US banks is estimated now at \$620bn, or 2.7% of US GDP.

Second, this is not a phenomenon restricted to the United States – it is international. For example, the collapse of the 167-year old Credit Suisse Bank. This forced a take-over at basement-low prices by its long time rival, Swiss USB. But USB demanded that the Swiss government guaranteed it against potential losses on the books of Credit Suisse, providing \$100bn in liquidity funding to cover deposit withdrawals.

Third, potential solutions such as bank regulations have been weakened, such as the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933. As we pointed out previously, this was weakened by the Democratic and Republicans together – but apparently not enough for financial investor greed. Even the International Monetary Fund (IMF) despairs of meaningful regulations. Its diplomatic language notwithstanding, it concedes "regulations" are not effective: "As the financial system continues to evolve and new threats to financial stability emerge, regulators and supervisors should remain attentive to risks... No regulatory framework can reduce the probability of a crisis to zero, so regulators need to remain humble."

Normal mechanisms such as lowering real incomes by inflation and removing any vestiges of a "welfare state" are not enough to satisfactorily balance the competing pressures. Meanwhile leading capitalists hope for newer territories and work-forces to exploit. These ambitions are steadily leading to a new world war. Workers and toilers of the world must organize to frustrate this path. Only a workers' and toilers' revolution can succeed in this goal. This requires Marxist-Leninist parties, which are being built in many countries.

## EXCHANGING ORGANS FOR FREEDOM



Physicians and nurses at work in a surgical suite. (Photo: Carol Highsmith/Library of Congress)

**By Allison P., international correspondent. February 25, 2023.**

In Massachusetts, prisoners may soon be able to donate their bone marrow and organs in exchange for a reduction of prison time. Democratic Senators from Massachusetts, Carlos Gonzalez and Judith A. Garcia, have proposed House Bill 3822 which would arrange such a scheme.

In simple terms, if an inmate donates bone marrow or an organ, they can receive between 60 days and one year off their sentence. Indeed, on the surface, as so many people consider prison as a means of "paying one's debt to society," would not saving the life of a stranger be a great way to give back to society? It would seem to address both the often-excessive sentences and the significant lack of available organs. The US Health Resources and Services Administration notes that 105,800 people are on the transplant waiting list, many of whom specifically require kidneys, and that 17 people die each day waiting for vital organs. If you don't read into it, it seems like a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Americans' experiences with the judicial system are often heavily dependent on income, race, and disability. Many people cannot afford to hire a lawyer, particularly people of color and the disabled. Hispanic men are incarcerated at twice the rate of white men, and Black men at seven times the rate of white men. Disabled people make up two-fifths to two-thirds of the prison population and are thus incarcerated at two and a half to four times the rate of the general population. Additionally, 95% of felony convictions are not obtained by means of a trial, but through a plea deal. Innocent people plead guilty to crimes often; 18% of known exonerees pleaded guilty to crimes they did not commit. Fighting for one's freedom is costly and there is a risk, especially for the working class, that you could end up with a much lengthier sentence. In addition 65% of known exonerees were people of color, and given the relative wealth disparity between people of color and white people, as well as people of color receiving longer sentences for similar crimes, this statistic should not be surprising.

This bill exploits working people – particularly people of color and disabled people – who are in desperate circumstances, offering for them to give up their organs in exchange for their freedom. It is frankly barbaric. So, I ask then, would you give up a kidney for a year of freedom, a year sooner with your family, a year sooner to see your spouse and kids? I would, and I imagine so would many others in such a precarious situation.

The real question of the matter is, what is to be done to address these situations? On the prison front, it is unlikely that prison abolition can occur under capitalism. However, the abolition of private prisons in conjunction with community control of police, as advocated for by the American Party of Labor, would greatly improve these circumstances. In terms of organ donation, it is difficult to imagine any sort of reward which could be applied for such donation under capitalism that would not be highly exploitative. Indeed, the US federal government recognizes this and has made it illegal to buy or sell organs. What can be done, at least as a start, is to create a system in which organ donation registration is the default which people can willingly opt-out of, rather than the opt-in system that we have now. Many countries do this already, and in the US roughly 90% of adults support organ donation, yet only 60% are registered as donors. This minor change would significantly increase the availability of organs and would be a very basic and practical first step in solving this long and complicated problem.

