

# Ukraine

# Will U.S. sabotage grain deal?

By Sara Flounders

July 24 — A deal brokered by Turkey for the export of grain from both Ukraine and Russia presents a political problem for U.S. imperialism and its war aims. Washington’s response: ship more weapons.

The landmark deal to move hundreds of tons of grain, if it moves forward, undermines U.S./NATO determination to continue the war in Ukraine despite the cost to that country and the dire threat of famine in countries around the world.

Washington is especially frustrated that the deal was arranged by NATO-member Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and that U.N. Secretary General António Guterres participated. Erdogan has refused to go along with the thousands of sanctions imposed on Russia.

Washington strategists aim to direct this proxy war in Ukraine and extend it, if possible. Billions of dollars in military contracts and war profits are at stake.

Yet, the grand plan of a global front that would make Russia collapse is going awry.

In another development, photos of Russian President Vladimir V. Putin, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Turkey’s President Erdogan showed them meeting in Tehran July 19, providing a warning of U.S. imperialism’s losing political control. The meeting of Washington’s two main targets challenges the claim that Iran and Russia

are isolated and facing collapse. Russian gas giant Gazprom has signed a \$40 billion agreement with the National Iranian Oil Company to help Iranian producers develop oil and gas fields throughout their country.

A week earlier, President Joe Biden’s trip to Israel and Saudi Arabia ended in a total failure. Biden failed to shape a coalition against Iran. He failed to convince Saudi Arabia to increase oil production or to accept the U.S.-proposed oil cap on the price of Russian oil.

## U.S. response — more weapons

The immediate U.S. response to the grain deal involving both Ukraine and Russia and the meeting in Tehran was to announce an \$270 million in military aid to Ukraine. The U.S. administration vowed to supply Ukraine with more high mobility artillery rocket systems (HIMARS) along with 580 Phoenix Ghost tactical drones. The U.S. and Ukraine portray the HIMARS rocket launchers as “a potential game changer” in the conflict.

White House national security council representative John Kirby announced the new arms transfer by again predicting a long war: “The president has been clear that we’re going to continue to support the government of Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes.” (AP, July 22)

Over the last five months, the U.S. and its European allies have supplied billions of dollars in weapons to Ukraine and imposed unprecedented sanctions

on Moscow. It is well understood that the continuing influx of weapons, military contractors and coercive economic measures will prolong the war.

## The food deal

The complex deal to move hundreds of tons of both Ukrainian and Russian grain and fertilizer through narrow, de-mined channels in the Black Sea, then through the Bosphorus into the Mediterranean

Sea and world markets involved separate agreements with Ukraine and Russia.

Ukraine’s military had mined the Port of Odessa and refused to remove the mines, citing military priorities. At the same time Ukraine’s government blamed Russia for blocking the mined harbor.

The 120-day limited agreement — which is no ceasefire — creates a demilitarized corridor through the Black Sea for

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Fire and ice 7



Masses celebrate the 69th anniversary of the assault on the Moncada Barracks. Cienfuegos, Cuba, July 26.

WW PHOTO: BILL SACKS

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TEAR DOWN  
THE WALLS



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# Celebrate the Cuban Revolution with Workers World

Workers World/Mundo Obrero joins with the Cuban people in celebrating the 69th anniversary of an event which changed the course of history for their island nation. On July 26, 1953, Cuban revolutionaries boldly attacked the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba and simultaneously conducted a siege of the army barracks in Bayamo.

These courageous acts were aimed to strike a blow against the brutal U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Although the military goals were not achieved and the struggle suffered a temporary setback, the armed struggle had reached a new stage that continued until the dictatorship was overthrown Jan. 1, 1959. As the guerrilla forces fought in the mountains, an underground movement spread across the country.

Cuba has not only developed in every sphere since the socialist revolution, this island nation has carried out acts of international solidarity to aid oppressed countries in Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa, whether with military might or medical personnel and supplies. This assistance has been given generously,



**Celebrating the legacy of Fidel Castro in Cienfuegos, Cuba, July 26.**

WW PHOTO: BILL SACKS

despite the horrific blockade implemented against Cuba by Washington for over six decades.

Even now during the pandemic, despite having a dearth of medical supplies, Cuba is sharing their COVID-19 vaccines with countries denied them by the imperialist West. Due to the dedication and meticulous efforts of their scientists and health care workers, nearly all of their own population has been inoculated with Cuban-produced vaccines.

In recognition of their heroic work in dealing with this health crisis, 50,000 representatives of the health and science sectors were invited to lead this year’s May Day march in Havana. Cuba’s leaders thanked them for their remarkable work.

Cuba has deservedly won the support and respect of peoples around the globe. Workers World/Mundo Obrero has shown our unwavering solidarity with this socialist country on this newspaper’s pages and in countless activities on the streets.

**WW needs your help!**

If you appreciate our coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program or renew your membership. The program was established 45 years ago so readers could help WW publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to fight for revolutionary change leading to socialism.

Since the early 1990s, the fund has helped sponsor the workers.org website. Throughout the pandemic when fewer print issues have been published due to staff health concerns, new articles have been posted daily at workers.org, where the PDF of the weekly newspaper has been displayed. Not one online issue has been skipped throughout this over two-year health crisis.

For a donation of \$60 a year, or \$120 or \$300, you receive a subscription to WW newspaper and one, two or three free subscriptions for friends, depending on donation. A free download of the “What Road to Socialism?” book, published in 2020, is available at workers.org/books. Notify us if you want a paperback book.

Write checks, either monthly or annually, to Workers World. Mail them with your name and address to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, New York 10011. Put “Supporter Program” in the memo line. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/.

We appreciate your help in building Workers World!

