



# Protesters challenge war profiteers' summit

**Ukrainian generals meet the warbucks**

By John Parker

Austin, Sept. 21 – We gathered last night, coming from Baltimore, Los Angeles and Denver, at the hotel in Austin, Texas – 12 minutes away from the Austin Convention Center where the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) was holding its "Future Forces" conference.

The NDIA gathered merchants of death like Lockheed, General Dynamic, Raytheon and other weapons manufacturers salivating over the prospect of billions more additional dollars to add to the \$70 billion already promised for war in Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials and military officers, including President Volodymyr Zelensky himself, were scheduled to attend this conference – some in person, some virtually – to push for more weapons to be manufactured to make up for those already being used to target the Russian, Lugansk and Donetsk militaries and to target civilians, especially in the Donbass region.

However, as could be seen on the faces of Ukrainian military officers entering and exiting the conference, the last thing they expected to see were activists chanting: "Hey hey, ho ho, war profiteers have got to go!" and "Biden, Biden, can't you see – we don't want a World War III."

The protest was initiated by the Socialist Unity Party. Many activists from SUP, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Dallas Anti-War Committee, Austin Students for a Democratic Society and other unaffiliated activists were also surprised at the overwhelmingly positive reception from residents and those working near the Austin Convention Center.

Paul Tardie, who decided to come over after seeing the protest from across the street, said, "Thanks for doing this!" He said that he was frustrated by the one-sided reporting on what he knew was a U.S. proxy war against Russia.

Nicole Rogers and Jacob Rogers from Round Rock drove 20 miles in traffic to get to the demonstration. They had very unique signs reading "Draft beer, not people" and "War money, blood money," with its own comic strip within the sign explaining how the military-industrial complex profits off of war.

Nicole led chants highlighting the need for peace and not death from the bombs being sold during this convention. A veteran who was walking by and wanted to know more about our protest spoke to her and walked away saying he was with us.

Two members of the Dallas Anti-War Commit-



SLL PHOTO: RASIKA RUWANPATHIRANA

**From Buffalo, N.Y., massacre to Ukraine's war crimes** 6-7



SLL PHOTO: JOHN PARKER



SLL PHOTOS: MAGGIE VASCASSENNO

tee joined the protest with their banner, leading the picket line and chants. Members Dan and Cassandra drove three-and-a-half hours to get to the protest.

Baltimore community activists drove 24 hours to get to the protest. That East Coast city is another area victimized by infrastructure neglect, which recently manifested in the presence of E. coli in its drinking water.

Said Sharon Black of the Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly: "We need money for food, housing and infrastructure to rebuild our cities. We need to be fighting for abortion rights and trans rights, not for U.S./NATO proxy wars. Biden needs to stop the Starbucks and Amazon union busters, not spend billions on war."

What we found out today is that there are a lot of people who now remain quiet, due to the perceived backlash for challenging the lies from the Pentagon and the corporate media about the U.S. war on Russia. They remain quiet because they have a different view.

From the conversations we had with some of them today, we learned that many more than we realized do understand what is really going on – from the Nazi infiltration of the military and government of Ukraine, to the war's billions of dollars in profits for the military-industrial complex.

More importantly, we discovered that when we mobilize and make our rejection of these lies and this war visible through protest – people will find their voices and join us. □

## The Donbass referendum and blood on Biden's hands

By Melinda Butterfield

On Sept. 21, U.S. President Joe Biden stood before the 77th United Nations General Assembly and said with a straight face: "If nations can pursue their imperial ambitions without consequences, then we put at risk everything this very institution stands for ... You cannot seize a nation's territory by force."

The Oxford English Dictionary defines projection as "the unconscious transfer of one's own desires or emotions to another." Or, in this case, one's own actions.

Biden's remarks were subject to widespread ridicule on social media.

Biden's war \$\$\$ to Ukraine 3

But many people who recognize the hypocrisy of a U.S. president condemning others' alleged "imperial ambitions" may not fully understand how this slander was directed at the embattled people of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR) of the Donbass region, who have been subject to eight and half years of unrelenting war since the 2014 U.S.-sponsored coup in Ukraine.

While Biden was in New York gracing world leaders with his comedy stylings and attempting to whip up a new wave of war frenzy against Russia and China, activists from around the U.S. gathered in Austin, Texas, to protest a conference of the biggest U.S. military-industrial corporations, including Raytheon Technologies, Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics.

Ukrainian president, U.S. tool, and war criminal Volodymyr Zelensky was the invited guest of honor of the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA). He only appeared virtually, but Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Volodymyr Havrylov was in Austin. Havrylov joined the chorus of U.S. officials and billionaire war profiteers, encouraging an unprecedented speedup of weapons production (and profits).

The Biden administration and Congress have committed \$70 billion in war aid to Ukraine so far this year.

Thanks to these esteemed folks, on Monday, Sept. 19, another awful massacre occurred in Donetsk, the capital city of the Donetsk People's Republic. At least nine people were killed and five more wounded when a Ukrainian shell hit a bus stop and destroyed a nearby market. As usual, the target was an entirely civilian area.

At first, rescue workers thought more people had been killed, Donetsk News Agency reported, "due to the large number of body fragments."

On Tuesday, Sept. 20, a school and several residential buildings in Donetsk were damaged by Ukrainian fire. A civilian was wounded. The next day, a hospital was hit, wounding three.

Now it's Thursday, Sept. 22. Another mass

*Continued on page 12*

# Railroad workers have had enough

By Stephen Millies

President Biden announced a tentative agreement on Sept. 15 between the railroad monopolies and unions representing 115,000 railroad workers. It still has to be voted upon by union members.

The terms may include a 24% increase in wages over four years and a retroactive pay package. Railroad bosses are notorious for agreeing to new contracts years after the old one expired.

A big issue is not being penalized for taking off work to see a doctor. None of these items have been officially disclosed. Everything had to be clawed out of the railroad outfits.

Railroad workers have been under attack for decades. While there were two million workers employed on U.S. railroads in 1920, their number is now less than 150,000.

The capitalist economy would still grind to a halt without their labor. Wheat, corn, lumber, steel, cars, chemicals and coal are shipped by rail. So are many other items.

The elimination of almost all passenger trains outside of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor may lessen the railroad industry's visibility. Deindustrialization, especially the closing of many steel mills, has cost thousands of railroad jobs.

Yet globalization depends on freight trains carrying double-stacked containers from seaports to their destination. The seven big U.S. and Canadian "class 1" railroads hauled in \$27 billion of net income last year.

That's more than twice as much as what these railroads paid in wages. Meanwhile, CSX CEO James Foote raked in \$20 million.

These vast profits don't prevent rail bosses from turning the screws even tighter on workers. Earlier this year BNSF arbitrarily imposed a new attendance policy without any consultation with unions.

Workers are being threatened with being fired for going to a doctor or even a hospital visit. Forget about taking your child to the clinic.



Rail workers in Chicago rallied Sept. 21 to keep up the pressure on railroad bosses.

PHOTO: JONAH FURMAN

BNSF is completely owned by the Berkshire Hathaway conglomerate, whose CEO Warren Buffett has a \$94.6 billion fortune.

Most transportation workers don't have Monday through Friday work weeks. Neither do millions of workers in hospitals, restaurants and other 24/7 workplaces.

Many freight engineers and conductors are on call with no set work schedule. They may be forced, along with other railroaders, to be away from their families for a week or more.

Yet their justified demand for more sick days, even if unpaid, was fought by railroad companies.

## Railroad lobby lies

The Association of American Railroads has for decades been spreading lies about railroad workers. The AAR called safety rules "featherbedding." Train crews were slashed.

Railroad companies want to operate lengthy freight trains with just one worker. Or none at all, with the trains operated by remote control.

The tragic result of these cutbacks was the Lac-Mégantic rail disaster in Quebec, where 47 people were killed in 2013. This runaway train had just a one-person crew.

Railroad capitalists aren't satisfied with getting rid of 1.3 million jobs over the last 75 years and tearing up 100,000 miles of track. They got rid of most passenger trains before dumping them on Amtrak.

These money bags have a new scheme misleadingly called "precision scheduled railroading." It destroyed 45,000 railroad jobs in the

last six years, a 29% cut in employees.

Surface Transportation Board Chair Martin Oberman said that the class 1 outfits have "cut labor below the bone... In order to make up for the shortage of labor, they are overworking and abusing the workforces they have."

Trains have increased in length to as much as two miles or more. Railroad yards have been abandoned or downsized. Even the big capitalists who are railroad shippers are angry at the decline in service.

According to the Surface Transportation Board, the class 1 outfits paid out \$196 billion in dividends and stock buy-backs over the last 10 years. That's far more than the \$136 billion that railroads spent on new equipment and maintaining the right-of-way.

For almost two centuries the government has lavished subsidies upon the railroads. The latest example is the \$14 billion the feds spent on positive train control, a safety system that was decades overdue.

The most notorious of these handouts were the vast land grants stolen from Indigenous nations. Custer had it coming and he died for the Northern Pacific railroad, now part of BNSF.

Thousands of miles of track were laid by enslaved Africans, both before and after the Civil War. The "steel-driving man" John Henry was a prisoner who was worked to death building the Chesapeake and Ohio railway, now part of CSX.

Warren Buffett needs to pay reparations.

## Shooting down workers

Striking railroad workers were shot down in 1877 by troops sent by President Rutherford B. Hayes. He betrayed Black people by letting the Reconstruction governments be overthrown by the Ku Klux Klan.

Jay Gould broke the 1886 strike on the Missouri Pacific, now part of the Union Pacific. The rail tycoon declared he could hire one half of the working class to shoot the other half.

General Miles shot down railroad strikers in Chicago in 1894. This war criminal had Geronimo captured and later seized Puerto Rico as a U.S. colony in 1898.

The current negotiations happened a century after railroad workers employed in shops and roundhouses revolted against a 12% wage cut. Nearly 400,000 workers walked off the job on July 1, 1922.

President Warren G. Harding and his thoroughly corrupt administration smashed the strike. At least 10 workers were killed by the National Guard and private detectives across the country.

In 1991, George H.W. Bush was woken in the White House to sign a bill ordering railroad employees back to work. The current negotiations were also met by threats of government intervention.

After years of the big business media claiming the workers and their unions don't matter, the White House had to get involved.

Joe Biden may be smiling, but he wouldn't have tolerated a strike, either. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi had legislation ready to crush it.

All workers have the right to strike. If union members vote to reject the proposed agreement and need to strike, every poor and working person should support it.

A coast-to-coast strike will inspire millions like the Black Lives Matter movement did.

