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The Red Phoenix

REAL NEWS FOR WORKERS, BY WORKERS ★ NEWSPAPER OF THE AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR

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Photo: "Emancipated Women Build Socialism!," a 1926 Soviet propaganda poster created by Adolf Strakhov-Braslavsky

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AIRLINE WORKERS NEGOTIATE CONTRACTS AFTER YEARS OF UNFAIR WAGES AND ABUSES



Airline workers and pilots stand in a picket line, Feb. 13, Florida. (Photo: Robert Payne / Red Phoenix)

Ethan H. | Florida | March 7, 2024

Several unions representing major US airlines took up a picket on Tuesday, Feb. 13, to demand better pay, benefits, and working conditions as new contracts are under negotiation this year. Employees of airlines including Allegiant, Frontier, United, Delta, American, and Southwest picketed with signs stating demands for fair contract negotiations among other slogans. Many pilots took to the picket in solidarity with the flight attendants as well.

Robert Payne, a Board Member at Large in the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 577, has provided major insight into some of the demands and conditions being sought by Allegiant, JetBlue, and several other airlines who employ members of the TWU.

"Two-thirds of flight attendants in the United States are in some sort of contract negotiation right now," Payne told the Red Phoenix. "That includes Allegiant, that includes Southwest, and various other airlines." The workers of some airlines, such as Delta, have not achieved union status, but are actively pushing for recognition by their employer. Airline attendants have to be even more careful in their workplace due to the lack of union representation. According to a recent news report by The Hill, the union-busting efforts of Delta have gotten so out of hand that the US House of Representatives intervened. A letter to Delta CEO Ed Bastian was issued with support from 140 House representatives. Delta is one of the last major airlines which has yet to unionize.

Payne, a flight attendant with 8 years of employment at Allegiant Airlines, provides the Red Phoenix with examples of what the TWU and other unions are seeking in their new contracts, and why these demands are at the forefront of negotiations.

"We've all seen inflation shoot through roof over the last couple of years," Payne begins. "We've all seen a massive increase in hostility towards flight attendants stemming from the pandemic, as it's not as bad as during the pandemic, but I think every flight attendant knows somebody or has themselves been the victim of physical violence onboard an aircraft - that somebody they've worked with has been a victim of violence aboard the aircraft. You couldn't necessarily say that before the pandemic."

Payne's words are echoed in reporting from several news sources over the span of 2023, including CNN, which reported in March of a man aboard a United Airlines flight who attempted to stab a flight attendant after failing to open an emergency exit on a plane. A few months later, in May, another passenger was filmed repeatedly punching a United Airlines employee on a red-eye flight from San Francisco to Houston.

"What we are looking for in our contract negotiations is: we want pay that respects the fact that we are safety professionals," Payne states. "The fact that in the last 23 years, [airlines] have had one fatality as the result of an accident of an American commercial flight in the United States is not an accident. The flight attendants and their coordination with [the]

flight crew is a big part of why, when something goes wrong, we've been able to have a positive outcome almost every single time. We deserve to be paid a living wage that reflects the importance of what it is we do."

In addition to the threat of violence, flight attendants wrestle with the perception that the job is nothing more than a form of concession. Payne details some of the conditions that may not be considered by passengers and the public. "When you get up in the air, there has by-and-large been a misconception by the by the public - largely created by airlines - that we are waiters and waitresses in the sky and that that's our job," he stated. "That's not by accident; many airlines marketed flight attendants in a very sexist way by using sex appeal to get passengers on aircraft. So this perception is almost like you're advertising us as 'Hooters in the Sky.'" Indeed, a 2020 study from Harvard University's School of Public Health details the high frequency and underreported threat of sexual harassment faced by many flight attendants. The International Journal of Aerospace Psychology disclosed in August 2020 that 26% of North American attendants reported being sexually harassed by passengers, pilots, and even coworkers while on the job.

The invisible nature of the flight attendant poses a large struggle for employees as customers remain unaware of the level of importance that flight attendants have in the overall success of a flight. "Most of the time you don't even see us doing our job," Payne replied. "You don't see us performing pre-flight [checks] at the beginning of our shifts to make sure all our emergency equipment is okay. You don't really realize that we're assessing each passenger as they come on board, making sure they're coherent - that they're not intoxicated, that they're not showing signs of aggression. You don't necessarily see that when a passenger's getting upset that we're trying to defuse that situation, understand what the concern is and try to resolve it in a way that keeps the people around them safe, ourselves included. You don't see that we are assessing passengers during the flight to make sure that a sudden illness isn't coming on. When I talk to a passenger that tells me, 'Oh, well I'm not really feeling well today,' I'm asking questions. I want to understand why you aren't feeling well. Is this something I need to be concerned about? Do I need to contact our doctors on the ground? Most of the time I don't, but I'm always watching to make sure that there's not an escalation that could put this passenger's health and safety at risk or the health and safety of the people around them at risk."

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Despite these varying and expansive situations that flight attendants must always be aware of, there are still conditions which must be met for flight attendants to receive their hourly wages. A recent NPR article revealed that many flight attendants are not actually compensated for the time they spend during boarding, luggage stowing and while passengers are finding their seats. Rather, their pay compensation typically begins only once boarding has ended and the plane doors have closed.

When asked about pay and workers' compensation, Payne provided some insight into the extent of these conditions. "For every airline that is out there – with the exception of Delta and Skywest – flight attendants do not get paid until the aircraft pushes back from the gate. For some airlines it's when the door is shut, [for] other airlines it's when the brake is disengaged on the aircraft and starts moving back, but during boarding you're not being paid."

Other conditions which impede the payment of flight attendants include delays and cancellations. When asked about whether or not workers' compensation applies to these ambiguous windows of time, Payne told the Red Phoenix, "Flight attendants have to be careful when we are assisting passengers with baggage. Number one: we're really not supposed to be doing that. There are exceptions for passengers with handicaps, but there is a risk that if you get injured during that boarding time, workers' [compensation] may not cover the injury that you might sustain if you step outside of what you're supposed to be doing. Flight attendants have to be extremely cognizant; sometimes passengers think that we're just being rude. It's not that; we're trying to make sure we follow the policies that we have in place so that we don't get ourselves in trouble."



(Photo: Robert Payne / Red Phoenix)

Payne continued, "The occupational hazards that everybody thinks of when it comes to working on an airplane – everyone thinks, 'oh you have to be afraid of plane crashes or terrorism,' and yes, those are things that you are concerned about, but the thing I am more concerned about than anything is having a physical altercation with a passenger. I am concerned about being hurt in unexpected turbulence, because turbulence can happen without warning. I am concerned about being injured by repetitive motion such as lifting heavy bags into the overhead bins. Those are the things that I am most likely to be impacted on as a flight attendant, and while they're not as eye-catching for a headline, they're every bit as detrimental to my safety and to the safety of the people I work with."

"At the end of the day, different work groups are looking for different solutions to the same problem: wages for flight attendants across the industry have not kept up with inflation."

Looking further into the pay rates of flight attendants, the US Department of Labor reports that the median income for a flight attendant in 2022 was \$63,760, but flight attendant unions report that the bottom 10th percentile of flight attendants are paid around \$38,000 a year, which is just shy of \$30,000 below the \$67,690 necessary living wage to meet the US National Median income. The top earning flight attendants can make upwards of \$97,000, but overall the wages have not kept up with inflation. When asked about pay, Payne stated, "You might see a flight attendant that's getting a starting pay of \$30 an hour at 'insert airline here' and think 'That's really good! That's way more than the \$10 or \$15 an hour I'm making,' but that flight attendant is only getting paid in block hours. There's going to be a significant amount of time that's on the ground that is cleaning the aircraft; that is boarding and deplaning the aircraft; and most significantly, unplanned delays. None of that is being compensated for, except for a per diem that can be quite low, only a few dollars an hour. The only exceptions are Delta and Skywest who have a boarding pay, but even their boarding pay is a fixed amount for a fixed amount of time, so if you have a delay [the pay] doesn't get extended beyond that fixed amount of time."

Flight attendant unions are taking into consideration not only pay in-flight, but also pay compensation for time beyond the flight window as well as fair benefits. Issues with fair pay and benefits may explain high turnover rates that airlines are experiencing post-pandemic.

"Across the board during the pandemic, the airline industry saw a lot of turnover with flight attendants," Payne mentioned. "It's been easier for larger airlines to recover because there was a time when they

used to say that getting a job as a flight attendant for Delta or American was harder than trying to get into Harvard. Now, there's a lot more demand for labor among the legacy [airlines], so what you're seeing is a lot of flight attendants are moving from airline to airline chasing better compensation and better working conditions, and that's because a lot of people chose to retire early; a lot of people chose to leave the industry altogether. I know a lot of flight attendants experienced burnout. When you have to confront passengers over mask issues [on] every single flight for years, it can make your job go from one that you love to one that you dread. I think every flight attendant in the industry felt that."