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## Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

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

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

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and

worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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<b>National Office</b> 147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor New York, NY 10011 212.627.2994 wwp@workers.org	<b>Cleveland</b> cleveland@workers.org
<b>Durham, N.C.</b> 919.322.9970 durham@workers.org	<b>Houston</b> P.O. Box 3454 Houston, TX 77253-3454 713.503.2633 houston@workers.org
<b>Atlanta</b> PO Box 18123 Atlanta, GA 30316 404.627.0185 atlanta@workers.org	<b>Minnesota</b> minnesota@workers.org
<b>Austin</b> austin@workers.org	<b>Philadelphia</b> P.O. Box 34249 Philadelphia, PA 19101 610.931.2615 phila@workers.org
<b>Bay Area</b> P.O. Box 22947 Oakland, CA 94609 510.394.2207 bayarea@workers.org	<b>Portland, Ore.</b> portland@workers.org
<b>Boston</b> 284 Amory St. Boston, MA 02130 617.522.6626 boston@workers.org	<b>Salt Lake City</b> 801.750.0248 slc@workers.org
<b>Buffalo, N.Y.</b> 335 Richmond Ave. Buffalo, NY 14222 716.883.2534 buffalo@workers.org	<b>San Antonio</b> sanantonio@workers.org
<b>Central Gulf Coast</b> (Alabama, Florida, Mississippi) centralgulfcoast@workers.org	<b>West Virginia</b> WestVirginia@workers.org

Workers World  
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.  
New York, NY 10011  
Phone: 212.627.2994  
E-mail: ww@workers.org  
Web: www.workers.org



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Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

*Tear Down the Walls!* Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly

Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Sasha Mazumder

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, S. Hedgecoke

Contributing Editors: LeiLani Dowell, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Sara Flounders, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Carlos Vargas

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# Resistance is growing to abortion ban

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

The response to the Supreme Court decision June 24 to end the legal right to access abortions, denying bodily autonomy of women and other people who can become pregnant, was immediate in Georgia. Mass demonstrations, rallies, marches and a sustained 24-hour-a-day vigil on the Capitol steps drew large numbers of youth, women of all ages, LGBTQ+ individuals and whole families. Black and other people of color initiated and led many actions.

In Georgia abortion was legal up to 22 weeks of pregnancy, until July 20 when the 11th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the state’s 2019 so-called “heartbeat law” was legal since the Supreme Court had overturned the legal right to abortion established in the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling. Similar laws have been passed in other states based on the anti-abortion movement’s false claim that at six weeks of pregnancy, sounds of embryonic electrical activity are actually the sounds of a beating heart. They are not. (NPR, May 3)



PHOTO: GEORGIA NAACP

On July 23, the Georgia NAACP and other organizations initiated a march to the state Capitol in Atlanta, highlighting the impact on Black women of the new state law and the Supreme Court decision nullifying legal abortion.

Most people are not even aware they are pregnant at six weeks’ gestation. So this ban virtually outlaws abortions throughout the state. Georgia’s law offers some exceptions in cases where the pregnant person’s life is in danger or if the fetus would not be viable at birth. There are also exemptions if the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest — but the assault must have been reported to the police.

However, the Georgia law goes much further than most other state bans and declares embryos have “personhood”

rights beginning at conception. This means that an embryo should be counted in population census reports, can be declared a dependent on state income taxes and would be eligible for child support payments. That’s just for starters.

The list of unknown legal issues facing medical practitioners, social service agencies and state, county and city revenue departments, as well as law enforcement, is mind-boggling. Undoubtedly, there will be scores of court challenges to this horrific law, but meanwhile pregnant people will be denied the right and ability to make critical decisions affecting their own lives.

**Stop criminalizing health care!**

The fear is real that criminal charges could be brought against pregnant people who cross state borders to obtain an abortion. Could people be arrested for having a medication abortion with pills? How long will doctors wait to assist someone having a miscarriage, septic infection or an ectopic pregnancy?

Georgia already has an abysmal record for maternal deaths, especially for Black

women. The state is one of 12 that has not fully expanded Medicaid coverage, resulting in millions of residents not receiving basic health services, much less obstetrical and gynecological care. Black women are three times more likely to die because of pregnancy complications than white women; that figure is predicted to rise by an additional 29% with the abortion ban in effect.

Dr. Nisha Verma, a Georgia OB-GYN, testified July 19 before Congress on the impact of eradicating the legal right to an abortion. She stated: “The abortion ban will undoubtedly worsen maternal outcomes in Georgia, forcing doctors to turn away patients we know how to care for.”

“Now, doctors are in impossible situations — situations where [Georgia Gov. Brian] Kemp’s law directly violates the medical expertise we gained through years of training and the oath we took to care for our patients. ... As a provider of comprehensive reproductive health care, I know people are capable of making complex, thoughtful decisions about their health and lives — it’s indefensible that any politician would try to make those medical decisions for them.” (tinyurl.com/3fdut98x) □

# Driving 100 miles to give birth

By Ellen Cohen

Women seeking abortions are not the only ones who often have to travel long distances to obtain care. Labor and Delivery (L&D) units all across the U.S., particularly in rural areas, have been shutting down, forcing women in labor to drive many miles to give birth. This may increase pressure on patients to schedule inductions or even C-sections, procedures that account for about 25% and 32%, respectively, of all U.S. births.

“Between 2004 and 2014, 179 rural counties lost or closed their hospital obstetric services. Consequently, fewer than 50% of rural women have access to perinatal services within a 30-mile drive from their home, and more than 10% of

rural women drive 100 miles or more for these services. These conditions affect access to care before, during and after pregnancy and are more pronounced in the Black and Hispanic communities.” (tinyurl.com/2s4cm7hf)

Another 892 rural hospitals — more than 40% of all rural hospitals in the country — are now in danger of being closed, according to a March 4 article in Becker’s Hospital Review. (tinyurl.com/mkau8an4)

That article does not specify how many of these hospitals offer maternity care. However, L&D units are usually among the first to be closed down in financially struggling hospitals. Medicaid pays for 50% to 60% of rural births, and its reimbursement rates are lower than other

insurers.

According to the March of Dimes, more than 2.2 million women of childbearing age live in 1,095 counties that have no hospitals offering obstetric care, no birth centers, no OB-GYN medical services or certified nurse midwives. (tinyurl.com/yr8fpfbz)

After the denial of federally protected access to abortion by the U.S. Supreme Courts, women, girls and other people who can get pregnant are being forced by many states to carry pregnancies to term, even in circumstances of rape, life-threatening conditions or extreme poverty.