*The writer is a retired Amtrak worker and a member of the American Train Dispatchers Association and Transportation Communications Union.*

## New book coming soon:

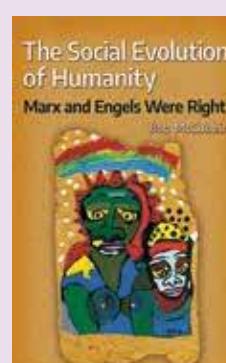
# U.S. proxy war in Ukraine and Donbass

Articles and interviews, 2013-2022

By Melinda Butterfield

The military conflict in Ukraine didn't start with Russia's intervention in Feb. 2022. After a U.S.-backed coup in 2014, Ukraine waged a genocidal war against the people of the Donbass region (Donetsk and Lugansk) for eight years, while repressing internal opposition. Learn the truth behind Washington's multi-billion-dollar proxy war against Russia in this collection of articles written as events unfolded.

Melinda Butterfield is co-editor of Struggle-La Lucha newspaper. In 2014, she visited Crimea, where she met with exiled Ukrainian anti-fascists, and was deported from Ukraine at gunpoint. In 2016, she went to the front line in the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics.



Paperback or Kindle <https://tinyurl.com/vwarcv7>

## The Social Evolution of Humanity

**Marx and Engels were right!** by Bob McCubbin

This study of the evolution of humanity focuses on human social/sexual relations and, in particular, the changing social status of women. It offers a selection of scientific evidence that updates and augments the viewpoint expressed in Frederick Engels' masterful work, '*Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.*'

McCubbin is the author of 'Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View.' Published in 1976, during the first wave of the modern LGBTQ2S movement, McCubbin's unparalleled achievement was to offer a historical analysis of how LGBTQ2S oppression developed.



## Struggle-La Lucha audio articles now available

Many Struggle-La Lucha articles are now available in audio format. Audio articles are more widely accessible to anyone with difficulty seeing or reading. The audio articles can also be listened to like a podcast – while traveling to work, for example.

Look for the audio link at the beginning of many SLL articles or check the list on the "Struggle - La Lucha audio articles" page: [tinyurl.com/4yusm2xv](https://tinyurl.com/4yusm2xv)

# New Orleans abortion rights protest blocks busy Bourbon St.

By Gregory E. Williams

Sept. 10—Today the Louisiana Abortion Rights Action Committee held a demonstration and march downtown. Signs and hand-outs read, “Raise the wages, lower the rent, abortion access now,” highlighting the intersection of all these issues affecting poor and working people. Abortion access is a working-class issue.

The action was endorsed by Workers Voice Socialist Movement, Socialist Unity Party, Women In Struggle/Mujeres En Lucha and Louisiana Workers Councils.

Speakers began with addresses outside the Louisiana Supreme Court building on Royal Street.

Gavrielle Gemma of the WVSM said that “there is a right-wing movement that wants to protect the accumulation of vast wealth and income inequality. They see [this moment] as an opportunity to take away everything—from workers, from women, from everybody, just so they can make profits.”

“Every movement has a beginning and a time when it seems as if it is not strong. But the people are strong. Vote for whoever you want; it won’t change the situation. Organize. People fighting back will change the situation.”

After the talks, the crowd began marching through the French Quarter, chanting, “Not the church, not

the state, rich men won’t decide our fate” and “Abortion is health care.” Only a couple onlookers were openly hostile. Overwhelmingly, the service industry workers and even some tourists seemed receptive. Servers and kitchen staff came out of the restaurants, took fliers and pumped their fists.

For around 10 minutes the marchers blocked one of the most commercially important intersections on Bourbon Street. Workers from the nearby queer bars came down to see what was going on, and some joined in the chants.

Over a megaphone, one organizer said: “If you’re wondering why we’re stopping traffic, the reason is that our lives — our right to exist with bodily autonomy, free from oppression, free from violence — is under attack! And whether you’re out there working or drinking you are involved! Join us! Take a flier!”

## Service workers’ power

In 2019, visitors to New Orleans spent \$10.05 billion, making tourism and the service sector that it relies on a driver of the city’s economy. The French Quarter is the heart of that. This means that the workers here have tremendous power. Women make up 57% of New Orleans’ low-paid hospitality workforce. If workers—especially women and gender-oppressed people—collectively decide to shut the city down, we can



March through the French Quarter on Sept. 10.

SLL PHOTO: GREGORY E. WILLIAMS

stop the flow of cash to the bosses and force them to meet our demands.

The smallest direct action—like blocking Bourbon Street for a few minutes—contains within it the seeds of bigger collective action. On Saturday, the workers in the bars and restaurants heard the message and pumped their fists. One day, what if they all walk out?

There should be no doubt that the specter of the George Floyd Summer is fresh on the minds of the ruling class and all their lackeys in the state.

And that radical moment contained within itself yet more seeds, and echoes of the urban rebellions that shook this country after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination. It was the rebellions of the people that consolidated the gains

of the Civil Rights era.

Or take contemporary India. That country is very different from the U.S. But it’s still worth thinking about the fact that, for several years in a row, Indian workers (including farm laborers) have carried out possibly the biggest general strikes in history—even for a day.

By shutting down whole sectors of the economy, the farmers defeated fascist Modi’s anti-farmer legislation. We have much to learn from the working class of India.

For now, the workers of New Orleans and the U.S. are a sleeping giant. But if we get organized, we can have the power. That’s what the ruling class and their fascist movement fear.

Abortion is health care. And if we don’t get it, shut it down!

# Biden adds billions in Ukraine ‘aid,’ pushing total to \$70 billion

By Gary Wilson

The people of Jackson, Mississippi, have toxic sludge coming out of their kitchen faucets. In some neighborhoods, there isn’t enough water pressure to flush toilets. They’ve gotten, at most, the distracted attention of President Joe Biden.

Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba says it will take \$1 billion to fix the city’s water plant and another \$1 billion to fix the sewer system. The Biden administration’s response? Last January, they promised to loan the state of Mississippi \$459 million over 5 years for water “improvements.” (Reminder: these loans from the federal government must be paid back with interest.)

The loans go to the state, not to Jackson, a majority-Black city that has been underdeveloped for years.

With the new crisis in Jackson’s water system, nothing has come from the Biden administration.

One joker suggested that if the city of Jackson declared itself a part of Ukraine, the \$2 billion check would be in the mail tomorrow.

The joke isn’t that far off.

## \$13.7 billion ‘slipped in’

Andrew Lautz in Responsible Statecraft reports that the Biden administration has “slipped” another \$13.7 billion weapons package into a routine spending bill that Congress

must pass to keep the government open past Sept. 30.

If Congress accedes to the Biden administration’s request, then the U.S. government will have committed nearly \$69 billion in taxpayer funds to Ukraine in just six short months,” the report says.

The latest request from President Biden allocates about half of the total funding to the Department of Defense (\$7.2 billion) and the other half to the Departments of State and Energy (\$6.5 billion). This is in line with the first Ukraine aid package Congress passed (\$13.6 billion total, which included \$6.5 billion for DoD and \$6.8 billion for State) and the second, much larger aid bill Congress passed (\$41.6 billion total, including \$20.1 billion for DoD and \$19 billion for State).

If the Biden request passes as is, then total U.S. war spending committed to Ukraine will be over \$69 billion in six months. That’s more than triple what the U.S. spent in Afghanistan in the first year of the occupation. It’s more than the State Department’s budget. And it equals what Russia spent on defense in 2021, Lautz adds.

This is all new funding, not taken out of existing funds for the Pentagon, for example. That means that Biden and Congress must borrow the funds. Lautz explains: “In fact, rising interest rates mean that the in-

terest costs alone on this \$69 billion in debt could be an additional \$14 billion to \$15 billion over 10 years, raising the taxpayers’ total tab for Ukraine assistance to as much as \$84 billion.”

The escalating billions for the U.S.-NATO proxy war on Russia have gotten not even a whisper of objection in Congress. With all the electioneering that is going on and the coming congressional elections, the only negative comment was from Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Oklahoma), who said it wasn’t enough.

When it comes to Congress, the sky’s the limit for the Pentagon and the military-industrial complex.

## Wall Street antics

Wall Street bankers and the military-industrial complex are calling the tune. And that can be seen in the antics of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky, who is putting in performances at the centers of power.

On Sept. 6, Zelensky rang the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange, which was filled with the blue and yellow Ukrainian war flag. This was the day after Labor Day, which seemed to emphasize that Zelensky had recently imposed a martial-law condition on workers in Ukraine, outlawing labor unions for 80% of the workforce, banning strikes or picket lines, and tearing up existing union contracts. Zelen-

sky signed the law in the last week of August.

Zelensky’s vicious anti-labor laws have been compared to the anti-labor repression of Chile’s fascist Pinochet regime.

Zelensky announced at the Stock Exchange a massive \$400 billion state sell-off, inviting Wall Street’s imperialist capitalists to exploit Ukraine’s resources and low-paid labor.

Zelensky is following the Wall Street appearance with a show prepared for a major U.S. military-industrial conference on Sept. 21 in Austin, Texas, hosted by the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA). Oleksii Reznikov, Ukraine’s minister of defense, is also scheduled to speak.

NDIA includes defense industry giants like Raytheon Technologies, Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics.

Eight defense contractors — including Raytheon, Lockheed and General Dynamics — attended an April Pentagon meeting to discuss how the U.S. could increase arms production for the Ukraine proxy war.

This should be sufficient to set the course for the anti-imperialist movement. The U.S.-NATO proxy war is being expanded. It can only be countered by organizing opposition to the imperialist war, the Wall Street bankers and the military-industrial monopolies behind it.

# Fear of an educated working class

By Stephen Millies

Former U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer didn't have to worry about student loans when she graduated from Brooklyn College in 1962. Whites then comprised over 90% of the students in the City University of New York system. Nobody had to spend a dime on tuition.

By 2019, Asian, Black, Indigenous and Latinx students accounted for 73% of the students in CUNY's four-year colleges and 85% in CUNY's community colleges. But CUNY isn't free anymore.

Current tuition is \$6,930 per year for the four-year colleges and \$4,800 per year in the community colleges. This doesn't include over \$200 in student fees or the cost of books and supplies.

The imposition of expensive tuition on the much more diverse student body is racism.

Black and Latinx students accounted for 40% of New York City's high school graduates in 1969. Yet CUNY's student body was still 91% white.

The same year, a student strike demanded open admissions to CUNY for all New York City high school graduates. It was won in 1970.

One of the fighters for open admissions was the late Tom Soto. He was later invited to come to Attica by the prisoners who would be massacred by Gov. Nelson Rockefeller.

