



## Millions tell Trump, Musk: 'Hands off!'

By Martha Grevatt

Nearly everyone in the U.S. has been negatively affected by the Trump/Musk team's cuts to federal jobs, veterans' care, schools, libraries, science programs, Medicaid, the Women, Infants and Children program, heating aid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and more. There are looming threats to Social Security and disability benefits. The capitalist class is trying to crush the working class and take the wealth it has produced.



New York City, April 5, 2025.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

The masses have taken to the streets in protest, as shown by the over 1,300 demonstrations held April 5 under the theme of "Hands Off!" Organizers cite over 600,000 people registering for the events, but many more showed up without registering. Actions took place in large urban areas, suburbs and small towns.

Millions of people protested across all 50 states, U.S.-occupied territories and dozens of locations around the world, showing immense anger against Trump and centibillionaire Elon Musk and their devastating attacks on workers, immigrants, people of color,

women and gender-oppressed people, LGBTQIA2S+ people, children, elderly and disabled individuals, the climate, environment, economy and health care. For many, it was their first time demonstrating or the first protest they have gone to in a long time.

However, the organizers, who are tied to the Democratic Party, limited the politics of Hands Off to challenging attacks by President Donald Trump and Elon Musk without opposing the capitalist system as a whole. There was zero official mention of the U.S.-backed Israeli criminal genocide against Palestine. Yet there were flags of the right-wing Ukraine regime and even a pro-war message in calls for "Hands off NATO."

Nevertheless, Workers World Party members were well received as they carried signs saying "Hands off Gaza!" and "Stop the war on workers and Palestine!"

They distributed literature calling for abolishing the capitalist class of billionaires, who are behind the frontal assault on workers and oppressed people everywhere.

*Protest reports can be read at*  
[workers.org/2025/04/84908/](https://workers.org/2025/04/84908/)



Philadelphia, April 5, 2025.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



Portland, Oregon, April 5, 2025.

WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

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## Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary  
Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of  
the imperialist beast. We are a multina-  
tional, multigenerational and multigen-  
dered organization that not only aims to  
abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist  
society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten  
the peoples of the world and the planet  
itself in the neverending quest for ever-  
greater profits.

Capitalism means war and auster-  
ity, racism and repression, attacks on  
im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQIA2S+  
oppression and mistreatment of people  
with disabilities. It means joblessness,  
increasing homelessness and impover-  
ishment and lack of hope for the future.  
No social problems can be solved under  
capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the  
world, yet no one has a guaranteed right  
to shelter, food, water, health care, edu-  
cation or anything else—unless they can  
pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and  
youth are saddled with seemingly insur-  
mountable student debt, if they even make  
it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous

youth and trans people are gunned down  
by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks  
to wipe out decades of gains and benefits  
won by hard-fought struggles by people's  
movements. The super-rich and their  
political representatives have intensified  
their attacks on the multinational, mul-  
tigender and multigenerational working  
class. It is time to point the blame at —  
and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because  
the working class produces all wealth in  
society, and this wealth should remain  
in their hands, not be stolen in the form  
of capitalist profits. The wealth workers  
create should be socially owned and its  
distribution planned to satisfy and guar-  
antee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has  
been out in the streets defending the  
workers and oppressed here and world-  
wide. If you're interested in Marxism,  
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for a socialist future, please sign up at  
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# Tariffs, the stock market and the working class

By Martha Grevatt

April 7 — Since April 2, the U.S. stock market has lost \$6.6 trillion in value. The Dow Jones has fallen 3,910 points — the worst loss since the start of the March 2020 COVID-19 pandemic — and the S&P 500 dropped 6%. Losses continued April 7 with the Dow dropping another 349 points. Stock markets in Asia and Europe have also plunged.

This fall has been attributed to the extreme tariffs imposed on imports from a long list of countries, announced by President Donald Trump on April 2 — which he misnamed “Liberation Day.” The 10% minimum tariffs on nearly every country in the world — many much higher such as 54% on China, 46% on Vietnam and 20% on European Union countries — go into effect on April 9.

To grasp the relationship between these measures and the ups and downs of stock prices, it's important to understand what it is that drives the market's wild fluctuations.

Under capitalism, workers are not paid the full value of the products or services they create. Part of the value goes to the workers in the form of wages. But they don't cease working when they produce enough to cover their necessary means of subsistence. They continue working, creating what Karl Marx called “surplus value.” The surplus translates into clear profit for the capitalist owning class — a wealthy class of millionaires and billionaires who perform no productive labor whatsoever.