But for many of those being forced to continue a pregnancy, there is little to no



2015 march from rural Belhaven, North Carolina, to the state capitol in Raleigh.

medical help available to guarantee their health and safety — or that of the child.

Ellen Cohen worked for 22 years as a certified nurse midwife in New York City hospitals, where she participated in research that led to the first breakthrough in preventing mother-to-child transmission of the HIV virus.

# Court evictions order won’t stop UC Townhome protests

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

University City Townhomes residents resisting eviction responded to news that owner IBID Associates had secured a court order July 22 to disband a protest encampment at the site, saying the decision will not stop their protests.

The court order was issued by Philadelphia Common Pleas Judge Joshua Roberts. Members of the UC Townhomes Coalition said that even if the Sheriff’s Office takes down the encampment, their protests will continue.

Coalition members responded with a statement in defense of Black autonomy against corporate developers and the city and invited supporters to unite with them in peaceful resistance. “At stake here is Black self-determination — including residents’ exercise of political speech on private property. All residents have the right to organize against corporate landlords. They are fighting to keep their children and elders safe and save their community from displacement in the face of state and corporate violence.”

Recognizing that Philadelphia is a union town, the Save the UC Townhomes

Coalition and the Philly Workers Solidarity Network issued a call urging city sanitation workers, represented by AFSCME, and other union members to not cooperate with property owners in removing the encampment. The call notes that union members have a stake in the battle against gentrification and for affordable housing.

UC Townhomes resident Sheldon Davids, a member of District Council 33 AFSCME Local 696, stated: “This particular instance concerns the families [who] reside at UC Townhomes; their impending vulnerability reflects that which

befalls a massive and increasing amount of disenfranchised people across our city. Disenfranchisement is a wall, which sustained union efforts have sought to chip away at in its pursuit for a better standard of living for all. We ask you to chip away with us.” To sign the call: tinyurl.com/bdhbe2h8.

**Lack of affordable housing creates ‘potentially hazardous conditions’**

The encampment of 15 tents was set up July 9 at the conclusion of a day-long Philly 4 Housing Fest to Save the UC



University City Townhomes encampment

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Townhomes, protesting the owner’s plans to evict the 70 low-income families and sell the property to developers. People occupying the tents include residents and supporters vetted by residents. All involved have worked to make sure that the protest encampment is a safe and secure place.

The over two-week tent protest has garnered broad media attention that was lacking prior to the action. The residents put up large protest signs, including one which covers most of the street side of a SEPTA transit entrance just outside the property.

Property owner, IBID Associates, a subsidiary of the Altman Group, claimed they were concerned that the tenants’ supporters are trespassing on the property and posing security concerns. In a statement to the court, IBID Associates said protesters were creating an unsafe and “potentially hazardous condition.”

For IBID to suddenly express concerns for the residents they plan to evict Sept. 7, with no plans or support for where they will live, smacks of extreme hypocrisy. Even with federal housing vouchers, residents fear city landlords won’t take the vouchers because of the ongoing shortage of afford-

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# How prison labor works in Arizona



The following article was excerpted from an Arizona Republic and KJZZ News July 22 investigative exposé revealing “what happens when a state exploits some of its poorest people for their labor.” Full story at [tinyurl.com/2p8ffmnn](https://tinyurl.com/2p8ffmnn).

After 15 months of gathering and analyzing more than 11,000 documents and building a computer program that downloaded tens of thousands of public profiles about prisoners — that the Arizona Department of Corrections refused to provide — reporters at the Arizona Republic and KJZZ News found that prison labor during the past 10 years has become ubiquitous across the state.

Prison work, for example, is in places that many people would never have realized: Prisoners make the custom woodwork at hip bowling alleys; they construct trusses, cabinets, wall frames at well-known private home developments and luxury apartment buildings; they work inside kennels for pet adoption shelters; they build confessionals in churches; they act as janitors and groundskeepers at schools — but are told to keep out of sight of staff and students so no one knows they’re there.

Many prisoners say they enjoy the jobs, if only because it gets them out into the free world and gives them something to do. The biggest problem: They are often paid less than \$1 an hour. And despite the misconception that everything in their

lives is paid for, prison life is really quite expensive. Prices for goods are about the same as in the outside world. From pens and paper to envelopes and stamps, it could take a full week for some prisoners to buy what they need to send a single letter to a family member by mail.



Incarcerated women prisoners doing telemarketing.

There are about 2,000 prisoners who are meant to get paid more. These elite members of the incarcerated population work for Arizona Correctional Industries, a state-run company under the auspices of the Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry.

Prisoners at ACI do two things: They either make products for sale to government entities and private businesses, or they are leased out to private companies that have trouble finding workers for jobs that few people in the free market would be willing to do.

Despite their higher pay, prisoners who work for ACI don’t get to keep it all. Far

from it. The state takes large chunks from their paychecks, forcing them to pay room and board, utilities and other expenses. In some cases, prisoners pay upward of \$700 a month to live in their own cells.

The Department of Corrections contends that the money helps offset the costs of incarceration, and ACI’s jobs help prisoners get work after they are released. As to the deductions from prisoner paychecks, ACI said it’s not responsible for those, since state law requires the Department of Corrections to remove that money.

Even before Arizona was a state, prisoners were mandated to work while riding out their sentences. The idea was to save the government money — not to help private companies turn a profit.

## ‘Convict leasing’ again in 1995

That changed in 1995 when ACI began quietly leasing out its captive workforce to a select group of farms, manufacturers and telecommunications companies. ... While prisoners once obtained woodworking, metalworking, upholstery and other useful skills working at the ACI’s manufacturing shops, an increasing number were now farmed out to private companies, often at the expense of their health.

Prisoners often get paid pennies on the dollar to perform tasks inside of the

prison such as to mop floors, rake the yard or do agriculture work. When an opportunity comes to do the same job outside prison for a small bump in pay, the majority interviewed said they gladly made the move.

But working on the outside of prison comes with its own complications, such as being strip-searched every day, being degraded in public by being forced to line up and have drug dogs sniff their rear ends, or working in intense heat for hours and then threatened by corrections officers for taking breaks when they’re tired.