## THE HISTORY AND MEANING OF MAY DAY



Chicago Teachers Union on strike in 2019.

By John Palameda, Illinois. April 30, 2022.

For the rest of the world, May Day has a rich cultural and political history. Originating in ancient Roman spring festivals, contemporary May Day customs were developed in the 14th and 15th century in England. A May Day Queen is crowned, children dance around the Maypole, and May Day baskets are exchanged. But even these quaint practices often bled into working class rebellion, as May Day celebrations often turned raucous and anti-authority in nature, causing the Puritan government under Oliver Cromwell to ban the holiday under the auspices of "pagan influence." The phrase "to go a-maying," taken from a Robert Herrick *carpe diem* poem published in 1648, means to be mischievous, to run outside social convention, to reject religious orthodoxy, to entertain one's fancies, and in the case of the poem, to throw away the restrictions of a heavily gendered society.

Yet, while May Day in its traditional form does have political contexts and overtones, as all things do, for workers in the United States May Day is something different. Traditional May Day celebrations have always been less prevalent in the States, first because of the staunch Protestant and Puritan bedrock of the early American colonists, and later because the day became quite explicitly political. For, contrary to the common belief that May Day originated in tanks rolling down Red Square, it was in the United States that May Day became International Workers' Day. In an 1885 convention in Chicago, Illinois, an alliance of labor groups headed by the AFL declared that the work day should be no longer than 8 hours, effective May 1st, 1886. On that May 1st, 1886, a massive general strike took place that led to the Haymarket Riot in Chicago on May 4th, where police and workers clashed over the right of workers to have "8 hours for what we will."

Seeing the political power that May Day was quickly gaining given its synthesis of cultural spring festivities and openly anti-capitalist organizing, and after the 1894 May Day Riot in Cleveland, Grover Cleveland and moderate union bosses set the federally recognized Labor Day to its current date, far away from the a-maying rioters, to the first Monday in September.

Thus, for leftists and working class activists in the U.S., May Day is not merely a celebration of labor, the spring, and the red flag. For us, it is a declaration

of political independence as workers, from moderate, compromising union leadership, from the political establishment and its holiday in September, and from reformist mentalities that tell us to wait for livable wages, decent housing, education, gender and racial equality, and fulfilling work. On May Day, we shed the Reaganite myths of the corrupt, criminal, and impotent union, and stand proudly beside our union brothers and sisters. We unearth the history of American Communists, civil rights leaders, suffragettes, radical musicians, poets, painters, and writers, who have been thrown in the dustbin of history by triumphalist capitalist historical narratives, or gentrified by the liberal establishment. We march together, across the wide spectrum of left ideologies, arm in arm, if only for the day.

On May Day, ultimately, we say openly that we are proud to be workers. We are not, as Steinbeck said, "temporarily embarrassed capitalists." Nor must we be made to be middle class people, as reformist unions and democrats tell us, as if there is nothing to be proud of about being a worker, that a bartender can't run the country, that teachers can't decide policy. Today we are workers, who work long hours to support ourselves and our families, seek to better ourselves with education, strengthen working class bonds through workplace organization, fight against racist separatism and bigotry that divides us, and enjoy the off time we earn with our labor. And that is enough, more than enough, to demand better treatment, fair wages, and recognition as human beings with passions, interests, and unique perspectives that are worth more than \$7.25 an hour. On May Day, we don't settle for "better thans," we declare without reservation that bosses should no longer exploit the true-hearted intentions of the workers. Bosses should not make billions off the need and desire of workers to buy textbooks for their children, to seek out an education, to raise children, to have a home they are proud of, or to have a job they enjoy doing.

So when we say today is May Day, that has special meaning for workers in the U.S. In the heart of the anti-worker and anti-communist beast, we declare ourselves to be proudly both, and recognize the gains we are making politically in our unions, local elections, and in our political parties. On May Day, we celebrate those gains, dream of a future free of wage slavery and all its effects, celebrate and march with our friends, union brothers, and comrades, and on May 2nd, we return to our historical and essential duty to bring those aims to every American worker.