The market reflects anticipated surplus value. When the bosses anticipate higher profits, stock prices rise. When they foresee lower profits or even a loss, stock prices fall.

## Tariffs may cut into profits

What does this have to do with tariffs? A tariff is a type of tax paid when a capitalist imports either finished goods, component parts or raw materials from another country. The tax rate varies depending on which country the product is imported from, but it is an added cost for the capitalist importing the product.

The fear among capitalists now is that the added cost of new, huge tariffs imposed by Trump will eat into their profit margins.



Philadelphia, April 5, 2025.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Even if they manage to pass the cost of tariffs to the consumer, higher prices could drive down sales and, by extension, decrease profits. This will affect a wide range of industries from steel and aluminum to electronics and appliances to cars and trucks to agriculture.

CNN reports that “U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to impose a colossal set of tariffs on America's trading partners is tantamount to ‘economic nuclear war,’ according to billionaire hedge fund manager Bill Ackman, who endorsed Trump's 2024 bid for president.” (April 7)

A tremendous amount of products, parts and materials are imported, because capitalists based in the imperialist countries find it more profitable to take advantage of much lower labor costs in the Global South, fueling globalization. Now tariffs threaten the profits made through superexploitation of workers; that is, the higher profits made because the wages are lower.

Whether or not the capitalists move production — and with it some jobs — back to the U.S. to avoid tariffs remains to be seen. Right now companies such as Stellantis, which includes Chrysler, are anticipating a drop in sales and laying off workers.

Of course, there may be more to the latest market crash than tariffs. There could be a recession looming. Recessions and depressions are inevitable under the capitalist mode of production but are more intense in its current late stage.

Either way workers and oppressed people don't need to feel bad for the wealthy shareholders, whose net worth has fallen. They may be less rich, but they are still rich.

## Workers will be hurt

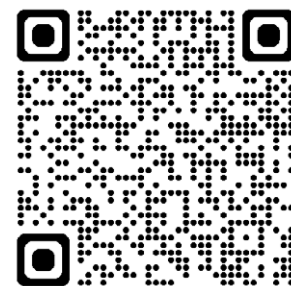
Unfortunately, the falling stock market also affects workers whose pension funds and personal savings are invested in stocks and bonds. When a pension fund loses a lot of value, pensions and/or retiree health care could be cut. Individual retirement accounts (IRAs) typically lose value when the stock market takes a nosedive. This means a double hit for retired workers who are also worried about their Social Security income.

The \$6.6 trillion loss on Wall Street represents wealth — speculated surplus value — that was created by the working class. Yet somehow the working class is facing layoffs for those working and loss of income for retired workers. This is income they worked for all their lives — their personal savings or their pensions. Pensions are legally understood to be deferred wages.

Tariffs are bad for the working class in another way. They set workers in different countries against one another, where they are led to blame each other for “stealing our jobs.” But the only way to win against the ruling class is through a global, united, class-wide movement. What's needed is international, working-class solidarity.

The rottenness of capitalism knows no bounds. It's past time to overthrow the class dictatorship of the billionaires. When that happens the working class can really proclaim “Liberation Day.” □

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# U.S. capitalist class – dominated by billionaires

At the start of 2025, Forbes magazine identified 902 billionaires in the U.S., overwhelmingly men. (April 1) While billionaires have always held influence over the machinations of the U.S. government, Donald Trump's second election and the rise to power and influence of unelected Elon Musk, one of the world's richest men, has made opposing billionaires a popular slogan at protests against Trump's draconian federal program cuts.

Signs reading: "Abolish the billionaires" or "Abolish the billionaire class" have appeared everywhere. Last month, during a YouTube video, Senator Bernie Sanders stated, "Our government is now of, by and for the billionaires."

But Sanders, like many liberals, is ignoring most of the history of the U.S. since its founding. President George Washington (1789 – 1797) was the richest man in the U.S., having grown wealthy from the trade of enslaved Africans. Whether millionaires or billionaires, the wealthiest people have always directed developments and policies of the U.S. capitalist government.

To be clear, just being a billionaire does not mean an individual is part of the capitalist ruling class. Athletes, performers, musicians and others who gained wealth through their own labor must be viewed under a different lens than capitalists like Tesla's Elon Musk, Amazon's Jeff Bezos and Meta's Mark Zuckerberg who became billionaires by exploiting the labor of millions of workers. X (formerly Twitter) and Meta have increasingly turned to supporting far-right politicians like Trump and weaponizing "free speech" – for white supremacists.