The Republic and KJZZ found multiple prisoners who reported injuries that were not recorded by the Department of Corrections and also hadn’t been properly treated. Some of them will never be able to work again. But they are not entitled to workers’ compensation or unemployment, because they were incarcerated at the time of their workplace injuries.

The Department of Corrections contends that it and its private partners are required to follow all federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards. But when asked about particular incidents, the Department of Corrections did not provide evidence of any reports that had been done to ensure prisoner health and safety at any locations where prisoners worked.

The study also showed consistent racial disparities in hiring patterns among well-paying jobs at many of the state’s more high-profile companies that use prison labor. □

# Julian Assange defense files appeals, granted extension

By Tareq Haddad

This excerpted article, which originally appeared July 16 in Popular Resistance, can be read in full at [tinyurl.com/kfzvkh2c](https://tinyurl.com/kfzvkh2c).

London — Following a June 17 decision from British Secretary of State Priti Patel approving the order to extradite Julian Assange to the U.S., lawyers for the imprisoned WikiLeaks publisher have since submitted filings indicating they intend to fight the decision on 16 legal grounds.

As first revealed by The Wall Street Journal, lawyers for Assange submitted two separate appeal applications: one against Patel’s decision; the second against a January 2021 ruling from lower courts that originally barred the extradition on mental health considerations but agreed with prosecutors on behalf of the U.S. on every other point of law.

Following that ruling, the U.S. sent a series of diplomatic assurances in which they said Assange would not be held in the restrictive conditions that were found

to cause an intolerable risk of suicide, if he were to be extradited, and successfully argued these assurances were sufficient to overturn the decision at the British High Court, which then declined to hear an appeal. ...

## Strategy to defend Assange

Filed on June 23, lawyers for Assange submitted four grounds of appeal against Patel’s decision, including that Patel erred in deciding that Assange’s extradition was not prohibited by Article 4 of the U.K.-U.S. Extradition Treaty — the clause that prevents extradition for political offenses.



The lawyers also argued Patel erred in her application of “specialty arrangements” with the United States — essentially further agreements under the Extradition Treaty —

on three occasions. Namely, that Assange ought to be protected from charges that carry the death penalty, for conduct outside the extradition request and from criminal contempt proceedings.

On June 30, Assange’s lawyers filed a further 12 grounds of appeal. First, the lawyers argued the extradition request submitted by the U.S. was an “abuse of process,” given that Assange was charged with 16 counts of violating the Espionage Act and that espionage was typically considered a political offense, barred in the Extradition Treaty upon which the U.S. request is made.

The lawyers also [defended Assange on the basis of the Treaty’s] Article 3 (on inhuman and degrading treatment), Article 6 (denial of a right to a fair trial), Article 7 (a novel and unforeseeable extension of the law) and Article 10 (the right to freedom of expression).

They further argued that extradition should have been prevented under [other] provisions within the U.K. Extradition Act of 2003.

The defense asserted that the prosecution, on behalf of the U.S., misrepresented the facts of Assange’s case in relation to

evidence provided by computer scientist Christian Grothoff that demonstrated WikiLeaks had not been first in making the trove of U.S. diplomatic cables available on the internet. Revelations are possible from [the] Icelandic publication Stundin providing a key witness that allegations contained in Assange’s indictment are fabricated evidence.

The documents indicate ... a long and complicated appeal, submissions for which are likely to exceed several hundred pages. As such, Assange’s lawyers applied to the courts for an extension of time in submitting their “Perfected Grounds for Appeal” — the documents in which lawyers must specify the precise legal arguments they intend to make.

An original deadline had been July 14, but a spokesperson for the Crown Prosecution Service confirmed that an extension has been granted, and Assange’s lawyers will now have until Aug. 28 to submit their filings.

The filing does not automatically entitle the defense to raise all its points at appeal. Judges from the High Court must “certify” that each objection has sufficient legal merit before the defense can use that objection to proceed.

The case continues. □

# Court evictions order won’t stop UC Townhome protests

Continued from page 3

able housing. And residents don’t want to uproot their lives from a community they have lived in for over 40 years.

IBID originally bought the property from Philadelphia for \$1 in 1983 to construct the low-income subsidized housing

units, located in what little remains of an historic Black community, long targeted by gentrifiers. After benefitting from decades of state and federal financial assistance from tax credits and housing subsidies, realtor Brett Altman now plans to demolish the Townhomes and sell the land for up to \$100 million.

Putting families out on the street, without the financial means to secure housing in a city where rents average \$2,000 a month, is the real hazard. The average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in University City, where UC Townhomes are located, is \$2,542.

Making matters worse, 1,700 low-in-

come housing units at 37 sites, in addition to University City Townhomes, currently have contracts with Housing and Urban Development set to expire within the next five years. Housing activists fear many owners of those properties will sell to gentrifiers rather than renew their HUD contracts. □



# Boston Starbucks Workers United strikes against unfair labor practices

By Mairead Skehan Gillis  
Boston

Striking members of Boston Starbucks Workers United made U.S. labor history this week, shutting down their store at 874 Commonwealth Ave. at Boston University for seven days, in protest of what SBWU calls a pattern of management’s new union-busting, racist and transphobic unfair labor practices. Only a month after voting to join Workers United, the workers walked out on July 18, setting up a picket line and command center at the store’s locked door, staffed 24/7 by the union workers and shifts of hundreds of labor and community supporters, stopping all deliveries and potential scabs.

In a July 18 letter to management, union leaders reported that Starbucks instigated the strike “immediately after our store voted to unionize ... [We] have been subjected to not only a slew of unfair labor practices on the local and national level (threats, overly restrictive policies, denials of benefits, changes in operations) but also a chaotic and hostile work environment.” The letter describes “illegal threats of discipline or termination,” arbitrary dress-coding, aggressive cuts to hours, extreme understaffing, weekly unilateral changes to work schedules and “offensive rhetoric with regard to race, gender and orientation” of workers and customers.

Strikers on the picket line spoke most angrily about the manager taking down

their LGBTQ+ rainbow flag, which now adorns the locked door.

The striking workers are calling for a more inclusive work environment free from unfair labor practices, where they are treated with dignity and respect by management, with livable schedules and wages paid by the super-profitable corporation. The workers are adamant about not returning to make coffee until their demands for respectful treatment in the workplace are met.