Indeed, the flight attendant industry faced a severe turnover rate due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which changed the nature of their job and brought about swarms of irate and fearful customers. Payne recounts the struggle in making flight safety a priority through the ongoing pandemic.

"We all tried to figure out different ways of coping with [mask mandates]. There are flight attendants who did the bare minimum, checking off a box saying, 'I did what I needed to do,' and there are flight attendants who were very zealous in trying to make sure that mask requirements were being enforced. But you knew no matter what approach you were going to take, you were going to get passengers who became angry at you for doing your job, and you would have passengers that were angry at you because they didn't believe you were doing enough. People were so hostile to each other, and they expected you to mediate the disputes. That created a lot of turnover, and I don't think the industry has recovered from that."

"I do believe the public is starting to become more aware of the compensation issues that flight attendants are experiencing, and they're starting to become cognizant of how much of the disruptions onboard aircrafts are starting to make their way onto TikTok and YouTube," Payne concluded. "People are starting to become aware of just how dangerous the job can be, so I think there's growing public sympathy. I think companies really need to understand that if they want to have the support of the traveling public then they need to make sure that they are taking care of the people that the public is interfacing with every single day. Our flight attendants are the face of the company they work for; I am the face of Allegiant Airlines when I work a flight. The public is more likely to have sympathy for us than any other part of the company because they know us, and their relationship with us is the relationship with the company."



AS IMMIGRATION "CRISIS" STIRS REACTIONARIES, WORKERS MUST ORGANIZE!



Army National Guard soldiers patrol the banks of the Rio Grande in Eagle Pass, TX, Jan. 9, 2024. (Photo: Jay Janner/*American-Statesman*)

Keegan D. | Colorado | Feb. 5, 2024

The State of Texas and its governor, Greg Abbott, have recently sparked a federal crisis so severe that other states are beginning to take sides, and some have even deployed National Guard troops to support the Texas governor. The cause for this crisis: immigration. It has long been a conservative myth that the root of the decline in American society for the working class is somehow the fault of near-powerless immigrants.

In an attempt to stop immigrants from crossing into Texas, the state installed substantial amounts of razor wire across the southern border. The Biden Administration sued Texas for this and eventually the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Administration 5-4, ordering Texas to take down the wire. The reason given was that it is the job of the federal government to secure the border, not the job of the states.

Joe Biden, it cannot be forgotten, is himself deeply reactionary toward immigrants and has upheld several Trump-era policies with regards to immigration. Biden's terrible record on immigration has not been enough for conservatives to support him, as they insist that he still has not done enough to limit immigration. Texas has vowed to disobey the federal order and maintain their own border, and 24 other Republican governors have signed a joint statement to support Texas against the Biden Administration. In addition, organized reactionary groups have also begun to send members of armed militias from other states to help secure the border. From this situation we can draw two major conclusions: first, that neither bourgeois party is able (or willing) to correctly analyze the causes of immigration, and second, that reactionary and openly fascist groups are highly organized.

Americans often have an incredibly idealistic perspective when it comes to immigration. Natural

citizens are led to believe that the reason for immigration to this country is because the United States is a land of unique opportunity. This thinking both elevates our country as an especially "good" one, and distances us from any causal relation to the disrepair of countries that immigrants are coming from. Much to the dismay of American liberals, immigration's cause is not our egotistical and unjustified sense of greatness as a state.

American capitalism has for over a century exploited Latin American countries as sources for the extraction of raw materials and cheap labor. To ensure access to these resources and labor, the United States has actively been involved in suppressing the labor and political movements that aim to improve the material conditions of the proletariat in Latin America. For example, in Chile the US intelligence apparatus funded the overthrow of the social democrat Salvador Allende, backing the tyrant Augusto Pinochet who maintained access to Chilean markets and resources for American capitalists. Similar backing of right-wing reactionaries to ensure the interests of American capital took place in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. The United States has also maintained blockades for decades against countries like Cuba and Venezuela who have been successfully able to take control of their own industry.

The constant meddling of imperialist powers, primarily the US, and the internal struggle against their own national bourgeoisie, are what drive the instability within these countries. This instability is to blame for the scale of immigration to the United States from Latin American countries, not our mythologized land of opportunity. Neither Democrats nor Republicans will admit that American imperialism is the causal mechanism behind immigration at the southern border.

The science of Marxism-Leninism enables us to

understand that the only way to stop the global exploitation of labor and the planet is through the proletarian revolutionary movement. It is the responsibility of the American working class to liberate itself from capitalism and rid the world of US imperialism. The answer to the immigration crisis is Socialism.

The other key takeaway from these recent developments is to acknowledge the organizational readiness of American fascists. The ability for reactionary groups to raise funds and send forces to crisis areas like this should be a call to all anti-capitalists and workers to join the revolutionary movement. The Democrats will do nothing to protect the working class from these dangerous reactionaries and only offer, at best, shallow condemnations. The working class must organize and unite against these forces to protect itself. We have no other option.

STUDY WITH US IN PORTLAND, OR!

The Pacific Northwest Division of the American Party of Labor is hosting regular in-person reading and discussion groups in Portland, Oregon!

These study sessions are open to the public and are held on Sundays. Contact members of the John Reed Division for details including time and location:

AmericanPartyofLabor.com/divisions/pnw

No prior knowledge of Marxist literature is necessary. Free access to the reading materials will be provided, and our comrades are happy to answer any and all questions.

Please wear a mask!



TAMPA ACTIVISTS AND STUDENTS DISRUPT CITY COUNCIL DEMANDING END TO CROSS-TRAINING BETWEEN POLICE AND ISRAELI FORCES



Protesters chant through the closed doors after being removed from a City Council meeting. (Photo: Red Phoenix)

Ava A. | Florida | Jan. 22, 2024

On Jan. 11, members of the American Party of Labor and Students for Socialism at the University of South Florida led a demonstration at Tampa City Hall to show solidarity with the people of Palestine and disrupt "business as usual."

In December, Students for Socialism issued a call to action, urging individuals to

flood the City Council with emails and provide public comments during meetings to push for the passage of a ceasefire resolution. Students for Socialism also co-signed the six demands of Tampa Bay Community Action Committee to the City of Tampa, including the ban of cross-training between Tampa Police Department and the Israel Defense Forces and the end of the Israeli-Florida Business Accelerator Program. The call to action was inspired by the shutdowns at Berkeley City Hall as well as the resolutions passed in the cities of Seattle, Richmond, and Oakland.

The City Council predictably ignored the emails and public comments, prompting demonstrators to escalate their actions to intensify the pressure. Around twenty community activists showed up at the first City Council meeting of the year wearing keffiyehs and waving Palestinian flags.

Forty minutes into the meeting, one of the demonstrators stood up and interrupted City Council member Luis Viera with the question, "Why haven't you passed a ceasefire resolution yet?" Viera penned a guest column in the Tampa Bay Times last month in which he condemned the attack on Oct. 7 and the rise of antisemitism but remained silent on the genocide in Gaza. Another demonstrator loudly criticized City Councilmember Lynn Hurtak for also staying silent on the genocide despite her husband's vocal support of a ceasefire. Finally the protestors began chanting, "Ceasefire now!" until they were escorted out, where they continued to chant and persist in the disruption as the doors slammed shut.

It is highly unlikely that the Tampa City Council will pass a ceasefire resolution, but the true purpose of the disruption was to insist that the Council acknowledge the United States' compliance with Israel's terror, rather than to fight for an unlikely gesture of support, and to demonstrate to City Council that its constituents refuse to let their demands go ignored.

OREGON RESIDENTS FORCED TO SHOULDER BILL FOR POWER COMPANY NEGLIGENCE

Orianna R. | Oregon | Feb. 4, 2024

Amid the most severe coldsnap this winter, Portland, OR, residents are forced to shoulder the bill for their power company's negligence. On Oct. 31, 2023, the Oregon Public Utility Commission approved a general energy rate increase for Portland General Electric (PGE) and is expected to approve a similar pending request from Pacific Power (a subsidiary of PacifiCorp). 900,000 residents in Multnomah County, served by PGE, are already beginning to see price hikes of more than 18% while other areas served by Pacific Power are expected to experience increases of as much as 25%. This blatant price gouging comes after power infrastructure was unable to keep up with last summer's record heat wave, causing blackouts during times when proper climate control is essential, especially for the most vulnerable members of society. With climate change induced record heat waves becoming a regular occurrence, we can expect the poorest of the working class to continue to take the brunt of failures and price gouging.

As if general rate hikes weren't enough, Pacific Power has also requested approval to add charges to help cover the cost of punitive damages related to their role in the 2020 wildfires. On July 10, 2023, a Multnomah County jury ordered Pacific Power to pay \$73 million in damages in a class action lawsuit; 2 days later they were ordered to pay an additional 25% of that sum in punitive damages, for a total of ~\$90 million. Pacific Power hopes to transfer the burden of this lawsuit on

to the consumer, and they are leaving the public in the dark as to the full extent of the new charges. Similarly, PGE has also applied for an unknown amount of new charges. The Oregon Citizens' Utility Board criticized PGE for a "lack of transparency." "Not telling customers the best estimate of how much their bills will increase is absurd," said CUB Executive Director, Bob Jenks. "Families need to know what to expect to pay for heating... with a rate increase this high, people will struggle this winter." As with the majority of these charges and price hikes, the Oregon Public Utility Commission is expected to grant approval when they rule on the proposed charges in March. It is only then that the public will know the true total of the costs placed on the essentials of life.