Open admissions benefited everybody. The number of first-time students almost doubled from 19,939 in 1969 to 38,256 in 1972.

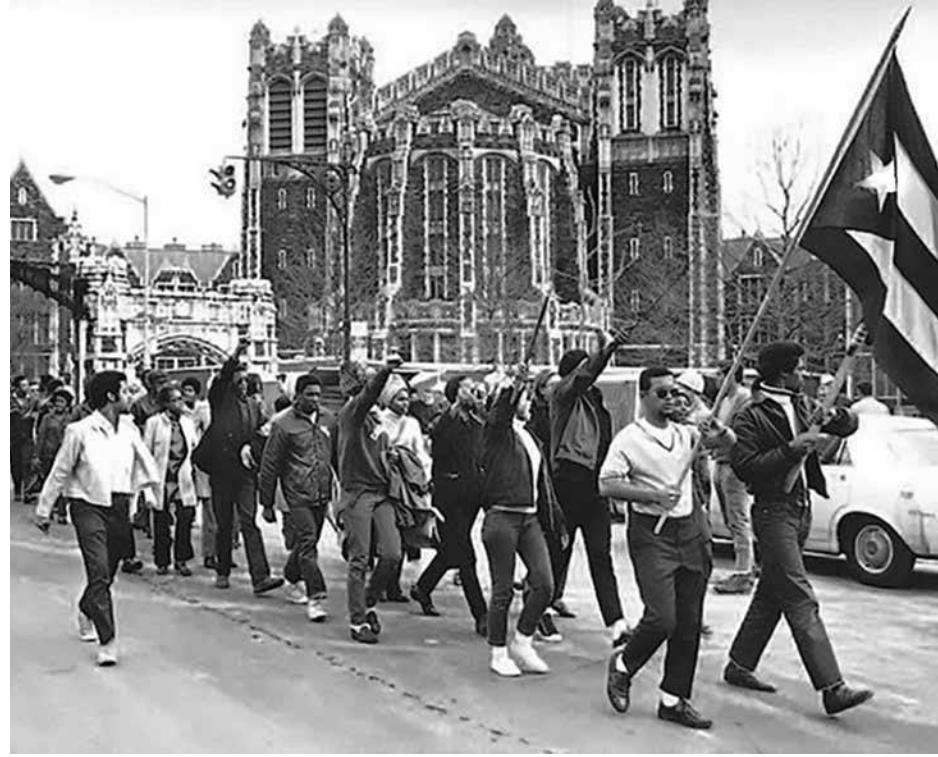
Black students increased 2.7 times from 16,529 to 44,031. Latinx students almost tripled, going from 4,723 to 13,563.

The number of white students also rose by 18%, going from 106,523 in 1968 to 125,804 in 1972. Thousands of more white students were able to attend college because of open admissions.

When Asian, Black, Indigenous and Latinx people move forward, so do all poor and working people.

## Illiteracy is preferable to the rich

The wealthy and powerful hated open admissions. Just the idea that poor people could attend college offended them.



Black and Puerto Rican students and community members march to demand open admissions at New York's City College, 1969.

"We are in danger of producing an educated proletariat ... that's dynamite," moaned Roger Freeman in 1970. Freeman was an advisor to then-Gov. Ronald Reagan of California. The term "proletariat" refers to the working class.

"We have to be selective on who we allow [to go to college]," said Freeman. Reagan and Freeman were outraged by the struggles of college students against racism and war in the 1960s.

On May Day 1970, President Richard Nixon called these students "bums." Three days later, four Kent State University students were killed by the Ohio National Guard. On May 15, 1970, two Black students at Jackson State College (now Jackson State University) in Mississippi were killed by police.

The longest fight was the 1968-69 student strike at San Francisco State College (now San Francisco State University).

It won Asian, Black, Indigenous and Latinx study programs. Among the strike leaders were the future actor Danny Glover and future International Longshore and Warehouse Union officer Clarence Thomas.

Freeman's sentiments were in tune with the Anglican Bishop Leonard Beecher's 1949 report about education in the British colony of Kenya. Beecher wrote that "illiterates with the right attitude to manual labor are preferable to products of the schools."

There were only three high schools for Africans in Kenya at the time, which admitted just 100 students annually.

Wall Street got its chance to gut open admissions and impose tuition for CUNY students during the 1975 "fiscal crisis" in New York City.

This was a hold-up of over 7 million people by the banksters who demanded 50,000 city workers be fired. Among them were thousands of teachers.

The passing of California's Proposition 13 in a 1978 referendum gutted funding for education and public services in the Golden State. While California residents paid a \$300 yearly fee to attend the University of California at Berkeley in 1968, the tuition is now \$15,000.

In contrast, all education in socialist Cuba is free.

Also helping to drive poorer stu-

dents out of college have been the attacks on affirmative action programs. California's Proposition 209, which passed in 1996, banned these attempts to promote equality.

Black student enrollment reached 8% of the freshman classes in the California State University system in 1997. By 2018, it dropped to just 4%.

Private schools are worse. Just 1% of the students at Caltech are Black.

## Thirty-nine lashes for teaching

Slave masters considered teaching enslaved Africans to read and write to be dangerous. If an enslaved person was convicted of teaching another enslaved African to read in North Carolina, they would be whipped 39 times.

Black people in the United States fought to build schools. Peter Humphries Clark, a co-worker of Frederick Douglass, was principal of Cincinnati's Colored High School.

Clark was a socialist who spoke to striking railroad workers in 1877. "The miserable condition into which society has fallen has but one remedy, and that is to be found in socialism," said Clark.

The struggle for free public education was connected to the abolitionist movement. Thaddeus Stevens fought for public schools at the 1837-38 Pennsylvania constitutional convention.

Stevens later led the anti-slavery forces in Congress. He demanded land and freedom for Black people.

Following the U.S. Civil War, it was South Carolina's Reconstruction government — known as the "Black Parliament" — that established the state's first public school system.

Capitalists need workers to have skills, yet they fear an educated working class. They want college to be reserved for "their kind."

The wealthy also don't want anyone else helping to educate poor and working people. The FBI hounded the labor schools operated by the Communist Party.

We agree that an educated proletariat is dynamite. All education should be free.

We look forward to helping to organize the coming social explosion that will get rid of capitalism forever. □



**Saladin Muhammad, PRESENTE!!!**

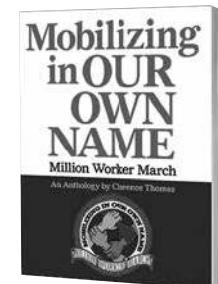
## The great revolutionary Saladin Muhammad joins the ancestors

Brother Saladin leaves an outstanding legacy of revolutionary commitment, leadership, consciousness, and direct organizing of our people's struggle for liberation. He was a commander-in-chief of revolutionary forces throughout the Black Liberation Movement and a staunch fighter for the Black Working Class. He worked tirelessly and with phenomenal energy to organize, guide, and lead our people's fights and battles against oppression. He was an internationalist, upholding the worldwide struggle against capitalism and imperialism. His intellect, insight, and analysis were outstanding in the theory and practice of organizing class and revolutionary struggle and the tactics and strategy of social transformation, national liberation, and socialism for the African American people.

Saladin's unmatched organizing skills led to the formation of the Black Workers for Justice, UE Local 150, and the Southern Workers Assembly, just to recognize only a few of his impactful accomplishments. And these organizational formations of the Black working class were built in the context of North Carolina, a state widely recognized for its anti-unionism and racist history, and in the U.S. South where the lack of a strong, progressive labor movement in the southeast region has been the Achilles heel of the U.S. national labor movement. The struggle to build a "new trade unionism" in the U.S. South must continue.

- The Executive Committee, Black Workers for Justice

The recently published book, "Mobilizing in Our Own Name: Million Worker March" includes the brilliant writing, essays and analysis of Saladin Muhammad. To order go to <https://millionworkermarch.com/>



# Struggle for trans rights and socialism go hand in hand

By Melinda Butterfield

On Aug. 12, the state of Florida announced new guidelines to end all gender-affirming care for trans adults and children who receive Medicaid. This will result in the forcible detransition of thousands of the most vulnerable, especially Black, Brown and Indigenous people. It will result in more deaths among a community that suffers astronomical rates of suicide when denied gender-affirming care.

It also means that private insurance companies are likely to begin denying gender-affirming care since the state rules give them a perfect excuse to do so. And that's clearly what's intended.

Gov. Rick DeSantis couldn't get a trans ban through the state legislature, so this was enacted by the Department of Health through the recommendation of a hand-picked group of anti-trans doctors. This follows the example of Texas, where earlier this year Gov. Greg Abbott and Attorney General Ken Paxton unilaterally enacted criminal investigations of parents, teachers and health care workers who support trans children on charges of "child abuse."

While there are ongoing legal cases in these and other states, the political coup d'état by the U.S. Supreme Court in June makes clear that these kinds of abuses of power will ultimately be legally upheld, as will anti-trans legislation – unless the working class intervenes to turn the situation around.

The combined attacks at the state and national level have unleashed an unprecedented wave of trans panic across the U.S. this year. The most serious escalation came during Pride month, when there were daily attacks aimed at trans people and the LGBTQ2S community generally, some spontaneous but many organized by the fascist right, often with police support.

Hundreds of incidents have been recorded in both so-called "blue" and "red" states, from coast to coast, north and south, but there has been almost no media coverage beyond the local level.

The demonization of trans people is merely the first wave of a fascist-inspired, ruling-class-supported campaign that will next target the broader queer community, women, and all workers and oppressed people. The ultra-right Supreme Court majority has already outlined its plans to eliminate constitutional protections for same-sex marriage, contraception, and protection from so-called "sodomy" laws that are still on the books in many states.

## Divide and rule from above

The speed with which the attack on trans people has escalated this year is truly frightening. From state bills in several Republican-ruled states, which often went down in defeat; to governor-imposed mandates; to fascist violence on the streets and in other public spaces; to the same anti-trans arguments and lies flooding the columns and airwaves of so-called liberal media outlets like the New York Times and megacor-

Based on remarks given at the Socialist Unity Party national plenum on Aug. 13.

Their arguments are then taken up and given weight by the centrist and liberal media and right-wing politicians on behalf of the ruling class.

"Patriotic socialists" claim that trans rights, queer rights and reproductive rights are a "distraction" from the class struggle. They said much the same two years ago about the Black Lives Matter movement. Their arguments can confuse young people who are interested in the class struggle but don't yet have a Leninist understanding of special oppressions and the working class.