The brutal heat wave did not deter shifts of supporters from joining the picket line at two rallies July 19 and 24 called by the Greater Boston Labor Council. Chanting “What’s Disgusting? Union Busting! What’s Outrageous? Poverty Wages!” hundreds of union activists, baristas from regional Starbucks, socialist organizations, students from neighboring universities, local politicians and candidates have come to pledge their support.

Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751; Painters Union, District Council 35; Teamsters Local 25; the Boston Teachers Union; Harvard dining hall workers, UNITE HERE Local 26; UAW graduate students and clerical workers; MIT Graduate Students Union; and the Brookline Educators Union have provided daily sound systems, food and water, entertainment and first aid supplies. The Greater Boston Labor Council brought a free ice cream truck to the “MegaPicket” on Sunday, July 24. Throughout the week there were per-



July 19 protest

WW PHOTO: STEVE GILLIS

formances out on the block, from live revolutionary music sung by Workers World member Kristen Turgeon, to speeches given on the sound truck, to karaoke sing-alongs led by striking workers. These efforts helped build momentum and enthusiasm on the picket line as the strikers moved into their second week of the shutdown.

Mobile teams led by SBWU local organizers made stops at the other Starbucks locations in the district to converse with their co-workers on shift and extend their solidarity and assistance, both at unionized and not yet unionized stores.

As the corporation threatens to recruit scab workers and reopen the struck store, it is of utmost importance to urge local

customers and baristas to not cross the picket line but rather to pledge to join the movement, defend the strikers and organize the staff at all locations.

Updates on the strike are regularly posted on the Boston Starbucks Workers United Twitter page (@BostonSBWU). Resources are shared on the SBWU website at sbworkersunited.com. These include a #NoContractNoCoffee pledge for allies, who can “take the lead from workers and respond to workers’ calls for action to further their campaign,” as well as a contact form for Starbucks partners who are ready to begin organizing at their own stores.

The rallying message chanted from the picket line is a reminder to all that “The people united will never be defeated!” □

## Three new wins for Cleveland Starbucks workers, third is 200th countrywide

There are now over 200 unionized Starbucks stores in the U.S. Number 200 was the University Circle store in Cleveland, where Starbucks Workers United won a union representation election when ballots were counted July 22. Dozens of union supporters had demonstrated outside the store July 15 (shown in photo) to back the union drive and protest the firing of a union organizer by Starbucks.

This was the third win of the week

for Cleveland Starbucks union supporters. Two other stores, one in Cleveland Heights and one on Cleveland’s West Side, were certified as voting unanimously for the union July 19. They followed a downtown Cleveland store that won its union election May 24, also by unanimous vote.

As protesters chanted July 15, “Cleveland is a union town!”

— Report and photo by Martha Grevatt



## One-day strike in Philadelphia

By Marie Kelly  
Philadelphia

Workers at a Philadelphia Center City Starbucks store held a one-day strike July 22 to protest union-busting tactics by management. The

strike began before 6:00 am and lasted into the evening rush hour. Workers formed a picket line at noon and were joined in solidarity by Teamsters union members, who brought the giant inflatable “Scabby the Rat,” symbolizing Starbucks

management. The 12th and Walnut Streets coffee shop is one of five Starbucks locations in the city that won their union elections. Ballots for that store were counted in June. There are now over 200 union stores nationwide. □



PHOTO: PHILADELPHIA TRIBUNE / ABDUL R. SULAYMAN

Starbucks workers strike Philadelphia Center City store, July 22. 'Scabby the Rat' courtesy of Teamsters union supporters.



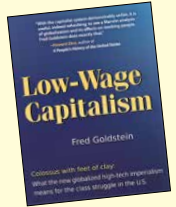
PHOTO: PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER / ALEJANDRO A. ALVAREZ

Starbucks workers strike Philadelphia Center City store, July 22.



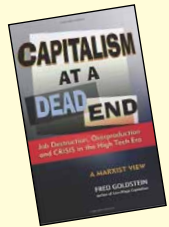
### High Tech, Low Pay A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy  
With an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of *Low Wage Capitalism*.  
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# Seattle Workers fight back against Starbucks' attacks

By Jim McMahan  
Seattle

Starbucks, headquartered in Seattle, is trying with a vengeance to halt the unionization of some of its prime stores. Workers are countering Starbucks' union-busting attacks with strikes and solidarity.

Starbucks, with billionaire prime stockholder and CEO Howard Schultz at the helm, recently announced the closing of five Seattle stores — two of which were unionized. One of the stores, at 23rd and Jackson Streets, is in the heart of the Black community. Along with another Black neighborhood store which was closed earlier in the pandemic, Starbucks has almost completely divested from Seattle's Black community — yet it claims to be a community supporter.

Starbucks closed a newly unionized



Strike at Seattle Starbucks Roastery, July 17.

store in the center of the LGBTQ2S+ community. All the stores being closed were doing a good business; their closure was just crude union busting.

On the weekend of July 15-17, Starbucks workers walked out, holding collective workplace actions against union busting at four Seattle stores. This was a repeat of strikes held the previous weekend. Almost 100 workers struck and walked the line at the Roastery on July 17. This store takes in \$50,000 to \$60,000 on an average week-end. Starbucks made \$4.2 billion in profit in 2021.

Solidarity was strengthened after a big picket line of UNITE/HERE workers only a half-block from the Roastery earlier in July. Starbucks workers supported the demonstration by newly unionized sandwich makers, who were demanding a fair contract at the 10-store Homegrown Sandwich chain. □

# Italian government arrests militant unionists

By Martha Grevatt

Six union leaders were placed under house arrest in Piacenza, Italy, in the early morning hours of July 19, under orders from the local prosecutor's office. Two are members of USB (Unione Sindacale di Base), and four belong to SI Cobas, two militant unions that represent workers in the logistics sector and have waged strikes recently against Amazon, FedEx and others. The six are charged with conspiracy to commit private violence, resistance to a public official, sabotage and interruption of public service.