While increases to the cost of living always affect the poorest of the working people the most, it is doubly true in this case. The estimated 18% increase in residential rates for PGE is the highest between residential, business, and industrial rates of 18%, 14.4%, and 12.5% respectively. The state of Oregon provides a low income utility discount, however eligibility for a single person is restricted to income below ~\$31,000, only two thirds of the living wage in Multnomah County, and PGE only offers discounts to households earning less than the absurdly low \$10,734 per year. As long as utilities are in the hands of the bourgeoisie and regulated by the state that serves their every whim, there will be no end to the ever tightening conditions placed on the working class. The only solution is public utilities, under the control of the working people and utilized for the common good.

NATO IS WAGING WAR IN EUROPE IN A FRONT FROM FINLAND TO ROMANIA FOR THE NEXT 4 MONTHS



**Workers' Communist Party,
Denmark (APK) | Jan. 23, 2024**

Translated from Danish
KPnet.dk

From late January to late May, NATO is conducting a huge military exercise consisting of three separate exercises, one of them in the Nordic region. The exercise is a situation where NATO mobilizes for war against Russia. Ostensibly, it is a defense exercise, but in reality it is a training of a war situation of an offensive nature and a rearmament pressure against Russia. As we have seen with NATO's proxy war in Ukraine, the war that is formally a defense is at the same time a result of decades of pressure and provocation from the West against Russia. In essence, it is an imperialist showdown between great powers that NATO is preparing for.

The exercise consists of three separate exercises, one on NATO's northern front (Nordic Response), the second on the eastern front (Steadfast Defender) with a focus on Poland and with Germany as a key transit country, and the third in the North Atlantic between Scotland, Norway and Iceland (Joint Warrior 24). Romania will be the base for the F-16 aircraft that NATO countries are currently deploying in the Ukraine war and the country will be included in the exercise.

The overall purpose is to practice the movement of troops and weapons from the US and other NATO

countries to the front lines of war, i.e. logistics and coordination for a NATO war and NATO's rapid reaction forces.

For the first time, NATO is operating with the Nordic region as a single region and the exercise will be close to the Kola Peninsula and Russia's nuclear arsenal.

The exercise will be the largest since the Cold War and will involve 90,000 participants from all NATO countries. More than 50 ships, 80 fighter jets, helicopters, drones, 133 tanks and much more will be involved.

Denmark is a member:

Denmark will participate with two frigates and an inspection ship, as well as units from the Air Force and the Special Operations Command, which includes the Jaeger Corps, the Frogman Corps and the Sirius Sledge Patrol.

Danish ports have been designated NATO ports, which we have already seen in use several times. Receiving US troops in the ports will be part of the exercise.

A special twist will be the training of the Nordic countries' air forces as a single unit. An intention to coordinate the Nordic air defenses under a joint command was decided by NATO in March 2023. In March 2023, the Nordic heads of the countries'

air forces –in the presence of the head of NATO Air Command– signed the agreement:

"The ultimate goal is to operate seamlessly together as one force by developing a Nordic concept for joint air operations based on already known NATO methodology. The Nordic Response and Arctic Challenge Exercise will be used as milestones for the joint efforts."

When NATO talks about defense, one must remember how the Ukraine war is propaganda-wise set up as a purely defensive war. Russia alone is given the responsibility, and Russia is clearly at war for its own imperialist interests regarding Ukraine, but behind the story lies the West's long-term takeover of power in Eastern Europe, where countries have gradually been incorporated into NATO. NATO's proxy war in Ukraine is just as much a war of aggression, and it will also be the character of a war that NATO is now practicing. It is imperialist competition that can turn into armed war, a huge risk that is being increased and fueled, among other things, through exercises like this.

Danish imperialism, as part of NATO –with the opening of US bases, with harbors subject to military purposes, with F-35 aircraft under NATO command– has involved us deeply in their entire war set-up. The NATO exercise this spring will be a tangible expression of NATO preparing for war right here in the Nordic region and Europe.

CHRISTINE GEOVANIS (1959-2024): COMRADE, SISTER, FIGHTER, FRIEND

Camilo Lazo | Illinois | Feb. 14, 2024

Comrade Christine Geovanis has died. Comrade Christine (Chris) was a life-long Chicago resident and activist. Starting while she was still in grade school, Chris became a passionate champion for the rights of the Palestinian people to peace, freedom, and national sovereignty. She helped found and support non-profit organizations and small community-based organizations, challenged the corrupt Daley political machine, and served as Communications Director for the Chicago Teachers Union.

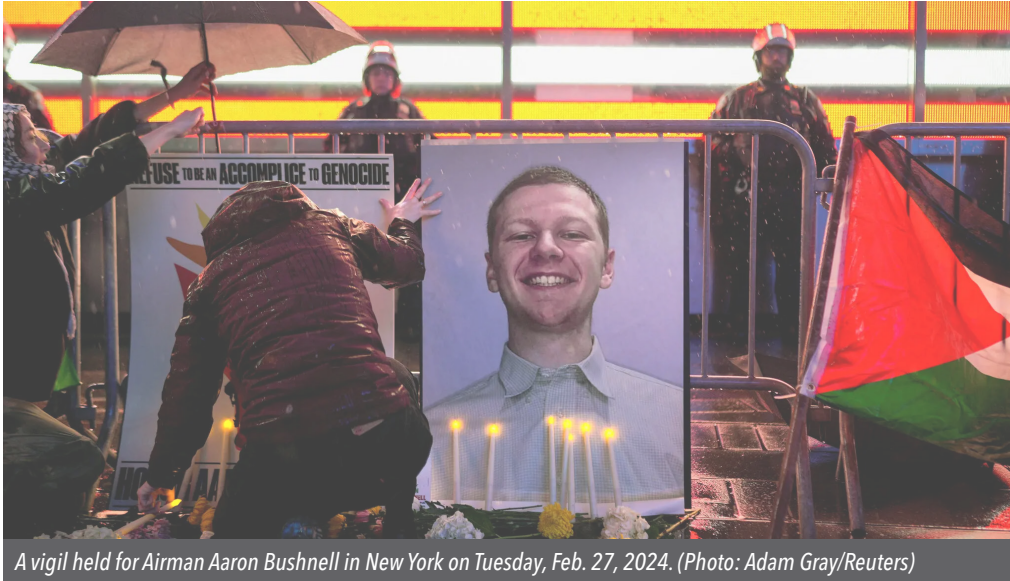
Together with her life partner, comrade Dick Reilly (deceased, 2020), Chris founded HammerHard MediaWorks and Chicago Indymedia, two alternative news media sites providing community-driven journalism free of corporate interests. They also helped found Chicago Coalition Against War and

Racism, an organization mobilizing opposition to the US invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq in 2003. A talented photographer, Comrade Chris helped to document and support peoples' causes such as the protests at Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline, Black Lives Matter and Occupy Chicago, opposition to the presence of Greek and Ukrainian fascist organizations in Chicago, most of all, solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people.

Comrade Chris was beloved and respected by all who knew her. Her passing has left a void in our hearts. However, we take comfort in the knowledge that another red star has joined the heavens, and that she still, and forever will, illuminate the struggle for peace, justice, democracy, and socialism.



HONOR AARON BUSHNELL'S SACRIFICE: ORGANIZE AND RESIST!



A vigil held for Airman Aaron Bushnell in New York on Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2024. (Photo: Adam Gray/Reuters)

Camilo Lazo for the Secretariat of the American Party of Labor | March 3, 2024

"The self-burning of Vietnamese Buddhist monks in 1963 is somehow difficult for the Western Christian conscience to understand. The Press spoke then of suicide, but in the essence, it is not. It is not even a protest.

What the monks said in the letters they left before burning themselves aimed only at alarming, at moving the hearts of the oppressors and at calling the attention of the world to the suffering endured then by the Vietnamese. To burn oneself by fire is to prove that what one is saying is of the utmost importance. There is nothing more painful than burning oneself. To say something while experiencing this kind of pain is to say it with the utmost of courage, frankness, determination and sincerity."

-Letter from Thich Nhat Hanh to Dr. Martin Luther King (June 1, 1965)

"Many of us like to ask ourselves, 'What would I do if I was alive during slavery? Or the Jim Crow South? Or apartheid? What would I do if my country was committing genocide?' The answer is, you're doing it. Right now."