# MAY 1 MANIFESTO: LET'S UNITE THE STRUGGLES FOR WAGES TO THE FIGHT FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION



## International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations (CIPOML)

The International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations (CIPOML) greets the workers all over the world on the occasion of May Day, emblematic date that symbolizes the struggle waged by the international proletariat against capitalist exploitation, to conquer their social emancipation, for revolution and socialism.

This commemoration takes place in the context of a convulsed world, in which it is foreseen that a new economic crisis of capitalism is on its way. As has happened in previous crises, it will lead millions of workers to unemployment, will provoke the decrease of wages, the increase of poverty, migration and other problems for the working classes; but, also, it will be a reason for the States of the most developed imperialist and capitalist countries to implement bailout programs for the big industrial and financial monopolies that "present economic difficulties," as they are already doing with regard to the banking crisis that, a few weeks ago, sank several banks in the United States, Germany and Switzerland.

Workers, peoples and youth are victims of exploitation, oppression and discrimination. That is why they fight against the anti-people policies applied by the governments of the respective countries, oriented to favor the interests of the big bourgeoisie and the international monopoly capital. Right now, the world is witnessing the rise of the struggle of the masses for their demands and rights, in which workers and youth play leading roles. Europe has become the epicenter of this class confrontation, within the most developed imperialist and capitalist countries, the working class raises its voice with energy, defends social security and its rights and demands urgent changes; but the struggle of workers, youth and women of the popular sectors is present in all continents. The rise of the struggle of workers and peoples worldwide shows that the contradiction that confronts the working class and the bourgeoisie, labor and capital is gaining intensity.

We live in a world conditioned by the ups and downs of the confrontation between the imperialist powers and their blocs and economic and military pacts. The inter-imperialist war in Ukraine is an expression of this, but it is not its only manifestation. There are ongoing localized armed conflicts in other countries, trade wars, military apparatuses and armies are being strengthened, there are disputes for the economic and political control of the entire planet. Inter-imperialist struggles, particularly that between the United States and China, warn us of the danger of a world conflagration.

The peoples cannot take sides with one or another imperialist power, with one or another economic and political alliance of the capitalist states because they all represent the interests of the big international monopolies, of imperialist finance capital. Therefore, we reiterate our condemnation of the inter-imperialist war that is unfolding in Ukraine, we raise the banners of peace, which means fighting in defense of the life of the workers and the peoples and maintaining a just anti-imperialist position.

The CIPOML expresses its solidarity with the workers and peoples victims of the aggression of foreign powers, particularly we express our voice of encouragement to the Palestinian people who for decades have been fighting for the right to live in peace in the territory that belongs to them and to constitute themselves as an autonomous and sovereign State; we condemn at the same time the criminal policy of the regime of Benjamin Netanyahu, head of the Zionist State of Israel.

What is happening in the world today, as a result of the aggravation of problems and phenomena that are characteristic of the capitalist system, confirms once again that this regime has nothing good to offer to the workers, the youth and the peoples. This is a regime of exploitation of the workers and opulence for the bourgeoisie; it is a system that lives in war against the peoples, to protect the paradise in which big capital reproduces itself.

The workers cannot continue to be subjected to the domination and exploitation of capital. The struggle for the immediate demands and the political rights of the workers and the people are unrenounceable, they are fundamental for their own subsistence, but it is insufficient to achieve social emancipation. The CIPOML calls on the workers of the world to unite the struggles for wages, for stability, for social security, for land, for water and for the many other problems that afflict us, to the struggle to overthrow this system of exploitation, to put an end to the domination of big capital, to the struggle to seize power, for the triumph of the social revolution and socialism.

***Only the proletarian revolution will put an end to capitalist exploitation!***

***Only workers' power will emancipate all humanity!***

**International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations (CIPOML) Coordinating Committee  
May 1, 2023**



## About the Red Phoenix

The Red Phoenix is the mass voice of the American Party of Labor, published and printed bi-monthly. It is a newspaper dedicated to providing a creative and original insight on what is happening in the United States of America and around the world. Along with analysis of important news, events, reviews, and commentary, the paper also includes interviews and letters from workers across the country. The goal of the Red Phoenix is to provide a platform for working people of all kinds, without the biases and mitigation of corporate media.

The Red Phoenix is aimed at revolutionary and progressive-minded people, activists, workers, and others who are fighting in firm opposition to the war against the poor and the oppressed. Our political stands are taken from a revolutionary perspective and our writing serves as a medium of expressing that sentiment.