According to SI Cobas, "this accusation allegedly stemmed from strikes conducted in Piacenza's logistics warehouses

from 2014 to 2021. According to prosecutors, these strikes were carried out with specious motives and with 'extortionist' intent, in order to obtain better conditions for workers than those provided by the national contract." (sicobas.org, July 21)

"The advance of the capitalist crisis, and the growing social malaise following the war economy and the high cost of living, produce an ever more stringent offensive against the workers and in particular against the trade union and

social avant-gardes of struggle," said USB. (news.italy-24.com)

Immediately the two unions called for protests, including sit-ins at government offices, marches and solidarity strikes in the logistics sector. Unions in numerous Italian cities heeded the call.

The USB is affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions, whose affiliates around the world, along with the WFTU central office in Athens, Greece, have condemned the anti-union repression. Unions in Indonesia, Argentina, Palestine, Greece, Cyprus, Russia, the Spanish state and India have sent messages of solidarity to USB and SI Cobas, demanding the charges be dropped. □



March to protest attacks on militant unions, Piacenza, Italy, July 23.

PHOTO: USB

WHEN WE FIGHT WE WIN!

## On the picket line

By Marie Kelly

## Harrisburg postal union gains new members

The 100 truck drivers at the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, location of 10 Roads Express have voted to join the American Postal Workers Union (APWU). The 10 Roads Express is the largest trucking firm contracted by the U.S. Postal Service to haul mail; 1,000 10 Roads Express workers already belong to APWU.

APWU President Mark Dimondstein praised the tremendous efforts of the Harrisburg organizing team, who stood firm against anti-union intimidation tactics. Bill Hamilton, an 18-year mail-haul driver said, "Most importantly, we will not accept being treated with anything less than the dignity and respect that we, as professional drivers, deserve." (apwu.org)

## Club dancers unionize to fight misogynist management

The strippers at Star Garden in Los Angeles voted to unionize last March and are negotiating with management to get union recognition. This comes after weeks of picketing and a walkout over the unfair firing of two dancers after they raised safety concerns. One of the dancers fired was threatened by a customer, and management ignored her demand for increased security.

As sex workers, the dancers want guarantees they will be provided adequate protection against misogynistic

threats. The Star Gardens strippers have filed five Unfair Labor Practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board. The dancers have joined the Strippers United union, founded by Antonia Crane in 2018.

Crane formerly worked at the Lusty Lady strip club in San Francisco, when the dancers there unionized with Service Employees (SEIU) Local 790 in 1997. She hopes the victory of the strippers at Star Garden will spur other club dancers to organize. The solidarity and strength of a union can forcefully challenge the current misogynistic climate — epitomized by the Supreme Court's attack on reproductive justice — and validate an individual's bodily autonomy.



Los Angeles strippers demand union recognition.

## Baristas take over after bosses check out

Augie's Coffee House and roastery was a Redlands, California, institution. Clientele appreciated the experienced barista staff, many of whom had worked there for 8-10 years. The workers loved their jobs and had developed a rapport with their customers and each other over the years. When the workers decided to organize with the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers (UE) and make demands for better pay and scheduling, the community showed support.

The bosses, however, decided to pull the plug, close up shop and fire all the workers in July 2020. What happened next shows the power of solidarity among workers. The staff reopened as a worker-run coffee shop, called the Slow Bloom Coffee Cooperative and organized

as SBCC Local 1011 of UE. Now business aspects like expenses and profits are transparent.

Erik Lopez, who works at Slow Bloom, was one of the organizers who had worked at Augie's. He says the two work environments are like night and day. Now there is no discrimination around scheduling, and tips are shared equally. The shop has no bosses, so workers are not subject to harassment by supervisors, who often target transgender or immigrant workers and put them on low-traffic shifts with scanty tips.

By dividing the tips, the workers at Slow Bloom show that everyone is valued equally. Everyone works hard, but sometimes a worker needs a break; being a few minutes late for your shift will not see you summoned into the boss's office. The coffee co-op is doing well, but it was a hard road to get there.

Lopez can relate to the current Starbucks union wave and urges baristas to stand strong: "Keep at it, man, and don't stop. I know there are a lot of tactics the boss can use, like stalling workers until they give up. Keep at it; have your co-worker's back and outlast them." (thestrikewave.com)



Slow Bloom Coffee Co-op workers

## UAW on strike in three states

Close to 1,700 United Auto Workers (UAW) members are on strike. In Marion, Virginia, members of UAW Local 2850 have been striking General Dynamics since July 2. General Dynamics is a major military contractor.

UAW members at two Case New Holland facilities are entering their third month on the picket line, after contract negotiations in which the company failed to meet union demands. Case New Holland workers manufacture bulldozers and other heavy industrial vehicles. The 600 Racine, Wisconsin, and the 440 Burlington, Iowa, plant workers are determined to win. □



# Fire and ice, yet politicians still sleep

By Paddy Colligan and G. Dunkel

No imagining is needed to picture what global warming/climate change might look and feel like. Millions of people in the Northern Hemisphere are currently living it.

This is an extraordinary summer. Wildfires and record temperatures in Europe, grass fires in London and widespread and deadly wildfires in Portugal, Spain, France, Turkey and in the drought-riven U.S. West. Temperatures over 100 F are affecting the U.S., as well as several European countries, where this phenomenon is so unusual that few people have air conditioning. (Bloomberg News, July 21)

A section of the Marmolada Glacier in the Italian Alps collapsed July 3, unexpectedly releasing a powerful avalanche that killed 11 people and swept a hotel across the border into Switzerland. That glacier is showing signs that another section of it may further collapse before the end of this extraordinarily hot summer.

A similar glacier collapse occurred a week later in Kyrgyzstan in the Tien Shan Mountains. Fortunate hikers escaped with their lives and video capturing its stunning power as it tore through the valley.