-Aaron Bushnell (Feb. 25, 2024)

A young man has taken his own life. Ordinarily, this would be another of life's painful tragedies, but there was nothing "ordinary" about this death. On February 25, 2024, Aaron Bushnell, an active-duty Airman in the United States Air Force, while dressed in his uniform, walked to the front of the Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC, where he doused

himself in a flammable liquid and self-immolated in protest of the genocide of the Palestinian people. Bushnell's final words before being overtaken by agonizing pain were "Free Palestine!"

Bushnell recorded the following message as he approached the Embassy of Israel:

"I am an active-duty member of the United States Air Force and I will no longer be complicit to genocide. I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest. But compared to what people have been experiencing in Palestine at the hands of their colonizers, it's not extreme at all. This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal."

In an act that can only be characterized as emblematic of the absurd cruelty of American life, a Secret Service officer who was on the scene, rather than offering immediate assistance, drew his weapon and pointed it at Bushnell, shouting "Get on the ground!" as Bushnell burned to death.

Let us be very clear on one thing. This was a "suicide" only in the sense that Bushnell died by his own hand. This was not an act of madness or "mental illness"; this was a conscious, calculated act of political protest. The agony that Aaron Bushnell suffered stands for thousands of other agonies that occur daily in Palestine, Ukraine, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Let us be clear on another thing. We must always bear in mind the words of Kwame Ture: "Non-violence," and this was the ultimate act of non-violence, "only works if your opponent has a conscience. The United States has none." Individual self-sacrifice does not sway the imperialist war machine, as this machine does not value human life. The way

forward is through the united mass action of the people to bring down the entire genocidal system, not an individual act of self-destruction. Such an act of sacrifice does send a message, however, not only to the ruling class but to all peoples of the world, and it is our duty as the oppressed and exploited masses to ensure his life was not given in vain. Mass organizing and resistance is the way to honor comrade Bushnell's wishes for a free Palestine. We do not intend to disparage Bushnell's anguish or dismiss his sacrifice, but rather to maximize the efficacy of his chosen tactic, in order to end the onslaught that has claimed over 30,000 Palestinian lives in only five months.

Let us be clear on one final matter. The blame for this tragic event, and for the genocide we see unfolding daily in Gaza, lies squarely on the shoulders of the imperialist warmongers and Zionists.

The American Party of Labor calls on all members of the US military, in Bushnell's memory, to stand up against the atrocities being committed in Palestine and around the world by refusing to be part of the imperialist war machine. To be conscientious objectors, to launch a soldier's strike, to put down your guns, and to prevent arms shipments are the best ways to honor and respect our comrade's pain and sacrifice.

The American Party of Labor also issues a call to action to all people of conscience, to all working and oppressed peoples, to take to the streets in militant and righteous protest to demand an end to the atrocities committed by the Zionist entity, for freedom and self-determination for the Palestinian people, and ultimately for an end to all war and imperialism.

FREE PALESTINE!

NO MORE WAR!

AARON BUSHNELL, PRESENTE!



AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR
ALL POWER TO THE WORKING PEOPLE!

RESIST U.S.-LED WAR PRESENTS WEAPONS WATCH: ALL EYES ON THE WAR INDUSTRY – LOCKHEED MARTIN

Resist US-Led War Movement | March 1, 2024



Series: Who Profits Off US-Israeli Genocide?

Lockheed Martin Corp, the number one transnational defense contractor in the world, is also the number one corporation complicit in genocide.

Lockheed Martin develops and supports the US military and its foreign allies by providing the tools it needs to target innocents. It is the birthplace of the F-35 jets, the Multiple Launch Rocket System, and the Longbow Hellfire missiles favored by the Israeli Occupying Forces.

We have witnessed how these weapons have been used to commit genocide in Gaza, where the al-Nasser hospital was just bombed.

Post-October 7, Lockheed Martin stock value increased drastically. Stocks valued at \$400 USD jumped up in value to \$436 USD, and consistently stayed above \$440 USD for months before dipping in late January due to software issue-related delays

in preparing to upgrade their F-35 jets.

Lockheed Martin has had an increasingly amicable relationship with Israel. Occupation forces have accumulated a total of 75 F-35 jets over the years, including 25 that were sent as part of a \$3 million deal made last summer. This was sponsored by the defense aid package sent over by the US – and therefore paid for by American taxpayers.

Another of Lockheed Martin's customers is the Armed Forces of the Philippines, who since the early '70s have regularly bought C-130 Airlifters that are used to suppress the Philippines' National Democracy Movement.

Lockheed Martin has proven time and time again that it is an enemy of the people by aiding imperialist powers in their attempt to quell national liberation movements across the world.

In 2023 alone, Lockheed Martin generated \$67.6 billion in profit by facilitating imperialist wars in pursuit of economic dominance.

On Friday, Feb. 9, student organizers at University of Maryland Baltimore County protested Lockheed Martin and other military contractors tabling at the Career Fair – joining their peers across the nation opposing their universities' role in war!

We are calling on our communities and universities nationally to cut ties with all entities aiding in the war machine!

We cannot let the compassion and skills of our students be taken advantage of to perpetuate this cycle of violence.

Ending war and militarism involves exposing and opposing those who profit from it!

All across the world, organizations are adopting calls for institutions and individuals to cut ties with war profiteers!

Join the fight today! Join the Resist US-Led War Movement!

www.ResistUSLedWarMovement.com
www.AmericanPartyofLabor.com

ICJ RULING CONDEMNS ISRAEL, DRAWS INTERNATIONAL LINE IN SAND

Alexis Galovich | Pennsylvania | Feb. 11, 2024

People worldwide are celebrating the January ruling by the International Court of Justice in favor of South Africa, condemning Israel's most recent bombardment of Gaza and ordering the state to cease the commission of acts of genocide in Palestine. This is a mark of progress for the global movement for the national liberation of Palestine, and although the ICJ is without the means to enforce this ruling, the hearing has set a precedent of establishing mass condemnation of the state of Israel's actions. As a result, other states are taking action in their own ways.

On Jan. 26 in the case of Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel), 15 of the 17 Justices ruled against Israel, declaring that some of Israel's current actions against the Palestinian people of Gaza constitute acts of genocide.

This ruling is good news for the Palestinian people as a sign of the growing support and strength of the struggle for national liberation, and it also serves as a means of exposing Israel's crimes in a more formal way. The movement to end the Israeli occupation of

Palestine continues to gain momentum; even ten years ago something like this would have been unimaginable, and this ruling acts as a milestone for the development of the cause. The victory of progressive forces over those of imperialism and reaction is inevitable. By legally acknowledging Israel's crimes for the first time since the country's birth, the Palestinian resistance against Zionism is given international legitimacy.

The ICJ lacks the means to enforce this ruling, although it does serve as a line drawn in the sand, putting the choice of whether and how to act into the hands of the governments of each country. On the same day as the ICJ hearing, the US suspended funding to the UNRWA, the primary agency providing relief for Palestinian refugees, further cementing its support for the state of Israel. Meanwhile, other countries have acted in support of the ICJ ruling against Israel. Most notably, Spain has suspended all arms sales and exports to Israel, demanding a "permanent solution" to the ongoing genocide which includes international recognition of Palestinian statehood, and urging compliance with the ICJ. One country with the potential ability and economic influence to significantly disrupt the economies of Israel and its imperialist allies, the People's Republic of China, has echoed calls for a

ceasefire. However, the supposed socialist republic has numerous business interests in Israel through its Belt and Road Initiative, and has so far failed to act to end the genocide of a people it claims to support in their struggle for national liberation.

We who struggle in solidarity with the people of Palestine against imperialism, Zionism, and reaction must remember that this struggle is far from over. Palestine will not be freed by the bourgeoisie who amass wealth from the sales of arms and from using Israel as an outpost of imperialism in the region, but only by the might of the international working class and progressive forces.

We must not rest on our laurels with this ruling, but rather take it as a sign to continue our attack against the inhumane forces of reaction. The world is watching and these recent developments have ever more clarified that the masses will not ignore genocide. Because it is in the interest of capital to keep a boot upon the necks of the Palestinian people, **we the people** must continue to organize globally until Palestine is free.



UNITED STATES, ISRAEL GAMBLE WITH CIVILIAN LIVES; INCITE WAR, GENOCIDE, TERROR FOR POLITICAL GAIN

R. Nesbitt | Maryland | Feb. 19, 2024

Between Feb. 2 and Feb. 3 the US Air Force launched several airstrikes against militant groups supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. The operation was conducted with retaliatory intent after a drone strike by pro-Iranian militias and the Revolutionary Guard of Iran killed three American Marines in Jordan. The National Security Council has stressed that efforts were made to minimize civilian casualties and one affiliated militia, Kataib Hezbollah, has announced it will be suspending attacks on American forces. Other groups, however, have issued no such resolution and reaffirmed their militancy as champions of the cause of Palestine in the wake of the renewed war by Israel into Gaza.