We have a special role to play in combating these reactionary forces that seek to divide and disarm the movement. We have not only the lessons taught by Lenin and Engels, but Dorothy Ballan and Bob McCubbin, and also Leslie Feinberg, who dispelled many of these anti-trans myths in the 1996 book "Transgender Warriors," which was recently reissued for its 25th anniversary.

It is not just because some of our party members and many members of our working class are threatened, although that is certainly true. It is because the struggle against trans, queer and women's oppression, like the struggle against national oppression, is central to the class struggle for socialism. Without upholding these struggles and incorporating them into everything we do, the communist movement will not be successful. ■



porations like Netflix and Starbucks; to the complete silence and inaction of the federal government – it's clear a large and growing section of the ruling class has enthusiastically embraced this particular course of divide and rule.

Another front in this war is the monkeypox virus. The CDC, after completely abandoning public health for COVID-19, has falsely portrayed monkeypox as a sexually transmitted disease, centered among gay men and trans feminine people, couched in stigmatizing language, while severely limiting the availability of vaccines. Already there have been incidents of violence and threats tied to this, which are sure to grow if the virus spreads more widely.

To resist this onslaught from above, the unity of the women's movement, the broad LGBTQ2S movement, and the trans community is of the utmost urgency. Why is it important for us as communists to be front and center in this struggle? Because a revolutionary, class and socialist understanding of these issues is needed to build and protect that unity.

A major effort is underway to divide the women's movement, the broad queer movement, and socialists from trans people. Two forms this takes are TERFs (Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists) and so-called "patri-

otistic socialists" (patsocs).

TERFs claim trans women are "men" invading women's spaces. Some even claim trans women are to blame for the loss of abortion rights for supposedly diluting the definition of "woman." They claim trans men are vulnerable lesbians who have been tricked into transitioning.



## Supporters of Leonard Peltier demand 'clemency now!'

By Mary Lou Finley

Indigenous political prisoner Leonard Peltier has now spent over 47 years in prison.

On Jan. 28 he tested positive for COVID-19. He was immediately placed in isolation but received no special care and was even without any drinking water for several days. After 15 days, Peltier sent an email that he had overcome the virus. But there's still concern about long term symptoms arising.

Recently a press conference was held in Tampa, Florida, about a mile from Coleman, the federal prison where Peltier is held. This brought significant media attention to his case, including NBC, CBS and Democracy Now. There were interviews

with one of his lawyers, former judge Kevin Sharp.

Two key senators, Brian Schatz (D-HI) head of the Indian Affairs Committee, and Patrick Leahy (D-VT), openly requested President Biden to grant immediate clemency.

Peltier's current campaign includes a petition to sign and share asking for clemency now: tinyurl.com/mta4xkwh. Readers can also call the White House at (202) 456-1111 to tell President Biden that Leonard Peltier deserves immediate clemency. Donations are needed to fund the freedom campaign: tinyurl.com/5fttux4t.

Bring Leonard home to Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota now! ■



[www.facebook.com/groups/UAINE](http://www.facebook.com/groups/UAINE)  
For those who survived Indian residential/boarding schools and those who never came home.

# From the Tops Market massacre to

By John Parker

We have to first address the most recent accusations against Russia regarding alleged mass graves, since the ruling class is flooding the airwaves with this.

In the first place I'd like to ask – who is the source of that information? Well, according to Reuters, which tries a little harder to show a semblance of objectivity, the source is solely the police. So the sources are the police and Ukrainian President Zelensky repeating this accusation.

Since 2014, however, the police and official sections of the military in Ukraine are led by open supporters of the World War II Nazi German occupation and celebrate the symbols of Nazi Germany.

Second – the Euromaidan Press, one of the very few media outlets still allowed to operate in Ukraine, is widely circulating this story on social media. It also ran stories pushing allegations of rape by Russian soldiers, "confirmed" by former Ukrainian Ombudsman Lyudmyla Denisova, who claimed that 25 teenage girls were kept in a basement in Bucha and gang-raped; nine of them were said to be pregnant.

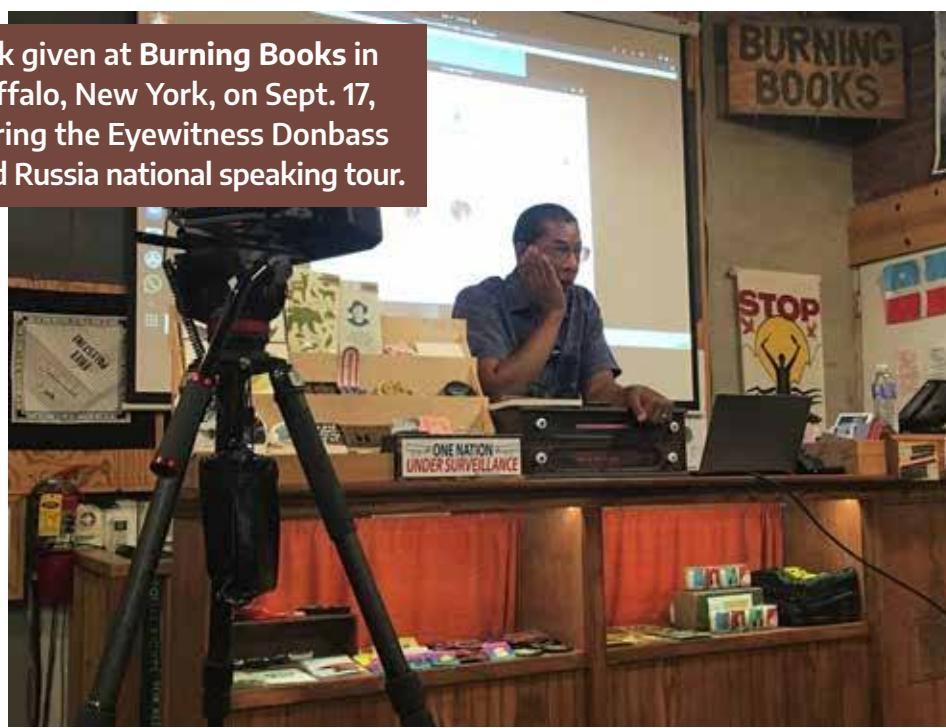
After evidence showed those claims were completely false, these accusations called into question the legitimacy of other Ukrainian government claims. The Ukrainian parliament promptly fired Denisova.

However, these stories had already gotten a very wide circulation. The same exact stories are still being circulated. Now, has Zelensky ever set the record straight on those lies as they continue today?

Third – has the U.S. corporate media been caught passing on outrageous lies that push U.S. imperialist war? Remember the crying and sad 15-year-old girl from Kuwait testifying before a very sympathetic and angered legislative body in Washington about babies being thrown from incubators by Iraqi soldiers, verified by corporate media? It was beamed around the world to build support for the first Iraq War.

Or how about the weapons of mass destruction and chemical weapons stories passed on as verified truth, but weren't? At least 500,000 Iraqi children died of U.S. sanctions as a result of those tales, which all turned out to be unverified lies by the Pen-

**Talk given at Burning Books in Buffalo, New York, on Sept. 17, during the Eyewitness Donbass and Russia national speaking tour.**



John Parker speaks at Burning Books in Buffalo, N.Y., Sept. 17.

SLL PHOTO: RASIKA RUWANPATHIRANA

tagon and Kuwaiti monarchy.

#### U.S. fueled Ukrainian civil war

Enough of that. I want to talk about playgrounds.

Playgrounds are wonderful. I saw the joy when my child was between ages 3 and 8 playing on the playground. Here we have the science of physics and engineering used for the sole purpose of creating see-saws and swings designed to hold a child's weight, manufacturing squeals of joy from children, not bombs.

But children can't live on playgrounds alone. They need nourishment. Speaking of that, isn't it incredible that there was a shortage of infant formula in the richest country in the world? But there was plenty of money for weapons for Ukraine.

In fact, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken last week brought another \$2.8 billion to Kiev. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Some \$70 billion has now been pledged for the war just this year. It's the largest single transfer of arms in U.S. history.

See, the war didn't start with the Russian intervention on Feb. 24. The U.S. began this war against Russia in 2002, and in a more concerted effort in 2004 with NGOs like the National Endowment for Democracy fomenting civil war in neighboring Ukraine.

Do you remember Blackwater, the corporation that provides mercenaries to the U.S. military? They are the folks who shot at Black people

trying to escape the floods in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina.

Well, U.S. military advisers and Blackwater (now called Academi) trained fascist forces in Ukraine, with Washington sending them weapons for the coup in 2014 against a democratically elected Ukrainian government.

Up to this year, they spent \$22 billion in that effort.

This war for oil profits and to increase threats against Russia and China includes the desire to further expand NATO, the most belligerent, violent and aggressive military alliance in the history of the world. When Martin Luther King Jr. said "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today – my own government," he would have surely included the U.S.-led NATO.

After the Warsaw Pact was dissolved, NATO was free to bomb Yugoslavia's passenger trains, demolish homes and kill Chinese journalists, then go on to the wars of Iraq, Syria, Libya and Afghanistan. In fact, the number of NATO countries doubled in 20 years and encircled Russia like a noose. And when Ukraine, following orders from the U.S., called for its inclusion in NATO, with weapons that would be controlled by Nazi forces like the Azov Battalion, Aidar Battalion, Right Sector and others – this presented an existential threat to Russia.

When 150,000 Ukrainian troops

were lined up at the border of the Donbass region earlier this year, after increasing their bombings from 70 per day to 1,400 between Feb. 15 and Feb. 22, the people of the now independent republics of Lugansk and Donetsk formally requested protection from the Russian government to stop a humanitarian crisis caused by the Ukrainian military. The Russian military had a responsibility to stop a genocidal nightmare pushed by the U.S.

#### U.S. media cover-up

Why hasn't all of this been reported by the corporate media?

When the U.S. targets a country for war, the media lose their pretense of objectivity and become an arm of the Pentagon. They report without verification any stories that fit the narrative vilifying the people and leadership of the targeted country.

Ukraine has purged itself of any public opposing views against this U.S. proxy war against Russia. Journalists not willing to play along have either been jailed or killed and media outlets are closed for simply reporting the truth.

There are two major manufacturers of U.S. propaganda in Ukraine, established with the money from NGOs like the National Endowment for Democracy, the European Endowment for Democracy and other U.S. intelligence and NATO funders. They are the Kiev Independent and the Euromaidan Press.

The Kiev Independent has a cozy relationship with the Azov Battalion, one of those fascist organizations that got money and weapons in 2014. Azov is now an official part of the Ukrainian military, and along with other fascist and white supremacist groups including Aidar, Right Sector and Svoboda, they especially target the Donbass region.