The Red Phoenix was founded in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash, as a way to give a platform and voice for working class people left outside popular media narratives. During the Trump presidential campaign and the George Floyd Movement, the Red Phoenix grew to have correspondents across the country seeking to interview workers, analyze the resurgent labor movement, and agitate for a true workers' democracy. In our era of misinformation and rising fascism and union-busting, the need for true working class stories, under the "blue and red" mythology, has never been greater.

To help us with our work by subscribing, donating, or submitting your own articles for publication, please visit us online at [RedPhoenixNews.com](http://RedPhoenixNews.com)



***"The Marxist-Leninists are not conservative and fanatical, as the revisionists and the bourgeois charge. On the contrary, they are the most progressive people, resolute fighters against everything outdated and backward. They stand firmly on the positions of the new and fight with all their might for its victory."***

**Enver Hoxha (1908–1985)**  
**Report to the Eighth Congress of the PLA**

## About the American Party of Labor

**The APL is a revolutionary working class organization.** Our aim is to abolish the capitalist system and replace it with a socialist, working democracy, a system based on the principle laid out by Marx, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." There can be no true freedom or democracy when billionaires have more wealth than the bottom 90% of Americans.

★ **An Anti-Revisionist, Internationalist Party:** The American Party of Labor is a dedicated anti-revisionist party, opposed to concessions to capitalists, and critical of all imperialist actions by the US, Russia, and China. The APL is an observer member in the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations (ICMLPO), and participates in the international anti-revisionist struggle.

★ **A Party of Working Class People:** The American Party of Labor is made up of workers fighting for workers' rights. Many of our members are in active union and unionization struggles, and we all do our political work after clocking out.

★ **A Party of Equals:** The APL is active in the fight for the rights of women, oppressed nations, the LGBTQIA+ community, and immigrants, and for the community control of police departments. In 2019, the APL was a founding member in the National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression.

★ **Forever Anti-Fascist:** We uphold the anti-fascist legacy of the Marxist-Leninist movement. Members of the American Party of Labor are active in movements against the Far-Right on college campuses, and the barbaric treatment of immigrants at the border.

### Who can join? How do I get involved?

Every working person who is open to our plan for change, agrees with our Program and Platform, and is over the age of 18 is welcome to apply.

To look at our joining procedure, activity, membership FAQ, and more, please visit:

**[AmericanPartyofLabor.com](http://AmericanPartyofLabor.com)**

You can find everything that you should know about us here, and you can contact us and connect to members in your area.

If we don't have a presence in your city, we'll get to know you and help you establish one.

## The Red Phoenix is published bimonthly by The American Party of Labor.

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## Why are we Marxist-Leninists in the USA in the 21st century?

There is an important fundamental difference between Marxism and other so-called anti-capitalist or "third way" theories. Marx, unlike many thinkers of his day, did not see a problem with capitalism that could just be mitigated. Instead, he and his compatriots analyzed capitalism itself to understand how the system worked. Marx's ideas for revolution are based on that analysis, and the experiences of the struggles in Europe of 1848. Solutions to the problems of capitalism can only be reached by understanding and observing the system itself, textured with the political reality of the country and historical struggles. This is why we think revolutionary history is worth talking about, and making part of our platform.

Regarding the regulation of capitalism and emergent social democratic reform movements, it is not uncommon that capitalist states restrict the private sector for various reasons. The problem is that political power is still stacked in favor of the ruling class; they have every avenue and all the resources necessary undo reforms and regulations. What truly led to the collapse of the socialist bloc was not that these countries pursued communism, which was ultimately too radical, but rather that these nations pursued market style reforms until they had more or less become capitalist countries. As we have seen in the US, liberal victories are short-lived.

Today, social democratic movements would have us do much the same, if not less – regulate capitalism, nationalize some industry, and try to maintain a welfare state – without expropriating the ruling class, without giving the nation a clear direction for the future, and worst of all, without putting the working class in power. We cannot face climate change, resurgent fascism, police brutality, the exploitation of oppressed nations, and the threat of American imperialism around the world without a revolutionary, centrally organized movement.



**PEACE,  
EQUALITY,  
SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY**

**Powered by Labor and made possible by contributions from workers like you.**