## History of class struggles

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote in the Communist Manifesto in 1848: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

Under capitalism, the capitalists control the means of production – factories, land, machinery and technology – while workers sell their labor power to the capitalist bosses who pay the workers less than the full value of the wealth the workers create with their labor. This difference provides the profit for the capitalists. It's the source of the exploiters' wealth under capitalism.

Marx argued that the interests of the cap-



italists and workers are inherently antagonistic. What one wins the other loses. This leads to a constant struggle between these two classes for power and resources.

From its inception the U.S. was a "bourgeois democracy" where the state was established to protect the interests of the ruling class. Individuals representing wealthy families and major corporations were appointed to positions in presidential cabinets, making sure the government protected the capitalists' interests.

"Expanding Empire: The Global War Drive of Big Business and the Forces That Will Stop It," written in 1972 by Vince Copeland, a founding member of Workers World Party, expands on the capitalists' means of control over government.

But during times of severe crisis – especially when the very underpinnings of the bourgeois government or economy were threatened – certain wealthy individuals would assume direct roles in government. Nelson A. Rockefeller, from the wealthy Rockefeller family, was the governor of New York from 1959 to 1973, a period that included the Attica prison uprising, which he ordered to be suppressed. He also served as U.S. vice president under President Gerald Ford from 1974 to 1977, following the resignations of Vice President Spiro Agnew and later President Richard Nixon. Ford himself was a member of a wealthy ruling-class family.

The election of Trump and the rise of Elon Musk to power are taking place under a U.S. capitalist crisis unlike any in recent history – capitalism at a dead end.

With the U.S. capitalist class facing yet another severe global economic crisis, these billionaires have stepped in to fully and financially back Trump, to the extent that Musk has been allowed to dictate cuts

to government departments that will lead to cuts in essential social services.

## Failure of globalization

The over 40 years of globalization and neoliberalism since the early 1980s was supposed to save the system. Capitalist owners of the means of production grew increasingly richer by exporting entire factories abroad. There they could more easily exploit low-wage labor throughout the Global South.

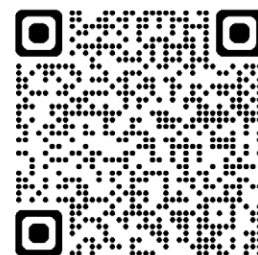
Trump claims that tariffs can somehow reverse the impact of globalization and bring jobs back to the U.S. This is another of his pipe dreams.

Many liberals who oppose the billionaire oligarchy in the U.S. call for a return to capitalist democracy. But this system has never served the majority of the population. Any basic rights for unions, workers, people of color, women and gender-oppressed people and LGBTQIA2S+ communities were won over years of struggle. Now they are the targets of Trump's policies.

Sanders and Democratic Party liberals behind the "Hands Off" protests April 5 focused on Musk and the growing oligarchy of billionaires, calling for a return to "democracy." They completely ignore the fact that the majority of members of Congress are millionaires, with many having financial holdings in major corporations.

Working-class and oppressed people – not just in the U.S. but around the world – face a challenge that Marx would have welcomed. Our fight is not simply against billionaires but against the capitalist class which billionaires like Musk dominate. The solution is not to go back to bourgeois democracy but to go forward to working-class, global revolution. □

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# ¡Construir protestas para defender a los estudiantes!

Mundo Obrero (MO) hace un llamamiento a todos los estudiantes que tienen derechos ciudadanos en Estados Unidos y que se identifican con el derecho a protestar para que emprendan acciones en defensa de cualquier estudiante que haya sido blanco de la administración Trump y de los policías del Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas (ICE). MO hace un llamamiento al movimiento antiimperialista para que se una y apoye cualquiera de estos esfuerzos.

Fíjese en los siguientes tres ejemplos que ya están en marcha para defender a estudiantes -en los tribunales y en las calles- que demostraron valientemente su oposición al genocidio infligido por Estados Unidos e Israel en Gaza.

Rümeysa Öztürk es estudiante de doctorado y becaria Fullbright de nacionalidad turca en la Universidad de Tufts, en los suburbios de Boston. Fue apresada por agentes del ICE enmascarados y vestidos de paisano que la agredieron y la ataron con una cremallera mientras paseaba por su barrio de Somerville, Massachusetts, el 25 de marzo. El asalto, similar al de la Gestapo, fue grabado en vídeo y visto por millones de personas en todo el mundo.