Azov sends out videos and reports of "verified" atrocities by the Russian military and the Kiev Independent funnels these stories and videos to Western media, while also disseminating them through social media.

The Euromaidan Press had an interesting and heart-wrenching story about an older couple who were simply trying to get humanitarian aid to a shelter established by the Ukrainian military to protect people in Rubizhne, a city in the Lugansk region, from the Russian military which, they said, were targeting civilians.

What is so interesting about this story is that the alleged account they wrote about happened a few weeks before I visited Rubizhne.

Euromaidan Press' story becomes more dramatic when it is revealed that this well-meaning couple met up with bullets from a Russian checkpoint. The woman, they wrote, was instantly killed, but the man lasted just long enough to call his son and speak to him for the last time before the last beat of his heart.

#### The reality of Rubizhne

Heart wrenching, isn't it? However, the fact is that the shelter in Rubizhne, which I visited and at one point held 350 people, was filled with people who were escaping the bombings of their homes, not by Russian tanks, but Ukrainian tanks – according to them. And, the Rus-



Memorial for the victims of the Tops grocery massacre in Buffalo.

SLL PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

# Ukraine's war crimes in Donbass

sian military was not in control of the area when this story allegedly happened – the Ukrainians were.

Larissa, the manager of the shelter in Rubizhne, was brought to tears when she told me what had happened weeks before we arrived. She said the people in the shelter, including her daughter, were under threat of starvation, with no food or water or fuel to run the well, nor ability to go out and get these things, due to the heavy fighting going on while this area was under Ukrainian control.

She said that even under those conditions, Russian military personnel made the choice to risk their lives to bring water, food and vital supplies to the shelter. If not for that humanitarian aid, they may not have survived.

As we traveled further west in the Lugansk region, we ran across a tuberculosis hospital that had been retrofitted by the Ukrainian military to make war against civilians and used in violation of the 2015 Minsk II agreements.

That facility was full of artillery – 122mm shells that penetrate tanks and aircraft. The walls had been re-decorated with symbols of Nazi Germany and the emblem of the Azov Battalion – the same one used by the 18-year-old white supremacist who massacred Black shoppers at the Tops grocery on Jefferson Avenue here in Buffalo.

We then traveled to Krymske, which in 2015 was occupied by the Ukrainian military. They violated the ceasefire treaty by using this location and bunkers just east of it for the sole purpose of bombing civilians and the Lugansk Peoples Militia in the neighboring town of Sokilnyky.



SLL PHOTO: JOHN PARKER

A decoy surface-to-air missile weapon by a bunker near Sokilnyky.

Ukraine's assault on these areas began in 2014 when the people of the Donbass region decided not to go along with the backsliding of history created by the U.S.-sponsored coup: a new anti-Russian government of puppets to U.S. interests and fascists who glorified World War II German Nazis and their collaborators in Ukraine.

So, with a vote of over 89%, the people of the Donbass region voted to have two independent republics – the Lugansk People's Republic in the north of Donbass and the Donetsk People's Republic in the south.

However, instead of honoring the democratic wishes of the people of Donbass, the new coup government in Kiev began massacring civilians in this region with tanks, resulting in the occupation of Krymske by the Ukrainian military, until late February 2022 when the combined forces of the Lugansk People's Militia and the Russian military forced them out.

The first impression you get when entering the town of Krymske is how normal-looking the homes and buildings are, unlike in Sokilnyky, where the homes look more akin to Swiss cheese and the administrative buildings are more rubble than structure.

This is due to the constant bombing of Sokilnyky by the Ukrainian



John Parker walking through a Ukrainian bunker west of Sokilnyky.

PHOTO: IZVESTIA

forces from 2014 until February 2022. By 2017, in fact, the civilian population there had to flee for their lives.

In Krymske, however, although they did not have to fear being bombed by the forces of the Lugansk People's Militia, the horror this population faced was the occupation of a military led by Nazis.

## U.S., Ukraine and white supremacy

Before coming here today, we visited the Tops supermarket on Jefferson Avenue. What was once abstract in our heads became very real when we saw the pictures of those who had died at the corner memorial there.

This community understands the ugly danger of white supremacy all too well. And it has also raised its head most blatantly and proudly in Ukraine today, thanks to the billions of dollars in U.S. support given to the Azov Battalion and other white supremacists since 2014.

Andriy Biletskyi, founder of the Azov Battalion, said in 2010 that the Ukrainian nation's mission was to "lead the white race of

the world in a final crusade..." Today followers of the Azov movement are encouraged to commit atrocities wherever they are living and post them on social media.

In 2019, Olena Semenyaka, the head of international outreach for the Azov movement, told Time Magazine that Azov's mission was to form a coalition of far-right groups across the Western world, with the ultimate aim of taking power throughout Europe.

She also acknowledged contacts with the U.S. Rise Above Movement (RAM) and said that RAM members came to Ukraine from the U.S. to "learn how to create youth forces in the ways Azov has."

After this meeting, RAM members participated in and helped organize the August 2017 Unite the Right riot of neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, North Carolina, where Heather Heyer was killed by a white supremacist who drove into the counter-protest she participated in. Three RAM members were arrested for inciting and organizing violence there, and sentenced to a little over two years in prison.

How does this relate to right here, right now?

We can't rely on those who don't give a damn about the threat to Black people from these fascist groups, like the Biden Administration and the Democrats, all of whom voted to continue to support feeding these monsters in Ukraine. They are no better than the racist Republican Party when it comes to white supremacy and the murder of our children by either the cops or fascist organizations.

The money they are literally sending up in smoke to bomb ethnic Ukrainians, ethnic Russians and other peoples in Ukraine could have saved countless lives from COVID – which, by the way, hits us Black people three times harder – or solved the homeless crisis and stopped the march towards poverty for our entire class due to inflation. But they don't give a damn about our security or our children's lives.

We are at a critical juncture. What lays before us is the threat of World War III. What lays before us is the threat of unprecedented poverty due to the rise in costs of basic necessities.

What lays before us is a return to Jim Crow laws and the lynchings we have already seen in the form of shootings of stores, shootings of churches – all resurrecting the past horrors of the bombing of the church in Birmingham by the KKK.

But if we unify our struggles, if we pledge our solidarity to every movement of working and poor people and people of color; to women and gender non-conforming people and our trans family; to Starbucks and Amazon workers fighting for a union; to Haitian immigrants fighting for their lives along with the entire immigrant community; and pledge to never let U.S. imperialist war be allowed to decimate our class and our struggle – instead of us fearing them, they will tremble at our strength and actions.

Let's get organized and unified, now! You can do that by keeping in touch with the Socialist Unity Party and joining our efforts to unify and reinvigorate a truly anti-imperialist movement in this country. ☈



Playground in Lugansk city.

SLL PHOTO: JOHN PARKER



## SACRAMENTO:

# A day of solidarity with prisoners and formerly incarcerated people

By Gloria Verdieu

This is the story of my experience going to Quest for Democracy 2022 on Aug. 8 in Sacramento, California's state capital.

I was offered the opportunity to go to Sacramento with All Of Us Or None (AOUON), a grassroots organization led by formerly incarcerated people, whose purpose is to strengthen the voice of people most affected by mass incarceration and the growth of the prison-industrial complex. Their goal is to build a powerful political movement to win full restoration of human and civil rights for incarcerated and previously incarcerated individuals.

I was told Quest for Democracy is a statewide lobbying day giving incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals and their families the opportunity to meet with state representatives and learn the process by which bills are passed. Most important, it is a chance to hold elected officials accountable.

We were given a list of bills and asked to choose a couple that interested us. When meeting with assembly members, we were to speak on why the bill is important and ask the representatives, "Can we count on your 'yes' vote on this bill?"

I was a bit hesitant, because I was told not to bring up other issues and stick to the issues on the list. I don't consider myself a lobbyist and I don't have any confidence in the capitalist criminal justice system or the politicians to do the right thing.

Early on the morning of Aug. 8, a group of seven activists, including me, boarded two flights from San Diego to Sacramento. We rented a van and drove to the capital, where everything was set up.

Some groups came the day before and received training on how to approach assembly members and present their concerns in a concise manner. The time you have is very limited, so you must make your point in 2 to 3 minutes or less.

There was a line at the AOUON booth to get t-shirts, a lunch ticket, a packet listing summaries of many bills on prison reform, and a package of "courage score sheets" for state representatives. We were asked to review this information before going to visit with our assigned representative. I knew little about what was going to happen when we sat with the State Assembly member.

### End involuntary servitude!

I was excited when the announcement was made from the capitol steps for everyone to gather in a semi-circle to prepare for a rally.

The rally began with a respected Indigenous community member acknowledging the land where we gathered and the ancestors whose shoulders we stand on. He emphasized that we stand together to do the work here today that will bring justice and dignity to all those in prison and those of us who are in transition, our families, friends and all our relations.

The first speaker was Dorsey Nunn, co-founder of All of Us Or None, executive director of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC) and one of the organizers for Quest for Democracy. Nunn was sentenced to life in prison when he was 19 years old.

Nunn spoke about justice, dignity and humanity for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, and the importance of ACA 3: the California Abolition Act – a bill which would amend the state constitution to end involuntary servitude in prisons.

Although more than 100 people came out and many groups were represented here, there was a great sense of unity, community and commitment to the issues of prisoners, families, reunification, support and education. It was very welcoming, and I could feel the gratitude towards everyone that came out on such a hot day.

Listening to the stories from the speakers, all former incarcerated individuals, I felt the heat was nothing compared to what those in prison go through every day.

I thought about the MOVE 9 and Sekou Odinga, who told their stories at the Malcolm X Library in San Diego. In my mind I compared their stories of life as formerly incarcerated people in the U.S. with that of the Cuban 5, who returned to Cuba as heroes after 16 years in U.S. prisons.

All the bills addressed issues that the Cuban people had already worked out through roundtable discussions and popular mobilization using the principles of socialism. Cuba is our shining example; Cuba has paved the way.

### Fighting for basic needs

Christopher, a 17-year-old completing his first year at San Diego City College, came with our group. His thoughts on the bills echoed mine when he said, "Why should there be a debate about a prisoner's right to call their family for free?"

Prisoners and families should be able to call without paying extortionate phone rates (SB1008). Families should be encouraged to visit and stay connected with their loved ones in prison (AB990). Families should be notified right away when an imprisoned son, daughter, father, mother, brother, or sister has a medical emergency (SB1139).