The timing of the strikes is tremendously conspicuous. We have just entered an election year, and here there is a president who, according to Statista, maintains a 41% approval rating as of January 2024. It cannot be forgotten that in the winter of 2019-20, then-President Trump launched similarly retaliatory attacks against Iranian proxies and personnel after the US Embassy in Baghdad was stormed by the aforementioned Kataib Hezbollah, after which Major General Qasem Soleimani of the Iranian military was assassinated via drone strike. A winter of saber-rattling and the threat of war between the United States and its allies against Iran issued until the deepening of the 2019 recession and the COVID-19 pandemic sapped all attention, resources, and public support for such a conflict by March of 2020. Trump was no stranger to slapping paint on his foreign policy blunders and touted the American response to the storming of the Embassy in Iraq: "As President, my highest and most solemn duty is the defense of our nation and its citizens. Last night, at my direction, the United States military successfully executed a flawless precision strike that killed the number-one terrorist anywhere in the world, Qasem Soleimani." This in itself is not true, or at least it wasn't when the United States collaborated with Soleimani to defeat ISIS.

Hostility between the US and Iran is nothing new, however with the recent strikes, in combination with Biden's disapproval rating, the geostrategic context of Israel's genocidal crusade into Gaza, and 2024 being an election year, the broad offensives must be viewed with the highest suspicion. This weakening and isolation of jihadist forces in West Asia strategically strengthens Israel's hand of pursuing its "war" with lesser risk of terrorist attacks in the immediate future, which is very important for the Knesset at a time when government ministers are being chased out of hospitals by the victims of Hamas' attacks in outrage of their aggressive policies towards Palestine. The Biden administration in general needs the sheer political weight of successful, surgical operations against "hostile forces" to increase favor amongst the people who compose the "middle class" in the United States. Gaining popular confidence is sorely needed for Biden after the disastrous conduct of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the peak of the Russo-Ukrainian War, and growing divisions within the EU-NA imperialist bloc.

As far as political leverage goes, this may yet backfire for President Biden. According to a recent poll by the University of Amherst, Massachusetts, nearly half of Americans consider Israel's endeavors to constitute genocide, and in the Democratic Primary of New Hampshire (a Republican bastion in progressive New England) last month, over 1,500 voters wrote in "ceasefire" on their ballots in protest of the failure of the Biden administration to coordinate an end to Israel's terror in Palestine. For such a maneuver in a deeply conservative state,



A view shows a damaged building after what security sources said was an Israeli strike in Nabatieh, southern Lebanon, Feb. 15, 2024. (Photo: Reuters/Aziz Taher)

never mind the massive and persistent protests in solidarity with Palestine these last four months, the President's plan of indirect support for Israel and a show of force in Western Asia may backfire horrifically among students, workers, and the youth.

Even liberal mouthpieces like Bloomberg have criticized the efficacy of the recent airstrikes to intimidate jihadist militias or Iran, as we have already seen with only one militia disavowing attacks on American targets in the future. Building upon American surgical strikes, Israel bombed a Hezbollah target in Lebanon, killing several civilians, to which Hezbollah promised an escalation of violence, launching several strikes earlier this week including ten missile bombardments in one day. America, softening targets for its Israeli vassal, is encouraging a path of increased violence, killing countless innocent civilians and cementing Israel's place as the bleeding imperialist ulcer of West Asia.

The reformist wing of the capitalist vanguard in America is gambling with war, genocide, and the incitement of terror to accrue political capital in a tense election season. It is asserting the empire's interests after years of blunders and drawbacks, and if this genocide in Gaza persists – if there is no ceasefire, if war should come between the United States and Iran – Biden will be waving goodbye to the White House with blood-soaked hands.

No war but the class war!

Ceasefire now!

From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!



INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY: A REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY, A LIBERATED FUTURE!



Women march in support of Palestine in Amsterdam, Netherlands. (Wikimedia/Jos van Zetten); IWWD march as part of the Petrograd strike leading to the February Revolution in Russia, 1917.

The Women's Commission of the American Party of Labor | March 8, 2024

Socialist Roots vs. Neoliberal Doctrine

International Working Women's Day was established as an explicitly revolutionary celebration in 1911, born from labor movements and guided by Marxist ideology to build toward socialism and communism. When the neoliberal United Nations commemorated the date in 1975 the class nature was intentionally removed, rebranding as simply International Women's Day.

The official "theme" of the UN for this year's IWWD is titled, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress," which is not only brazenly capitalistic but also shamefully ignores what is arguably the most pressing and immediate concern for women internationally at this time: the ongoing genocide of Palestinians at the hands of Israel and its imperialist allies. The UN itself has acknowledged that two-thirds of the people killed in Palestine since Oct. 7 have been women and children. The most recent reported toll of the approximately 30,000 confirmed deaths includes at least 12,660 children and 8,570 women. It is clear that the UN's priorities currently and historically lie with multinational corporations, enabling ongoing exploitation and oppression of the masses worldwide.

On this International Working Women's Day, the American Party of Labor honors the socialist roots of the holiday while continuing to fight against forces oppressing today's women worldwide. We reject the bourgeois "theme" of the United Nations for IWWD and the removal of class analysis that liberal feminism pushes. We call on all progressive people to join us in building a world free of oppression, marginalization, and genocide. Workers' rights are women's rights! National liberation struggles are women's struggles!

Overview: Historical Beginnings

A "National Women's Day" was first proposed in

1909 by members of the Women's Committee of the Socialist Party of America, headed by Theresa Malkiel, a Jewish socialist and garment worker who wrote about labor activism from a socialist perspective, opposed the lack of class analysis within bourgeois feminism, and spoke out against the rampant white supremacy across the United States. Malkiel also worked to expunge racism from within the ranks of socialist organizations and parties in the US, when white Southern socialists often refused to work with their Black comrades.

The following year, the International Women's Socialist Conference proposed commemorating this day annually. In 1911, hundreds of thousands of women took to the streets across Europe, and in 1922 the Soviet Union became the first country to establish International Working Women's Day as an official holiday.

Proletarian Women

A common narrative from liberals and conservatives is that women only entered the workforce en masse during World War I and World War II, but women have been proletarianized since the beginning of societal transitions into capitalism. Garment factories have traditionally employed women and the industry has a long history of women-led labor activism.

The New York Shirtwaist Strike of 1909 is one of the most influential events in the founding of International Working Women's Day. The strike was led by Clara Lemlich and Local 25 of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. The participating workers were predominantly Jewish women under the age of 20.

"Thus it happens that the working class and its mouthpiece, the Socialist party, are the greatest champions of woman's emancipation. Long before woman suffrage became a fad, long before the woman herself had come to realize the justice of her position, the Socialist party demanded the equality of sex.

Woman's Day, to be celebrated and observed through the length and breadth of our country as a day of woman's coming greatness, as a token of her just demands, as a protest against her present disqualification."

–Theresa Malkiel, "Woman's Day," *New York Call*, Dec. 28, 1909.

Clara Zetkin

Zetkin was a German feminist and communist leader

who, along with Lenin, co-founded International Working Women's Day as an official holiday in 1922. Between 1892–1917 she edited the Social Democratic Party's newspaper, Equality (*Die Gleichheit*). She also co-founded the Spartacus League in 1914, and then the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in 1919. When Hitler and the Nazi Party took power, Zetkin was exiled to the Soviet Union, where she died in 1933.

"The liberation of the workers can only be the work of the working class itself, it can never accomplish this gigantic and terrible work of history, however, if it is torn in two halves by the sex distinction. As the men and women of the proletariat are united body and soul in their crushing life of misery, so must they also unite a burning hatred of capitalism with a more confident, more daring will to fight for the Revolution. The International Communist Women's Day must not remain only a women's demonstration in any country or town. It must everywhere be the expression of the will and the work of the entire Communist Party. The latter must support our Women's Day with all its physical and moral strength."

–Clara Zetkin, *The International Communist Women's Day* (1922).

Paula Thiede

Paula Thiede was a founder of the Union of Auxiliary Book Printing Workers of Germany and played an influential role in a series of strikes that led to a nine-hour work day and increased pay. She faced sexism from men in her own union, but was eventually accepted after winning concessions. In 1910, Thiede attended the International Socialist Women's Conferences in Europe, where she proposed the creation of IWWD with Clara Zetkin.

Käte Duncker

Käte Duncker was a member of the German Social Democratic Party, one of the first members of the Spartacus League (along with Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin), and then a member of the Communist Party of Germany. She worked as a teacher and had been fired several times for her political work as a socialist. Duncker had been a delegate to the International Socialist Women's Conference, where she was involved in the founding of IWWD. She lived in the Soviet Union from 1924–1926 before returning to Germany, where she lectured at the Marxist Workers School in Berlin. The subjects of her lectures included women's rights, child welfare, and education through chronic illness. Duncker migrated to the United States in 1936 after her husband had

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

fled to Denmark and their two sons had been exiled, but she returned to live in the German Democratic Republic after the war.

A Militant Celebration

“Our comrades put a lot of effort into the preparation of [1914] “Women Workers Day.” Because of police intervention, they didn’t manage to organize a demonstration. Those involved in the planning of “Women Workers Day” found themselves in the Tsarist prisons, and many were later sent to the cold north. For the slogan ‘for the working women’s vote’ had naturally become in Russia an open call for the overthrow of Tsarist autocracy.”