Glacier collapses are happening due to intense heat waves and lack of winter snowfall. Bob Berwyn, reporting for Inside Climate News, concluded such unpredictable events “could become more frequent and widespread as global warming intensifies heat waves and deprives the ice fields of the snow needed to replenish them. On average, high mountain areas are warming at least twice as fast as the rest of the planet.” (insideclimatenews.org, July 19)

### The role of ice

What is happening in the polar and alpine regions of the Earth is of great concern. Ice is critical to establishing and regulating conditions of a habitable planet. It regulates the temperatures of the atmosphere and the oceans, governs weather

patterns and sea levels. When glaciers and sea ice melt, sunlight is absorbed by the land or water they used to cover. This sets up a feedback loop that further accelerates summer melting. (tinyurl.com/4ajakdhv)

There are two ice sheets — the Greenland Ice Sheet in the Northern Hemisphere and the Antarctic Ice Sheet in the Southern Hemisphere. They hold about 70% of the world’s fresh water and are critical to sea levels and ocean currents. The rapid or sudden collapse of sections of these ice sheets could result in the submersion of low-lying islands and even much of the world’s inhabited coastal regions.

The changes in ocean salinity and temperature have already impacted marine life and global weather patterns. People living on the Arctic coast are experiencing changes to their subsistence lifestyle and destruction wrought by intensified storms. Changes are being felt in Western Europe’s historically moderate weather, with intensified summer heat and winter cold, as well as changes in precipitation and storm frequency affecting the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in this region.

### Mountain glaciers

Besides the glaciers that extend out from the ice sheets, there are inland glaciers in mountain ranges, as the two examples noted above. Even though mountain glaciers represent only 4% of the world’s land ice area, about half a billion people depend on these water reserves. (tinyurl.com/7r2tpy4s) The disappearance of these water resources would trigger major migrations.

In the Andes Mountains in the Southern Hemisphere, 98% of the glaciers have lost ice, more than any others globally relative to the size of the region. The water they supply is vital to the people living in nearby cities. Farmers in the



Collapse of Marmolada Glacier in Italian Alps.

area depend on the glaciers for some of their water for drinking, irrigation and hydroelectric power, especially those who live in arid areas or who are experiencing drought. (tinyurl.com/2d34anzp)

In the Himalayas, global warming has meant that the glaciers receive less snow, but so do the areas around them with both good and bad effects on agriculture. The positive effects of longer growing seasons and temporary possibilities of irrigation in these high-altitude farming areas are likely to soon be offset by disappearing glaciers, as greenhouse gases continue to heat up the planet. (tinyurl.com/7r2tpy4s)

Beyond these mountain areas, the flow from these glaciers is essential to feeding river systems like the Ganges, on which millions and millions of people downstream are dependent.

### U.S. Senate fails once again July 15

The United States is one of the world’s largest emitters of greenhouse gases, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists. The Biden administration wanted the Senate to pass a bill to seriously reduce this amount.

In the grand tradition of bourgeois politics, all sorts of compromises and deals were proposed to get the Build Back Better Act, or indeed any sort of response to the climate crisis, passed.

Without generous tax credits, the transition to electric vehicles would be

slowed and the goal of having half the new cars sold in the U.S. being electric by 2030 would not be met. Yet corporate plans go forward to create new and toxic open-pit lithium mines in the U.S. for the needed battery components, despite opposition by affected Indigenous communities, environmentalists and conservationists. (tinyurl.com/yckjnxn3)

The amount of coal used in producing electricity in the U.S. has fallen dramatically, since natural gas is far cheaper. But per capita emissions are far higher than they are in Europe, which uses far more renewable energy sources. China has almost three times the renewable capacity of the U.S.

The changeover to wind and solar power and the improvement of battery storage technology would be completely undercut — “kneecapped” according to the delicate assertion of the American Clean Power Association — while the rest of the industrialized world continues to push their development forward.

But all the entreaties and deals didn’t move the Democratic senator from the coal industry or any Republicans. None of them wanted to risk the ire of their donors or be charged with contributing to inflation by not promoting the production of more oil and gas from U.S. sources.

The reaction in the U.S. environmental movement to this failure to pass the bill was split. The old, established NGOs like the Sierra Club pointed out that the Biden administration still has a lot of administrative options, even though the Supreme Court has reined in the Environmental Protection Agency.

The youth-oriented, grassroots environmental activists in the Sunrise Movement, which attracts folks in Extinction Rebellion, were a bit more radical. They called for elimination of the filibuster and expansion of the Supreme Court to the left. □

# Protests against increased energy costs in Puerto Rico

By Deborah Rodriguez

On July 20 an alliance of Puerto Rican and multinational anti-imperialist organizations led by New York Boricua Resistance (NYBR) gathered in front of DLA Piper in New York City. DLA Piper is one of the law firms that represents LUMA and is connected to the increase in energy prices in Puerto Rico. LUMA is Puerto Rico’s main electric utility company.

The protest was in solidarity with thousands of Puerto Rican people who mobilized on the island July 20 demanding: 1) zero increases in utility costs; 2) zero cuts to pensions for retired and active electrical energy workers; 3) a reduction in 75% of the debt in bonds; and 4) a push toward renewable energy, such as solar energy. The protest also called for a cancellation of LUMA’s contract and for DLA Piper to terminate its relationship with LUMA.

In Puerto Rico workers from various sectors, multiple social organizations and left-leaning legislators marched in the streets of San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico, demanding the government cancel the LUMA contract. The Puerto Rican people have been condemning the Canadian-American company for its most recent 17.1% increase in energy costs, while the people are placed at risk of death as medical equipment, food and water are compromised by persistent outages.

Simultaneously, the people are impacted

by austerity measures targeting workers’ pensions and an increase in costs of essential necessities such as food and gas.

DLA Piper is a multinational company with offices in over 40 countries whose past invoices reveal charges of over \$40,000 for 45 hours for legal and administrative representation. (tinyurl.com/y7s79wmy)

That cry was echoed loud and wide in front of DLA Piper by organizers in NYC. The heat was on as members from the New York Community Action Project, Malaya NY, Lalmorich, Ridgewood Panther Solidarity Organization and Workers Assembly Against Racism, a range of multinational and intergenerational organizations, rallied against LUMA and DLA Piper

and as one with the Puerto Rican people.

The NYBR-led protest was endorsed by A Call to Action on Puerto Rico, ProLibertad Freedom Campaign, Workers World Party and International League of People’s Struggles to demand DLA Piper terminate its relationship with LUMA.