There are so many bills that resonated with me, like one to prevent children 12 years old from being tried in juvenile court (SB429). Or the bill to release medically vulnerable people who are the most expensive to incarcerate and least likely to reoffend (AB960).

I was somewhat surprised as one of the State Assembly members spoke. I didn't get her name, but I heard her say: "People just don't know about the inhumanity that is prevalent in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). Some think [imprisonment] is a vacation or a break."

**Based on remarks given at the Socialist Unity Party national plenum on Aug. 13.**



SLL PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU

Dorsey Nunn of All Of Us Or None (in red shirt) speaks at Sacramento rally Aug. 8.

"You spend months, years or decades in prison, and when you get out you get \$200. What the fuck can you do with \$200?" she shouted.

She supported a bill that would raise the "gate money" given upon release to \$1,300, which she said is "still not enough." (SB 1304) What's needed is a path to reentry – training, counseling, housing, a job with a living wage, and compensation while you make that transition.

There were many bills that impacted incarcerated peoples' reentry into society. These are issues that Cuba has figured out. Yes, in Cuba you do the time, but the whole purpose is to come out restored, renewed, reunited with family and community, and hopefully you will do better. The system is not set up for you to fail.

As Gerardo Hernandez, one of the Cuban 5 who is now head of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), said: "Our purpose is to help. We talk with the family, we encourage the family to stay involved, because it is understood that the family suffers when a loved one is incarcerated."

"Prisoners need not be discriminated against because they went to jail. Our objective is not to make a repressive action against those persons but to help those persons, who are victims themselves in many cases."

Cuba's neighborhood CDRs number 138,000, with over 8 million members, and continue to work on programs and solutions to the problems of petty crime, drugs and mental illness.

### Solution to mass incarceration

I think about the remarks by Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel on May 16: "In the United States, 2,000 children are arrested every day and 44,000 are in prison. We only cite this data to demonstrate, once again, the hypocrisy and double standards of those who presume to judge what happens around the world."

Díaz stated, before our people and the world, that in Cuba no one under 16 years of age is imprisoned!

There are coalitions such as those which organized Quest for Democracy 2022 throughout the U.S. The Socialist Unity Party's Prisoner Sol-

idarity Caucus will work with these groups. We will support incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people, listen to their demands, support their efforts to reform this system and fight for their right to exist and live with dignity.

These organizers are aware of the hard, long struggle it's going to take to pass these bills, because it took 10 years just to pass "Ban the Box" – the box on applications that is used to deny formerly incarcerated people access to livable wages, decent housing, medical care and many other life-sustaining benefits.

When we had our 20 minutes with State Assembly member and Local Government Committee Chair Cecilia Aguilar and two of her staff, I asked about ACA 3, the amendment to end involuntary servitude. Aguilar said: "This is a hard bill to pass. My staff and I will research this bill. This is what we do with all bills."

Each person spoke about bills, and she expressed her support for all of them. We thanked her for taking the time out of her schedule to talk to us and she thanked us for coming.

We returned to our rented van and made our way to the airport for our 5:00 flight back to San Diego.

It was a learning experience. It didn't change my position on lobbying with the politicians, but I am glad I went. It just shows how much work we must do to educate our class about socialism.

Prisoners should be compensated for their labor while incarcerated and at the time of their release. They should have a path for reentry, be united with family and community, be treated with dignity, and not be punished or discriminated against because they went to jail.

With over 2 million people in U.S. prisons, affecting millions of families, this is a major concern.

Every hard-won reform and act of solidarity, however small, is important. But as Cuba shows, the only solution is a socialist revolution.

Abolish capitalism! Shut down the prison-industrial complex! End mass incarceration now!

For information about LSPC, AOUON and Quest for Democracy, visit [PrisonersWithChildren.org/Policy-Advocacy](http://PrisonersWithChildren.org/Policy-Advocacy).

# How can we respond to U.S. crisis and threat of world war?

By Sharon Black

A discussion on the continuing danger of imperialist war must lead our political discussion.

Nancy Pelosi's reckless and provocative actions in Taiwan could have easily touched off a military response that would have had wide consequences. I think it's accurate to say that the Communist Party of China's careful and measured response prevented that. This does not change the dangerous threat of war and the key importance of Taiwan.

The amoral servants of finance capital – who conspire in their think tanks and board rooms, or in the Pentagon war room and the White House – may well have differences about when and how to pull the trigger. But the one thing that remains constant is the necessity of capitalism to expand or die. They are servants to that.

China is now second to the U.S. in gross domestic product and that nagging fact keeps most of them up all night.

## Generals over the White House

I wanted to preface further remarks with a quote from Sam Marcy's "Generals Over the White House." It's good to review this pamphlet for both a historical perspective and as a guide to understanding the present.

"The military-industrial complex is an historically inevitable outgrowth of the inherent tendencies in capitalist production in the epoch of imperialism, that is, monopoly capitalism.

"Our view of the military differs fundamentally from the anti-militarism of the liberal and progressive elements in capitalist society. Their anti-militarism takes as its point of departure the split of political, social, diplomatic and military policy from economics.

"It fails to recognize that the structure of capitalist society, that is, the relationship between the basic classes, between exploiter and exploited, determines the politics of the capitalist state, no matter which policy the governing group may pursue. This policy is inevitably imperialist and today inexorably serves the military-industrial complex, which, willy-nilly, is propelled in the direction of imperialist war.

"Yet, revolutionary Marxists do not view the inevitability of imperialist war fatalistically. There are deterrents, of course."

## Afghanistan withdrawal

We are coming up on the one-year anniversary of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The U.S. military exit was more than just a political debacle for the Biden administration, as important as this is in calculating the trajectory of this past year, which shifted to a U.S. confrontation with Russia and the destruction of Ukraine.

Military contractors and U.S. banks made a fortune during the 20-year war on Afghanistan. The war was financed to the tune of \$2 trillion. The U.S. Treasury will be paying the banks until 2050. With interest added, they will shell out \$6.5 tril-



PHOTO: THE MEMPHIS SEVEN

On Aug. 18, a federal judge in Tennessee ordered Starbucks to reinstate seven fired workers following a union organizing drive in Memphis. Young workers are reviving the union movement by organizing at Starbucks, Amazon and other corporate giants.

lion in costs. This is surplus value stolen from the working class both now and in the future.

The military-industrial complex profited off of the death of close to 150,000 Afghan people. U.S. withdrawal didn't end the pillage, destruction or misery. The U.S. immediately seized \$9.5 billion from Afghanistan's central bank held in the New York Federal Reserve. It enacted debilitating sanctions and prompted widespread starvation.

This scorched-earth misery has played out in U.S. proxy wars and occupation from Yemen to Palestine, from Iraq to Libya, and around the globe.

## Donbass, Russia and Ukraine

We should be proud of the work of our comrades – particularly of John Parker, who literally went to the front line in Donbass and Russia. And equally of the analysis and coverage that Struggle-La Lucha published and the actions we organized.

All of this took place under the most difficult avalanche of bourgeois propaganda and the capitulation of a significant segment of the anti-war movement.

This has to be attributed to comrade Melinda Butterfield, who may be credited as one of the very few communists in the United States who not only wrote about the war on Donbass consistently from the beginning in 2014, but also initiated and organized protests.

The NATO build-up has nothing to do with the so-called defense of Western Europe or Japan. Its purpose is to force upon them planes, guns, missiles and weapons systems made in the U.S. and sold at extortionate profits.

The European Union countries should keep in mind the words of Victoria Nuland, who is currently the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, the fourth-ranking position in the Department of State. At the time of her famous private conversation in 2014 she was Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs when she proclaimed, "F\*\*\* the EU."

That quip sums up the relationship that U.S. imperialism has with its junior imperialist powers.

Based on remarks given at the Socialist Unity Party national plenum on Aug. 13.

This includes what is currently happening – the burgeoning development of young workers who are reviving the labor movement from Starbucks to Amazon and numerous other organizing efforts.

The gloomy prospect of a deeper capitalist crisis is trumpeted everywhere. Anyone who looks at Biden's Inflation Reduction Act has to come away shaking their head at its hollowness.

We would be badly remiss not to take into consideration that an acute catastrophe, i.e. a major hurricane, flood, fire or other event, could become a social crisis which would figure into the equation prior to the 2024 elections.

How can we organize the working class and develop an immediate program of action around the climate crisis? It could be helpful for us to look at how the Cubans handle this.

## Put struggle for socialism on the agenda

I want to end by saying something about the World Marxist Political Parties Forum that took place on July 28, and the urgent need to put the struggle for socialism on the agenda.

This conference was hosted by the International Department of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee Nguyen Phu Trong, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee and President Miguel Diaz-Canel, and Chair of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation Gennady Zyuganov.

More than 300 representatives from over 100 Marxist political parties, left-wing parties and political organizations in 70-plus countries attended the forum online. Chinese President Xi Jinping opened the forum with a congratulatory letter.

It's perhaps hopeful and interesting that this gathering is taking place in the context of the potential for world war. Whether this represents a realignment of Marxist forces or not, its message of socialist unity and affirmation of Marxism, especially from Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel, is welcome.

I wanted to read two quotes from his address:

First: "We are firmly convinced that socialism is the only way toward development with social justice, as a creative overcoming of capitalism, its unsustainable irrationality and the values that guide it."

Second: "The reality of today's world confirms that it is increasingly necessary and urgent for us Marxist parties to unite in order to face the great challenges that lie ahead. Only unity in diversity will assure us victory. Long live the emancipatory ideas of Marxism!"

The fight for revolutionary socialism must be high on our agenda.

Going back to Sam Marcy's pamphlet: "Revolutionary Marxists do not view the inevitability of imperialist war fatalistically. There are deterrents."

Class struggle is one of the most potent deterrents. And the fight for socialism, both practically and in theory, is the most important weapon of the working class.

# Punishing Cuba: the self-serving ‘State Sponsors of Terror’ list

By Cheryl LaBash

On Sept. 25 car and bike caravans in many U.S. cities are rightly demanding that Cuba be taken off the U.S. State Department’s “State Sponsors of Terrorism” list.

Didn’t know there was such a thing?

Every presidential administration appoints a secretary of state. Now it is Antony Blinken; before him was Mike Pompeo, and under Obama it was John Kerry and Hillary Clinton. And the president, through the secretary of state, can put countries on this list or take them off. It is arbitrary.

As a parting slam against Cuba, on Jan. 12, 2021, just eight days before Joe Biden assumed the presidency, the Trump administration condemned Cuba once again. And Biden has let it stand, although he can waive provisions or decide to remove Cuba from the list altogether.