– Alexandra Kollontai, *International Women’s Day*, 1920.

Petrograd Strike: February Revolution of 1917

In Russia on March 4, 1917 (Feb. 23 in Julian calendar), thousands of women took to the streets as part of a general strike, joining with the Petrograd metal workers whose strike began the day before. This was the prelude to the February Revolution, which overthrew Tsarist rule and established the Provisional Government. Women of the proletariat and peasantry united under slogans demanding land reform, bread, and an end to unjust war.

“The 1917 Working Women’s Day has become memorable in history. On this day the Russian women raised the torch of proletarian revolution and set the world on fire. The February revolution marks its beginning from this day.”

– Alexandra Kollontai, “Women’s Day,” 1920.

Socialist Celebration

Before the UN established “International Women’s Day” in 1977, the holiday with its class nature in-tact – as International Working Women’s Day – had already been commemorated and celebrated in revolutionary states. IWWD was adopted:

- by the Soviet Union in 1922, jointly signed by Alexandra Kollontai and Vladimir Lenin;
- by the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania at its founding in 1945;
- by revolutionary China in 1948 (one year before the People’s Republic was founded);
- by Cuba following the revolution of 1959.

“The Party and the working class should measure the advance toward the complete construction of socialist society with the deepening and progress of the women’s revolution within our proletarian revolution. If the rights of women lag behind, then the revolution marks time.”

– Enver Hoxha.

Garment Workers in Bangladesh

The American garment workers’ struggles – whose labor organizing inspired International Working Women’s Day – are still reflected today in the working conditions of women all over the world. In November 2022, the Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) reported on the alarming frequency of fires in garment factories. This industry primarily employs women and has the second-lowest wages nationwide, in a country where violence against women is rampant. These workers do not have trade union rights, and their labor rights in general are extremely limited. They do not have appointment letters, regular eight-hour work days, weekly holidays, overtime pay, or provident funds. There is no provision for medical assistance or education for their children, or even proper and sanitary restroom facilities in the workplaces.

“If there was a healthy political situation in the country, if there was a government in the interest of the people, such a situation would not have arisen. The movement to stop violence against women in Bangladesh today is inextricably related to the movement for the emancipation of the people and the establishment of a democratic Bangladesh... The ruling class is completely enmeshed with the imperialist system. Domestic fascist rule and imperialism are tied in the same knot – the resistance movement against one and not the other is meaningless. Simultaneous and united movement against this double enemy of the people will pave the way for the liberation of the people of Bangladesh.”

– Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist), *Unity & Struggle* #45, Nov. 2022.

Corporate “Celebration”

Large corporations run publicity campaigns to pacify us just enough to feel “represented” while they attempt to distract us from their everyday evil activities. The keyword “working” has been effectively removed from International Working Women’s Day in media and popular consciousness in recent decades. The United Nations’ focus on “empowering” women in leadership roles in imperialist countries and powerful corporations is a tactic to tell the oppressed masses that exploitation is acceptable as long as the exploiters are diverse and “inclusive.” Such liberal institutions serve only the bourgeoisie by refusing to address the intentional and systemic oppression of women that is inherent in the structure of capitalism.

Palestine is a Feminist Struggle

The most glaring atrocity faced by women at this moment is the plight of Palestinians as they struggle to survive Israel’s current genocidal campaign. Our

hearts bleed for the thousands of women who have lost their lives already, and for the countless others who have faced innumerable losses of their loved ones, their children, their homes, their health, and any sense of security or autonomy. There is no excuse for the United States’ continued support of Israel, supplying the occupational forces monetarily and materially with their instruments of death and destruction provided by taxpayers and by the surplus value of workers’ labor, defying the International Court of Justice and abusing its veto power within the UN Security Council, ignoring the will of the overwhelming masses domestically and abroad who are demanding an immediate and permanent end to this genocide.

“In Gaza’s population of 2.3 million, approximately 572,000 are women and girls of reproductive age, all of whom require access to vital reproductive health services. Among them, 50,000 pregnant women are caught in this conflict, with thousands facing imminent childbirth under dire circumstances.”

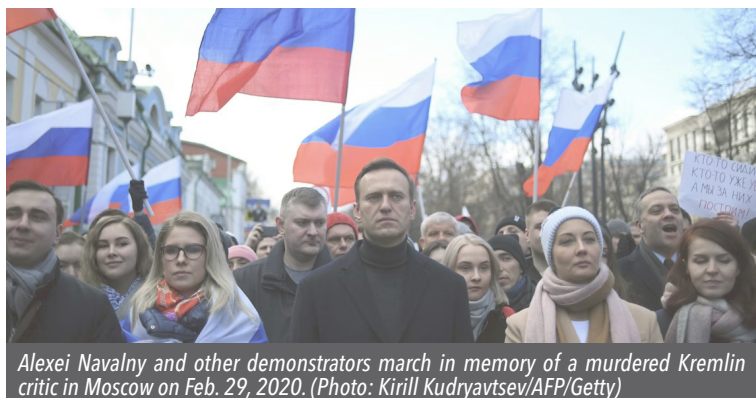
– Palestinian Feminist Collective, “Palestine is a Feminist Struggle.”

The people of the United States have been fighting against reactionary attacks against reproductive rights, both legally and physically, since the overturning of Roe v. Wade in 2022 and with the continued passage of increasingly regressive legislation further restricting access to vital healthcare, not only for women but for people of all marginalized genders. Instead of protecting reproductive rights and providing federal funding for healthcare, the ruling parties in this country are funding a genocide that disproportionately affects women and children. Bourgeois politicians invoke accusations of sexism and oppression of women in Palestine to “justify” the complete obliteration of their nation, but their actions make it clear that the ruling class does not care about Palestinian women. The American ruling class does not even care to protect American women’s basic rights. As Americans, our connections to the feminist struggle in Palestine must be understood, and the severity of the conditions for Palestinian women cannot be understated.

On this International Working Women’s Day, it is the duty of all people of all nations to continue fighting relentlessly for an end to Israel’s genocide of Palestinians. The only acceptable way to celebrate this occasion is to stay in the streets, demanding a free Palestine and the liberation of women everywhere.



"SUDDEN DEATH SYNDROME" KILLS RUSSIAN NATIONALIST NAVALNY



Alexei Navalny and other demonstrators march in memory of a murdered Kremlin critic in Moscow on Feb. 29, 2020. (Photo: Kirill Kudryavtsev/AFP/Getty)

Hari Kumar | International correspondent | Feb. 28, 2024

On Feb. 16, anti-Putin opposition leader and Russian nationalist Alexei Navalny was found dead at the Kharp high security prison near the Arctic, to which he had been transported recently in secret. The Russian state authorities claim his death was from "Sudden Death Syndrome." Quite a ridiculous diagnosis, as his detention since 2021 has been marked by repeated evidence of maltreatment and sleep deprivation, constituting slow torture. It was not a 'sudden' death, or without prior signals at all.

Let us briefly reprise who the main characters in the drama were.

First, Vladimir Putin (1952-). We need to return to the final victory of the capitalist take-over of the formerly socialist USSR. While the destruction of the socialist USSR began with the death of Stalin, the shell of the USSR remained until its liquidation in 1991.

There ensued a huge private profiteers grab for the assets of the state.

But two factions of the Russian ruling class emerged clearly. The first capitalist grouping was manifestly aligned with Western capitalism. Its clearest representative was the multi-billionaire Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who had formed the Yukos oil giant. He had fervently bought up state issued vouchers and used them to buy major components of the oil and petrochemical industry at fire sale prices. They worked to open the doors of the now defunct USSR to Western capital.

But they were opposed by the second and opposing faction of capitalists, a Russian national capitalist class. They were based largely in the gas industry and weaponry. Their economic nest was gas in the shape of the privately owned Gazprom.

Putin was the Chief of the KGB in Dresden during the late days of the GDR. It is likely that in the GDR's final days Putin was involved in moving cash stores of the Stasi into the West. Nevertheless, after the GDR's collapse, Putin returned to Russia, supposedly resigning from the KGB in 1991. He emerged as a politician in St. Petersburg in 1994. In 1997 he was appointed by President Yeltsin as deputy chief of the presidential staff. He helped organize the corrupt sell-off of former Soviet industry to the hands of favored collaborators. By 1998 Putin had become Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), the successor to the KGB. By 1999 he was appointed as acting Prime Minister by President Yeltsin, whose resignation led to Putin becoming Acting President.

There should be no illusions that Putin had any sympathy for socialism or communism, saying in an interview that the Bolsheviks "destroyed what glues, molds the people of civilized countries – market relationships. They destroyed the market, emerging capitalism. The only thing that they did to keep the country together within common borders – was a barbed wire."