Indignadas por la agresión, miles de personas convergieron en la Universidad de Tufts el 26 de marzo para exigir que el ICE liberara inmediatamente a Öztürk de su entrega a un campo de concentración del ICE en Luisiana. Dos de los mayores sindicatos de Boston -Empleados de Servicios (SEIU), al que pertenece Öztürk, y el Sindicato de Profesores de Boston (BTU)- han exigido la liberación inmediata de Öztürk y el fin de las redadas del ICE. Un juez federal dictaminó el 28 de marzo que Öztürk no puede ser deportado sin una orden judicial.

Yunseo Chung, estudiante de Columbia y residente legal estadounidense que se trasladó a Estados Unidos desde Corea del Sur cuando era niña, fue detenida en una sentada el 5 de marzo en el cercano Barnard College en protesta por la expulsión de estudiantes que participaban en el activismo proalestino.

Amenazado de deportación por Seguridad Nacional, el 24 de marzo Chung demandó a Trump y a otros miembros de la administración. Su demanda argumenta que el gobierno está «intentando utilizar la aplicación de las leyes de inmigración como una cachiporra para suprimir el discurso que no les gusta». (Guardian, 25 de marzo) Un juez de distrito estadounidense concedió una orden de restricción temporal que prohíbe trasladar a Chung, que aún no había sido detenido, fuera de la jurisdicción del Distrito Sur de Nueva York.

Mahmoud Khalil, incautado por el ICE en su vivienda de la Universidad de Columbia, atrajo una amplia publicidad y provocó manifestaciones de miles de personas en la zona de Nueva York y en todo el país. Al igual que Öztürk, Khalil fue trasladado a un centro de detención del ICE en Luisiana, donde el régimen de MAGA espera un cheque en blanco para sus tácticas de estado policial.

Cientos de manifestantes, en su mayoría judíos, realizaron una

## MUNDO OBRERO editorial



FOTO: CEASEFIRE NOW, N.J.

Cientos de manifestantes frente a la audiencia del tribunal federal para Mahmoud Khalil en Newark, N.J., el 28 de marzo de 2025.

sentada en la Torre Trump de Nueva York el 13 de marzo para protestar por las detenciones de Khalil y otros. La policía detuvo a unos 100 participantes. Una protesta el 28 de marzo en el lugar de la vista judicial de Khalil en Newark, Nueva Jersey, respaldó las demandas de sus abogados de que las vistas se queden en Nueva Jersey.

Otros estudiantes han sido detenidos, y el Secretario de Estado Marco Rubio ha dicho que la administración está cancelando arbitrariamente las tarjetas verdes (permiso para trabajar en EE.UU.) y los visados de estudiante de otros, incluidos estudiantes chinos.

Las detenciones, similares a las de la Gestapo, pretenden atemorizar y silenciar a la oposición. También han despertado y extendido la resistencia. La oposición incluye a quienes luchan contra la guerra genocida estadounidense-israelí en Gaza y a otros que apoyan el derecho a disenter.

MO insta a sus lectores y copensadores a promover todas esas muestras de resistencia a las tácticas de estado policial de la Casa Blanca.

La amenaza pública de Rubio de que el Estado imperialista suprimirá arbitrariamente los derechos de los estudiantes extranjeros, visitantes y otros, aunque es una grave amenaza para los individuos a los que va dirigida, expone las debilidades en el corazón del imperialismo estadounidense.

Durante décadas, la clase dominante estadounidense abrió las puertas de sus universidades a estudiantes de todo el mundo con la absoluta confianza de que este paso beneficiaría a su sistema. No temían las consecuencias. Al contrario, muchos estudiantes se quedarían en EE.UU. y proporcionarían investigadores, médicos e ingenieros leales a la economía capitalista estadounidense.

Que el equipo MAGA esté cerrando estas puertas es una admisión de que el imperialismo estadounidense está perdiendo su capacidad para atraer este talento y ganarse la lealtad de los estudiantes.

¡Defendamos a los estudiantes! □

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y oprimidos  
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PHOTO: CATHY MCLAUGHLIN

Miles de personas reunidas en la plaza Powderhouse, cerca de la Universidad Tufts, para exigir «¡Liberen a Rümeysa Öztürk!», Somerville, Massachusetts, 26 de marzo de 2025.