There are automatic consequences, not only for the country put on the “naughty” list, but other countries, businesses and even individuals. The State Department website says sanctions “include restrictions on U.S. foreign assistance; a ban on defense exports and sales; certain controls over exports of dual use items; and miscellaneous financial and other restrictions.”

Okay, the U.S. won’t give foreign aid or sell weapons or export “dual use” items – like how Washington blocked chlorine to purify water in Iraq when that country was on “the list,” or how it designated Pastors for Peace/U.S.-Cuba Friendship school buses and toasters as possible “dual use” items!

But let’s look at “miscellaneous and other restrictions.” Additional “sanctions laws that penalize persons and countries engaging in certain trade with state sponsors” are activated.

If a relatively small country like Cuba wants to buy ventilators or

other medical equipment, raw materials for their life-saving vaccines, or anything on the international market, who will trade with it when threatened by the U.S.?

There are plenty of examples of mega-fines levied by the U.S. against major foreign banks, corporations like Honda and even Airbnb. Is it worth the risk of irritating Uncle Sam to trade with a small market of 11 million people?

There is no knowing what else is activated, just by putting a country on “the list,” until you run afoul of it. If a vacationer from England enjoys a vacation at Varadero, snorkeled or enjoyed a bird-watching or cigar aficionado trip – perfectly legal in their country, unlike the U.S. – they are surprised if they decide to visit the U.S.

The U.S. excludes these individuals from using the visa waiver program simply because they enjoyed a Cuban beach. They may not get an appointment for a visa interview for months.

Even U.S. states have automatic laws prohibiting sales to countries on “the list.”

## Who is the real terrorist?

What gives the United States the authority to call anyone a terrorist?

Cuba was again voted to be part of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. A Cuban woman got the highest number of votes for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). On Nov. 2 and 3 the U.N. General Assembly will again call on the United States to end its one-sided war against Cuba – as it has for 30 years.

Pro-blockade politicians try to use the scary word “terrorism” to stop people from looking for the facts. Is it really terrorism to help end racist South African apartheid? At a time when police and their agents were assassinating Black leaders like Fred

Hampton, Mark Clark, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., was it wrong to give refuge to Assata Shakur? Was it wrong to host peace talks to end the civil war in Colombia? These are some of the excuses that are given to divert from the real reasons.

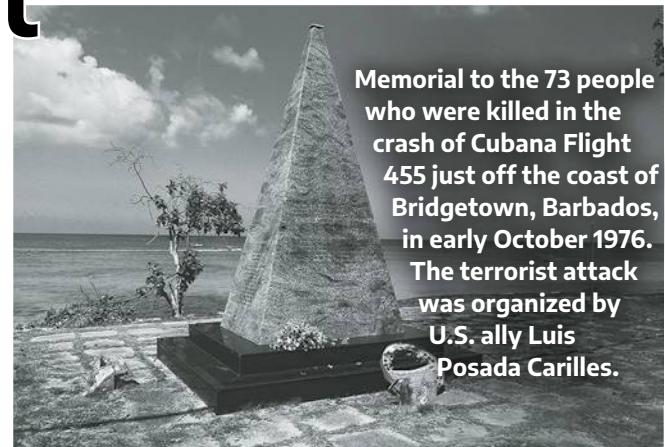
Cuba gained independence and sovereignty through a revolution. Cuba prioritizes human needs and development, not exploiting workers to make a handful of billionaires rich. It has no landlords or predatory bankers. Instead of restricting rights, Cuba expands rights, consultation and participation.

Compare Cuba’s new Families Code referendum on Sept. 25 with the U.S. Supreme Court’s reversal of Roe v. Wade, denying bodily autonomy – the most basic of human rights.

“Will the real terrorist please stand up?” The title of this documentary made by Saul Landau as the world fought to free the Cuban 5 from U.S. prisons seemed irrelevant on Dec. 17, 2014, when the U.S. decided to switch Cuba strategies — Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino and Antonio Guerrero, the last three Cuban heroes, flew home, free from U.S. penitentiaries.

But after Jan. 12, 2021, the history of U.S.-sponsored terrorism against Cuba and its friends became important to review.

It is important to note that Cuba has never attacked the United States. Never planted bombs in hotels, shot bazookas at the United Nations or assassinated diplomats in the streets of New York or Washington, D.C., never spread biological toxins or attempted to assassinate political leaders. In fact, it was information from Cuban intelligence that prevented the assassination of



**Memorial to the 73 people who were killed in the crash of Cubana Flight 455 just off the coast of Bridgetown, Barbados, in early October 1976. The terrorist attack was organized by U.S. ally Luis Posada Carilles.**

President Ronald Reagan in North Carolina.

All of the actions described above were, however, carried out by the U.S. and its agents against Cuba.

The Oct. 6 anniversary of the first midair bombing of a commercial airliner will be recognized in Barbados with a renovated memorial to Cubana Flight 455 and the 73 people who died. Luis Posada Carilles, who died a free man in the U.S., organized and paid for this mass murder.

At the same time, communities across the U.S. are asking for better relations with Cuba. Most recently, the City Council of Willimantic, Connecticut, called for the U.S. to end the blockade in a 7-2 vote.

It is likely that ratio could be applied to the entire U.S., where resolutions representing more than 41 million residents have been passed in labor unions and city councils, state legislatures, school boards and county commissions.

A small but important first step toward justice is for President Biden to remove Cuba from this scurrilous and self-serving list. Do it now!

As we support the heroic Puentes de Amor monthly caravans through the streets of Miami by creating support actions in our local communities on the last weekend of each month, let’s raise the demand to #Delist along with #UnblockCuba.

**All out for Cuba on the weekend before the vote at the United Nations, Oct. 29-30!**

# Sri Lanka: The struggle continues

By Rasika Ruwanpathirana

Recent news of people overrunning the presidential palace in Sri Lanka, followed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fleeing the country, took Western media by storm. What is not reported is the ongoing police repression by the current president, Ranil Wickremesinghe.

His latest attack took place on a peaceful protest Aug. 18 that was organized by the Inter-University Students Federation (IUSF) in Colombo, along with other progressive forces and artists. Witnesses say they were attacked unprovoked, and individuals were chased, beaten and arrested. Some of them were kidnapped by unidentified militia and held for hours in undisclosed locations.

Many progressive organizations and union leaders have condemned the police repression and demanded immediate release of those who were arrested. They are also demanding an investigation into the incident.

After Gotabaya’s resignation and



**Sri Lankan university students take part in a demonstration in Colombo on Aug. 18.**

exit, it was time for Sri Lankans to decide the next steps towards the future. There was hope of a real change in the country. However, this new hope was short-lived.

It turns out that when Gotabaya left the country, he had carefully

planned to secure his family’s and his close allies’ future by handing over power to official opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Even though Gotabaya is very unpopular at this time, he was elected by the majority of Sri Lanka’s radical

Buddhist nationalists. His political party still holds a majority of seats in parliament. Furthermore, when it was time to select the new president, it was clear that the decision was carefully orchestrated in order to preserve the status quo.

## People’s demands disregarded

When the people of Sri Lanka came out to the streets, they demanded not only the exit of the president, they demanded the exit of all members of the parliament, who maintained the corrupt system cycle after cycle. Their demands were very clear: They wanted the current government gone and those who were responsible for the crises and corruption prosecuted.

However, these demands were blatantly disregarded by President Wickremesinghe in attempting to form a national government with his own agenda, so he can continue to stay in power without calling for a general election. So far he’s done this by getting votes from the former

# Pakistan floods and capitalist-fueled climate change

By Scott Scheffer

The year 2022 has seen so much devastation from climate change. Deadly heat waves plowed through all-time temperature records in Europe, the U.S., and South Asia.

Devastating floods from Eastern Kentucky and St Louis, Missouri, to Sydney, Australia, turned roads into rivers, washed away bridges, and destroyed thousands of homes.

East Africa is enduring its most prolonged drought in many decades, and 20 million people are at risk of severe hunger. The death toll from all of this is elusive, but when estimates are possible, it will certainly be in the hundreds of thousands.

Capitalist-fueled climate change is a war on the planet and all its inhabitants.

With all that, what is happening in Pakistan stands out. A monsoon season nearly double compared to "normal," compounded by the rapid melting of glacial ice, has unleashed floods that have a third of this poverty-stricken nation under water.

More than 1,150 people have died since the middle of June when the rains began, and 33 million others are affected. Millions of people have fled their damaged or destroyed homes, and search and rescue operations are finding more victims daily. More rain is on its way. Language describing the situation includes "epochal level," and "nothing left."

## Capitalist-caused climate change

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made an emergency appeal for a \$160-million relief fund. He warned of the perils of capitalist-caused climate change in his video to a ceremony launching the fund. Guterres said, "Let's stop sleepwalking toward the destruction of our planet by climate change. Today, it's Pakistan. Tomorrow, it could be your country."

Guterres' remarks could easi-

ly be seen as a veiled criticism of the dismal U.S. response to climate change. For more than a century, while emitting the most significant volume of greenhouse gasses, the capital created by labor throughout the world flowed into the coffers of imperialist corporations and banks. Being the preeminent imperialist country, the U.S. is considered the most well-equipped and, simultaneously, the most obligated to battle climate change. But for decades, U.S. energy companies, banks, and the entirety of corporate U.S. have blocked and sabotaged actions to curb emissions.

## IMF austerity imposed on Pakistan

A 2019 IMF "bailout" of Pakistan's economy imposed austerity measures as is typical. When exploitative imperialist corporations bleed a country dry, the IMF swoops in and demands that the government lower wages, cut social services and push living standards down in exchange for funds to "rescue" the spiraling economy. After a long delay, they finally released a scheduled payment of \$1.17 billion during the devastating flooding.

The government of Pakistan estimates that the recovery from the floods will cost \$10 billion. However, if the U.N. appeal for \$160 million comes to fruition, combined with the long-delayed IMF payment, that will provide less than 14% of the estimated needs.

Since 1994 the U.N. has organized annual conferences on climate change called Conference of the Parties (COP). In 2009 at COP15 in Copenhagen, wealthy capitalist countries were forced into an agreement to provide \$100 billion annually to the Global South by 2020. The funds are meant to finance mitigation and adaptation in those countries that are not the cause of climate change but have been so exploited by imperialist policies that they are the least able to



Catastrophic flooding in Pakistan.

recover from the consequences of an overheated global atmosphere.

Pakistan is a sterling example. According to CBS News, "Since 1959, Pakistan is responsible for only 0.4% of the world's historic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The U.S. is responsible for 21.5%."