Putin rapidly surrounded himself with the Siloviki ('strong men' or so-called KGB Inc.) led by Igor Sechin. These men had no interest in selling Russia to the West, instead wanting to keep Russian capital to be used for dubious purposes. The first target they went after was the section of the oligarchs who were the entry point for foreign capitalists into the Russian economy. This especially applied to Khodorkovsky, who had been lauded by Business Week. They jailed him for years, expropriated his companies and drove him into exile. This model was to be followed against all other challengers to Putin, such as Berezovsky. In 1999 Putin then framed "Chechen terrorists" for terror created by his secret service and used that to ensure his hold on the presidency.

The second player to mention is the victim, Alexei Navalny (1976-2024). Navalny was a lawyer who was trained in the USA and became an oppositionist. In 2021 he was described thus:

"Navalny started his career as a lawyer before studying finance in Moscow and Yale. Rapidly becoming an oppositionist, Navalny regularly organizes demonstrations against corruption and Putin. Now according to Wikipedia he has 'more than six million Youtube subscribers and more than two million Twitter followers.' In 2000 he joined the Russian United Democratic Party Yabloko. Again, just like his predecessor he formed a social movement, but this time with perhaps more of a directly political edge – 'The People's Movement', and also the 'Movement Against Illegal Immigration' (MAII) and Great Russia, to form a new coalition, the Russian National Movement. In 2012, Navalny attempted to form a new party, 'The People's Alliance.' He has stood for elections several times under severely hampered circumstances and has widely published about Putin's corruption."

No doubt Navalny became the new hope of Western capital to re-enter the Russian stage. He showed himself to be a Russian racist and chauvinist despising the other nationalities in the Russian federation. Nonetheless he developed the opposition 'Smart Vote' as a clever platform to unite people in voting against candidates of 'United Russia' (Putin's vehicle – the largest party holding 75% of the 450 seats in the Duma). It overcame Putin's strategy of denying any standing right for independents at elections, by simply finding alternative electable candidates to unite around. It helped elect some independent candidates to power including high profile United Russian players. It also was one strand of the opposition to Putin's Imperialist war.

Navalny was attacked by Putin's agents with a paralyzing agent. Unexpectedly, he was brought to medical assistance inside Russia. Doctors then arranged a spectacular flight to emergency treatment in Charité Berlin. Upon his recovery, Navalny exposed in a 'sting' the Russian secret service's attempt to murder him. Then, remarkably, he quite knowingly flew back to Moscow. It was a foregone conclusion that he would be arrested:

"Navalny flew back to Russia in January 2021. He fully understood that he would be arrested on a number of somewhat spurious charges. He had in the meantime exposed the secret service attempts to poison him with a taped 'sting' telephone call to one of the FSB operatives while posing as an operative. He had also openly goaded Putin. In these very public statements, and in his courting of arrest – Navalny has behaved just like Khodorkovsky did in his day. On January 17 2021 Navalny was arrested. However, in sharp contrast to previous arrests of anti-Putin agitators, there was now a reservoir of heightened, near-organized discontent in the Russian people. Moreover, social media enabled wide-spread demonstrations."

In a vindictive attempt to silence him, Navalny was subject to slow torture since 2021, which no doubt led to his death, although it remains possible that his corpse may ultimately reveal even more acute violence:

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

“At the time of his death, Navalny was due to serve a cumulative three decades in prison. It was made clear he would remain in jail as long as Putin remained in power. In jail, Russia's most famous opposition leader faced some of the worst excesses of the Russian prison system. He said the Kremlin wanted to break him, as a punishment for staying alive. His team feared worse. Navalny went on hunger strike after being denied urgent medical treatment in prison. He said the authorities subjected him to psychological pressure and sleep deprivation, detailing a fellow inmate to wake him every hour on the pretext of making sure he had not escaped.”

We should grieve for the ill-effects on any progressive anti-Putin movement in Russia. However Navalny's character as a pro-Western capitalist should not be denied. Despite this, he had mobilized a wide movement:

“While Navalny is offensively anti-immigrant, anti-Chechen, and is supported by Western capitalism, he has undoubtedly been a major part of a wide grass-roots democratic movement. Critical support for his ‘Smart Voting’ movement as a first step to rebuilding a socialist movement is the only way forward for progressives inside Russia.”

His death is not unmourned in Russia, with many courting arrest:

“At least 359 people have now been arrested at rallies in memory of the late Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. This would be the largest wave of arrests in Russia since the arrest of more than 1,300 people during demonstrations against the partial mobilization for the Ukrainian war in September 2022. A number of people were arrested, especially in Saint Petersburg and Moscow, as the online civil rights platform Online-Bürgerrechtsplattform OVD-Info announced. In total there were arrests in 32 Russian cities.”

The body count of the Russian army invading Ukraine continues to rise. Guarding his rear, Putin has suppressed more dissidents who might become a focus against him – whether from the right-wing, the center, or the left-wing.

For example the right-winger, oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin. Previously we noted his similarity to Coriolanus: “Similar to that Roman general in an arrogant hubris fueling a spectacular turn-coat-ism, he now only awaits his own murder.”

Indeed Prigozhin's murder duly came. More recently other Putinite-suppressions

silenced the center. Putin removed the potential candidacy of Nadezhdin in the forthcoming elections. This removed a significant, but largely symbolic, challenge:

“Russia's election commission has rejected anti-war challenger Boris Nadezhdin as a candidate in next month's presidential vote. Mr. Nadezhdin has been relatively critical of Vladimir Putin's full-scale war in Ukraine when few dissenting voices have been tolerated in Russia. Election authorities claimed more than 15% of the signatures he submitted with his candidate application were flawed... The Central Election Commission said that of the 105,000 signatures submitted by Mr. Nadezhdin, more than 9,000 were invalid. They cited a variety of violations. That left 95,587 names, meaning he was just short of the 100,000 required signatures to register as a candidate, commission member Andrei Shutov said.”

It might not be irrelevant that even from the Arctic, “Navalny had called for a nationwide protest on the day of the March presidential election and for voters to gather at the polls at noon as a sign of dissent against Putin.”

From the left-wing, Putin removed the potential ‘socialist’ force of Boris Kagarlitsky:

“Leading left-wing Russian thinker Boris Kagarlitsky is facing up to seven years in prison on charges of ‘justifying terrorism’ even though it is clear to everyone – including supporters of Vladimir Putin and his aggression in Ukraine – that he was arrested for his anti-war views. Kagarlitsky is perhaps the most prominent Marxist thinker in the post-Soviet space... he was arrested on 25 July after stating in a social media post that the attack on Russia's Crimean Bridge in October 2022, believed to be the work of Ukraine, was understandable ‘from a military point of view.’ His case is just one of hundreds of police investigations into anti-war Russians.”

Navalny's death further prolongs the Russian imperialist aggression into Ukraine. Members of the United Communist Party in some Russian ‘communist parties’ openly repudiate their own leadership for refusing to condemn this imperialist war of Russia's. Meanwhile the USA and Western imperialist powers try to lever Navalny's death into ensuring further funds to Ukraine.

Despite the risk to themselves, the war continues to arouse many Russians into confronting Putin's state. While no clear leadership or formal movement has yet to emerge, it will.

SUPPORT PALESTINE AND THE AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR!

Gaza relief fundraiser:

The American Party of Labor is hosting an ongoing fundraiser for Palestine. 100% of proceeds of our “Free Palestine” merchandise are being donated to emergency relief efforts in Gaza.



How we use financial support:

As observer members of the ICMLPO, we send members of our party to conferences, workshops, educationals, and work programs abroad.

We occasionally run Service to the People Programs in Orlando, New Jersey, and New York City, where we provide necessary supplies to working class families free of charge.

We self-publish our newspaper and tabling materials, as well as perform all of the labor required to do so.

All proceeds go directly into our work. None of our members are paid from party funds; we all volunteer our time and labor. *No profits, ever!*

How you can help us:

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All power to the working people!

AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR JOINS RESIST US-LED WAR MOVEMENT



AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR



From the Secretariat of the American Party of Labor | Feb. 11, 2024

The Resist US-Led War Movement is an international network of democratic, progressive, and anti-war organizations and individuals committed to opposing US imperialism and its ward of aggression. The Resist US-Led War Movement combats militarism and imperialist war; demands an end to Zionism, apartheid, and all forms of systemic racism; and supports the rights of all peoples to self-determination, sovereignty, and peace.

The Movement unites around the following Manifesto:

"All around the world exploited and subjugated nations and peoples are rising up against the tides of war, militarism and neo-fascism brought about by the crisis endemic to the global capitalist system.

This is US monopoly capital and the rest of the monopoly capitalist system in decay.

Every hour, workers in the factories and workplaces, farmers and peasants in the fields and plantations are being killed. Women and girls are degraded by systemic rape culture as a tool of war. Natural resources and the environment are plundered and destroyed. Families are displaced by wars. Villages and cities are hit with bombs and missiles. Hospitals, schools, places of worship and other public centers are being occupied and wiped out.