So far, not one penny of the funds promised in 2009 has been paid. Because of the explosion of climate-change-related, devastating crises around the world in the last few years, the lack of payment is anticipated to be a huge issue at the November COP27 in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt.

Climate scientists have shown that because of rising ocean temperatures due to greenhouse gas emissions, rainstorms, tropical storms, and hurricanes lose their strength and move along more slowly than before capitalist industrialization. Rainstorms hang around for days dumping water on land. Urban areas with concentrations of tall buildings slow the storms down even more. This phenomenon has been especially apparent in the last 50 years

and was expressed most clearly when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. Katrina also showed the world that racism and national oppression compound the problems of climate change. The experience of nations of oppressed people within the borders of the U.S. in many ways mirrors that imposed on people in the Global South.

Hoping for a solution from a capitalist government is like appointing the fox to guard the henhouse.

Writing this week in the journal Nature Climate Change, a group of scientists has called on their colleagues for activism. April saw protests by more than a thousand scientists from 25 countries. In the UK, scientists were arrested for gluing their scientific papers — and their hands — to the Department for Business building.

The fight against climate change must be taken from the hands of the corporate class and their government. A militant mass movement in solidarity with the most impoverished and oppressed throughout the world will surely grow.

president's parliamentary allies, promising to secure their futures and thus avoid prosecution.

But all progressive forces in Sri Lanka are demanding that Wickremesinghe should not stay in power, unelected for the remainder of the term, which is three more years. He must start the election process.

Since the uprising began on July 9, there have been many protests by various progressive forces. These protests have been brutally suppressed by Sri Lankan police, who portray the protests as a fascist rampage similar to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The current government in Sri Lanka is using the same methods that the U.S. often uses to track down and prosecute its political opponents. For example, they arrested the internationally recognized trade union leader Joseph Stalin and held him in custody for weeks. It was only after international pressure that his release was secured.

## Media ignores repression

To the surprise of many, these latest police repressions were not widely

reported in the Western media. The news is not being prioritized by social media, and there is no mention by major outlets like CNN and BBC. The kind of media presence we saw leading up to the resignation of Gotabaya disappeared without explanation.

Moreover, the current government, in attempting to appease the International Monetary Fund, is considering privatizing national assets in Sri Lanka. On top of that, the government has borrowed money from many pension/retirement funds that belong to the workers and trade unions and is now in the process of canceling 20% of those debts. This will significantly reduce retirement funds for people who worked their entire lives.

After the Cuban Revolution, a journalist asked Fidel Castro why he didn't kill the former dictator Batista. He explained that killing Batista wouldn't change anything, since the capitalist class would simply replace him with another and the cycle would continue. "The only way we can change that is to change the system itself. And that's what we did."

The uprising in Sri Lanka was not a

revolution like in Cuba. It's also true that Western forces took advantage of the situation and even manipulated the situation through social media. But no one can deny the fact that people rose and demanded change.

It is the lack of real political organization that held them back. Progressive forces in Sri Lanka know this. They have been consistently speaking out and continue to reorganize the struggle in an attempt to build new leadership.

Over the last 40 years, Sri Lanka lost generations of youth to the civil war and the rebellion during 1989-1991. Now, decades later, there is a whole generation of youth out of work and without any hope. They continue to come out against the repression.

Therefore, there's a real fear that the current government will resort to the brutal methods used during the repression of the 1989 rebellion. The silence of the Western media during this latest wave of repression is appalling.

**Socialist Unity Party and Struggle-La Lucha support Back to the streets! Say NO to U.S. wars Week of action: Oct. 15-22 More info at UNACpeace.org**

<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/>



[facebook.com/strugglelalucha](https://facebook.com/strugglelalucha)



[twitter.com/StruggleLaLucha](https://twitter.com/StruggleLaLucha)



Struggle/La Lucha PDF: [tinyurl.com/y7coh85zPDF](https://tinyurl.com/y7coh85zPDF)

Check out the daily news links at: [www.struggle-la-lucha.org/category/links/](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/category/links/)

**Donate to keep us in print at [www.struggle-la-lucha.org/support/](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/support/)**



# Continúa la lucha sobre la energía en Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

La política energética de un país debe estar diseñada para mejorar la calidad de vida de sus habitantes potenciando un desarrollo que fomente su economía y proteja su medioambiente. En esta colonia, es al revés. La política energética en la práctica, es realmente la de una falta de interés por el bienestar de la ciudadanía.

Aquí el gobierno permite que corporaciones extranjeras se apropien de nuestro entorno, construyan lo que quieran y donde quieran sin requerirles los permisos necesarios de construcción, ni de impacto ambiental. Es decir, les dejan operar al garete, igualito que opera el mismo gobierno.

Si ya hemos reportado del desastre de la compañía mafiosa Luma Energy, hoy les quería mencionar a otro criminal de la energía, New Fortress Energy. Una de las compañías de gas estadounidense que tiene contrato con la Autoridad de Energía para suplirle gas natural.

Resulta que esta compañía construyó, sin los permisos necesarios, un terminal en la Bahía de San Juan, poniendo en peligro los alrededores, incluyendo a los habitantes de la zona.

Y como siempre, son las organizaciones ambientales, religiosas y comunitarias las que salen a defender al pueblo. Esta pasada semana un grupo de estas, se presentó a las oficinas de uno de los legisladores de la Comisión de Recursos Naturales llevando globos y un bizcocho hueco, coreando "Cumpleaños infeliz" para exigirle que se cumpla con una Resolución pasada hace ya un año, que obliga a los ejecutivos de New Fortress a declarar sobre la seguridad y los daños ambientales.

Esta se suma a las decenas de manifestaciones nacionales y locales que intentan exponer los crímenes neoliberales causados por las privatizaciones y el abandono de este gobierno fallido.

Por eso es más urgente que nunca la unidad de acciones como esta para encaminarnos a la recuperación de nuestro país a través de la independencia.



SLL FOTO: BERTA JOUBERT-CECI

Miles protestan contra LUMA Energy el 25 de agosto frente a La Fortaleza, la residencia del gobernador en el Viejo San Juan. Posteriormente, la Unidad de Operaciones Tácticas de la Policía atacó a los manifestantes pacíficos con gas pimienta y granadas de humo.

peración de nuestro país a través de la independencia.

Y como decimos aquí, ¡Solo el pueblo salva el pueblo!



Desde Puerto Rico,  
para Radio Clarín de Colombia,  
les habló Berta Joubert-Ceci.

## The Donbass referendum and blood on Biden's hands

*Continued from page 1*

slaughter of civilians in Donetsk. "Kiev gunmen delivered artillery fire from the occupied town of Orlovka using 155mm projectiles which impacted near the Central Indoor Market building and flower shops and hit the Route 38 mini-bus. Six people, including a 14-year-old girl, were killed, and another six were wounded in the shelling, according to the latest reports."

In the Lugansk People's Republic, cities like Alchevsk that had been largely spared from attacks in recent months are now being routinely attacked by Kiev, using long-range weapons provided by the U.S. and other NATO powers. Svatovo, Novoaidar, and Troitskoye were all hit by U.S. high mobility artillery rocket systems (HIMARS) this week.

### Referendum to join Russian Federation

This is the backdrop for the decision to hold a referendum for the DPR and LPR to join the Russian Federation. The referendum is being organized quickly, on an emergency basis, and will be held over five days from Sept. 23-27. Residents of the liberated Kherson and Zaporozhye regions of Ukraine will also have the opportunity to vote.

All of these regions, along with Kharkov and Odessa, rose against the fascist-led, U.S.-sponsored



The husk of a Donetsk bus destroyed by Ukrainian artillery on Sept. 22. Six people were killed, including a 14-year-old.

coup regime in the spring of 2014. Mass movements in each region declared their intentions to proclaim people's republics. Only Donetsk and Lugansk were able to successfully resist being crushed by the Ukrainian military and neo-Nazi gangs. Anti-fascists in those areas were forced into exile, imprisoned, killed, or driven underground.

The United States pressed Ukraine to launch a new offensive against the Donbass starting in late 2021 – a deliberate provocation to draw Russia into a military conflict with the NATO military alliance. In February, the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Militias and the Russian Armed Forces united in a special military operation to protect the Donbass republics and de-Nazify Ukraine. Today many Ukrainian anti-fascists fight in the ranks of the Donbass militias.

A movement for a referendum on joining the Russian Federation has been growing in the Donbass republics for several years. It's not something the Russian government wanted; Russian President Vladimir Putin resisted these calls in the interests of a negotiated agreement with Ukraine and its Western spon-

sors. But the U.S. rulers weren't interested in a negotiated settlement — they wanted war.

If, as expected, the referendum is successful, the Russian government has signaled that it will accept the vote and incorporate the DPR and LPR as soon as October 1.

The decision to join the Russian Federation may not be ideal from a political standpoint and certainly was not the goal of many of the communists and socialists who inspired the independence struggle of 2014. But it is driven by necessity.

### Stronger defense for Donbass

Under the Russian Constitution, once the DPR and LPR are part of the federation, Russia will have a much stronger basis to defend those areas and respond to the Ukrainian-NATO attacks, including exercising its nuclear deterrent. The republics will maintain their names and enter the

federation as autonomous republics, as Crimea did in 2014.

The recent military setback for the anti-fascist alliance in Ukraine's Kharkov region and subsequent attempts by the Ukrainian military to break into the DPR and LPR have created enormous anxiety for the people of Donbass, who face genocide in the event of a Ukrainian takeover. This has been the stated policy of not only the hardened fascist battalions like Aidar and Azov but even of high officials in Kiev for the last eight-plus years.

On Sept. 21, President Putin made a national address to present a decree on a partial military mobilization (draft). Up to 300,000 people are to be called up to protect Russian territory from NATO aggression, which will soon include the DPR and LPR. It appears that the Russian government has now accepted the fact that there will be a prolonged state of war with the imperialist West.

We can expect these new defensive measures to be met with a new wave of anti-Russia war propaganda heading into the midterm U.S. elections, on a par with the witch-hunt against all things Russia earlier this year. This is likely to have an impact on the politically weak sections of the anti-war movement here. It is incumbent on principled anti-imperialists and socialist workers to meet this challenge with courage and political clarity.

Victory to the Donbass republics, Ukrainian anti-fascists, and their allies!

Defeat U.S./NATO imperialism and its Ukrainian proxies!

End the New Cold War against Donbass, Russia, and China!

**STRUGGLE ★ LA LUCHA**  
for Socialism / por el Socialismo



SLL PHOTO: MAGGIE VASCASSENNO

National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) 'Future Forces' conference poster.