Mothers and fathers lay their bodies to shield their children from bombs and airstrikes. Indigenous peoples and other oppressed nations face discrimination, genocide and displacement from corporate plunder and extractivism. Youth, people of color, LGBT, women and the poor are preyed upon and recruited to fight and perish in these wars at the behest of corporations as well as face increasing brutalization, mass incarceration, and racism by the militarized police state in their home countries. The whole world is threatened by the nuclear arsenal, chemical weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction of the United States.

Peoples resistance and struggles for liberation DO NOT CEASE to proliferate in all corners of the globe, fighting for life, livelihood, sovereignty, peace, justice, and dignity. Peoples are also self-determining their forms of resistance and paths for liberation.

There remains an urgency to find bases of unity across cities, countries, and global regions impacted by imperialist war, militarism, and neo-fascism.

There is an urgency to amplify our calls and multiply our collective actions to:

RESIST US-LED WAR and militarism, including the withdrawal of US military troops, occupation, bases, war games and exercises in West Asia, Africa, East, Central and South Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands, and East Europe. Resist US-NATO, AFRICOM and CIA counterinsurgency operations,

proxy wars, and other forms of covert intervention. Fight Zionism, apartheid, and systemic racism. Fight against the US military-industrial complex, including divestment from the hundreds of billions spent on war and militarization and redirecting of public funds towards people's needs, development, and infrastructure.

BUILD JUST PEACE through justice, social equity, and solidarity amongst peoples, including the recognition of the right to self-determination, economic, and food sovereignty, and self-defense of nations and oppressed peoples from reactionary aggression and violence. Build peace through genuine sustainable development, job creation, and the health and well being of our communities.

Resist Imperialist War! Build Peace! Long Live International Solidarity!"

The American Party of Labor is proud to be a member organization of the Resist US-Led War Movement. We ask our comrades, friends, and supporters to whole-heartedly endorse the Movement and all its efforts. And we ask all democratic, progressive, and revolutionary-minded individuals, parties and organizations to join us in being a part of the Movement.

The future belongs to the peoples, not to the imperialists and war-mongers. The future is ours.

www.ResistUSLedWarMovement.com
www.AmericanPartyofLabor.com

TRUMP ON TRIAL: WE MUST EXPAND DEMOCRACY, RESTRICT REACTIONARY MOMENTUM

R. Nesbitt | Maryland | Feb. 14, 2024

The Supreme Court of the United States sat last week to preside over the case brought forward by the legal team of Donald Trump to challenge the legality of his exclusion from the ballot in the State of Colorado for the 2024 presidential election. This comes as Trump is still bogged down in the federal charges brought against him for, among other things, inciting insurrection against the government in the putsch of Jan. 6, 2021.

Colorado has based its exclusion of Trump from the ballot on the weight of the evidence against him in his incitement of rebellion. With Trump leading in split races for the Republican primary, weaponizing Biden's immigration policy and waging several legal battles at the same time, there are high stakes in Trump retaining any shred of legitimacy and innocence he can have as he goes up against the meek and absent Executive under Biden and Harris. In this era of crisis, of Democratic stagnation and flimsiness and Republican reaction and populist posturing, the conservative "middle class" of America will buck even its hallowed constitutionalism in favor of a political celebrity, as shown in their public outcry against the election of 2020, the presidency of Biden, and the federal prosecution of Trump.

Mara Gay, an Editorial Board member for the New York Times declared on Feb. 5, "Donald Trump has tested every norm of American democracy." The question must be posed, has he? Is Trump an unfortunate aberration of a stable and developing democracy or is he the product of a system that has been inherently undemocratic from its inception, as it can only be in the largest capitalist empire yet made in human history?

The long and sordid history of the exclusion of women, the landless citizenry (the proletariat), African-Americans, immigrants, and the youth from suffrage and the chipping away at this elite edifice needs no recitation here. But what, crucially, can not go untold are the stunning advances made by these groups, and the masses as a whole, in establishing that bare minimum of political participation. From the movements of the Suffragettes, Civil Rights, immigrants' and Indigenous people's for equality and political freedom, the American working masses have a library of unopened epics in class struggle and it is a struggle that continues and must intensify to this day.

At the same time as communities, states and more sensible federal legislators like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren assert broader democracy with

reforms such as initiatives for ranked-choice voting, ending felony disenfranchisement (as in Maryland), opposing the Electoral College, abolishing legalized bribery (lobbying) and voter ID laws, there now arrives on the field a vanguard for the reaction, embodied by Donald Trump and his movement, who see any single advance in democracy as "anarchy" and "revolution." Trump's support for voter ID laws, his suppression of mail-in voting and his various legal, practical and "allegedly" militant attempts to overthrow the 2020 election are enough to expose him as not truly representative of the interests of the vast majority of the people in the United States. Is it not enough that this man has not won the popular vote in either of his elections? The entire history of the MAGA wing of the Republican Party is one for the restriction of democracy even in its systematically skewed forms. It lashes out against the most meager of reforms meant to empower the masses, never mind revolutionary means, and that is the very definition of reaction.

Now, Trump and his minority screech and howl about some great injustice to democracy, a democracy which has not existed for millions of Americans from July 4, 1776, to this very day.

Marxist-Leninists find themselves in the unique position of simultaneously opposing the foundation of bourgeois "democracy" while also resisting any attempts to sink deeper into the chasm of an open dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. This work must be done in analysis and agitation for the people to demonstrate, vocalize, write and – in the greatest moments of crisis – vote, even to the extent where independent electoral bodies and coalitions for the working class can be formed. But chiefly in exposing this beast, the people must refuse to accept this as normal, and must not consider these events to be symptomatic of some unfortunate medical diagnosis for American democracy as the liberal pundits claim.

The legal basis of Trump's prosecution, "inciting insurrection against the federal government," is itself dangerous. As established in the 14th Amendment of the Constitution after the Civil War, if the proletariat should be compelled to do just that, its leadership and organizations will be prosecuted on the same basis, and in no doubt in quicker procession than the three years it has taken Trump to find himself on trial. Yet the judicial attempts to strike him from the ballot must be supported with full force by revolutionary and progressive forces in this nation, as they will provide a legal basis for his further prosecution and disqualification from any campaign whatsoever. The MAGA movement has shown us it will not end with one man, but they have demonstrated a militant and

anarchistic defiance in the defense of this leader. It should not even be a question of Trump's guilt as he stood outside the White House urging his rabble to "take back [their] country" mere minutes before the putsch commenced, but again, in this unrepresentative democracy we find ourselves in, everything is up in the air.

What then shall we do? Nothing? Vote for Trump as an act of suicidal accelerationism just to watch it all burn? Or support whatever campaigns can restrict his neofascist movement in its infancy to buy time for a revolutionary movement of the working classes to be built? The history of struggle against fascism has shown us the latter course is the most successful route for revolutionaries, progressives and the people en masse. Pay attention to the SCOTUS, prepare yourselves for the potential striking of Colorado's disenfranchisement of Trump or his possible victory in this trial, not in a masochistic sense, but to know, definitively, that a government that opens the door for tyranny will never be called democracy.

Regardless of this or that trial, this or that election, we must organize all the same. We must unionize our workplaces, we must flood channels with independent political media, we must continue to demonstrate against all manifestations of reaction – on the US-Mexico border, in Palestine, and in this protracted, uncertain test for bourgeois shamocracy in the United States.

"Earlier, the bourgeoisie presented themselves as liberal. They were for bourgeois democratic freedom and in that way gained popularity with the people. Now there is not one remaining trace of liberalism. There is no such thing as "freedom of personality" any more. Personal rights are now only acknowledged by them, the owners of capital – all the other citizens are regarded as raw materials, that are only for exploitation. The principle of equal rights for people and nations is trodden in the dust and it is replaced by the principle of full rights for the exploiting minority and the lack of rights of the exploited majority of the citizens.

The banner of bourgeois democratic freedom has been flung overboard. I think that you, the representatives of communist and democratic parties, must pick up this banner and carry it forward if you want to gain the majority of the people. There is nobody else to raise it."

– J. V. Stalin, *Speech of the 19th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Oct. 14, 1952.*

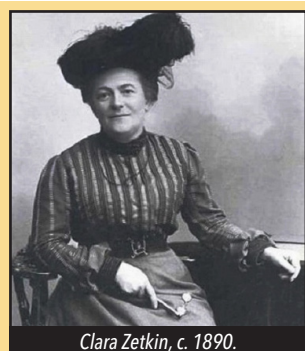
About the Red Phoenix

The Red Phoenix is the mass voice of the American Party of Labor, published online regularly and printed bimonthly. 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



Clara Zetkin, c. 1890.

"Our International Women's Day this year must become a giant recruiting of the broad masses to Communism and it must be an irresistible battle-cry against the bourgeois order and for the seizure of power by the proletariat. It must show that we Communists not only will but also can, can act."

Clara Zetkin (1857–1933)

"The International Communist Women's Day," February 1922

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**PEACE,
EQUALITY,
SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY**

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

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.

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.

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