NY Boricua’s recent press release highlights that DLA Piper is a tax adviser and lobbies in Congress on behalf of the Puerto Rican government. These vulture capitalists from DLA Piper have described Puerto Rico “... as an Opportunity Zone area. ... We have to be well aware that if we want to bring that capital here, they will be looking at a menu of other options ...” (tinyurl.com/yckzph2z)

Malaya NY and Lalmorich representatives spoke on the similar struggles faced by Philippine and Bengali people, respectively, noting how U.S. imperialism is the enemy of the people. Organizers compared the struggles of gentrification in Puerto Rico to those in New York City, as housing prices increase and communities are displaced due to gentrification.

Organizers reminded us that the freedom of Puerto Rican political prisoners was fought for by community organizers and of the need to organize and fight. In Puerto Rico and in New York City, the people’s demands are clear: “Fuera LUMA!” “Fuera DLA Piper!” and “Que Viva Puerto Rico Libre!” □



July 20 protest, New York City .

PHOTO: NEW YORK BORICUA RESISTANCE



# Biden’s COVID-19 challenge

The Joe Biden administration has the following plan for dealing with COVID-19:

1. Accept as normal 420 extra deaths each day, that is, 150,000 a year;
2. Assume that most of the deaths and much of the severe symptoms will stay concentrated in the older, poorer and more oppressed sectors of the population;
3. When it hits richer and more powerful people — like Biden and other members of his administration — make sure they get antiviral medicine and the best supportive care, even if others can’t;
4. Hope that the number of serious cases is small enough that hospitals avoid collapse — but take no steps to expand COVID-19 care or other medical care to the general population;
5. Claim everything is under control, whether it is or not. Go back to business as usual, without government mask mandates, without continued mobilization to distribute vaccines, without establishing and facilitating

public health protocols — such as testing and tracing needed to confront the next variant and the next pandemic; and

6. Blame China for establishing strict local quarantines and especially for shutting down business. There is a near insistence that People’s China allow the virus to spread as it has in much of the rest of the world, even though this would likely lead to millions more extra deaths a year.

As numbing as the above scenario is, it’s possible that a virus variant develops that throws the world into even worse chaos. But for the moment, put that thought aside.

The Democratic administration’s approach to the pandemic seemed reasonable in 2021 — but only in comparison to its predecessor. The Trump gang’s plan consisted of denial of the problem and scorn for science — unless they themselves got sick. Even then they were willing to try dangerous pseudo-cures.

The unraveling of both big capitalist

parties’ protocols for coping with COVID-19 and its variants reveals much about the inability of the capitalist system to protect and improve human life. This is all-the-more proven, as the inability has been duplicated by nearly all the governments in the imperialist world. That’s true even for those countries where a strong workers’ movement had historically won a more humane health delivery system.

The highest value under capitalism is to maximize profits. How the working class worldwide fares, whether they even live, the ruling class dismisses as trivial.

This can be seen in how the imperialist ruling class confronts the challenge of the pandemic, the climate crisis, economic instability and even imperialist war. Their main goal remains maximizing profits. Whatever suffering this goal causes, they try to impose on the Global South and on the working class. They do this even when it puts their own safety at stake. The



COVID-19 crisis proves this. The ruling class has long ago lost any ability to positively guide the fate of humanity. The alternative is to give priority to improving the conditions of the poorest and most oppressed sectors of the working class — along with that of the entire planet — which will improve and protect the lives of the greatest part of humanity. This can only be done in a system where the drive for maximizing profits has disappeared. The system needed is socialism. □

# Ukraine: Will U.S. sabotage grain deal?

Continued from page 1

agricultural exports. Battles continue even in the immediate area of Odessa. But the agreement provides a gap in the sanctions that have blocked Russian grain from world markets.

The deal also allows unimpeded access of Russian fertilizers to global markets. Russia is a major producer of fertilizers, which are vital to maximizing food production.

The ships will be monitored by a U.N.-led joint coordination center, which will be established immediately in Istanbul and include representatives from Ukraine, Russia and Turkey. (tinyurl.com/2s3s5zhp)

According to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, 85 ships at Odessa’s seaport were full of grain, with 20 million to 25 million tons of grain nearby in silos. The Port of Odessa is one of the largest ports in the Black Sea basin.

The city of Odessa is a large industrial center, with well-equipped docks and ship-repair yards, a wide range of engineering industries, chemical industries, oil refining and food processing.

This agreement to move food to prevent famine faces an uphill battle. Ukraine is awash in U.S. military con-



Grain silo in Odessa, Ukraine.

tractors, trainers and mercenary forces.

The city of Odessa is controlled by fascist forces. On May 2, 2014, paramilitary forces with Nazi and Ukrainian fascist Bandera symbols massacred anti-fascist protesters who sought refuge at the House of Labor. Their control of the city and the surrounding region continues.

### More than 7,000 sanctions

For over five months, the harsh sanctions imposed by the U.S. and the European Union — at U.S. demand —

have blocked Russia from exporting grain, fertilizer, oil and gas to the world market. This has created an economic crisis far beyond Russia.

Between Feb. 22 and July 20, Australia, Canada, the European Union (EU), Japan, Switzerland, Britain and the U.S. imposed a total of 7,271 sanctions on Russia, including 1,350 entities. The measures included asset freezes and travel bans. (statista.com, July 22)

Sanctions blocked Russia’s Central Bank from accessing more than \$400 billion in foreign-exchange reserves held abroad. The G7 countries decided to disconnect several Russian banks from the SWIFT system. This imposition of the most severe sanctions in modern history was intended to create an economic catastrophe, hyperinflation, uprisings and the collapse of the Russian state.

Russia is one of the largest raw materials suppliers to the world market. Russia has the largest land mass in the world and is grain, protein, fertilizer and energy self-sufficient. The sanctions meant to destabilize and dismember Russia have boomeranged back on the countries that imposed the harsh measures. And the sanctions imposed on Russia have especially impacted Africa, creating spiraling economic dislocation throughout African countries.

Although the U.S. demanded the sanctions on all Russian exports and transactions, including grains, fertilizers and energy, U.S. corporate media and U.S. and NATO politicians have blamed Russia for withholding supplies that the imperialist countries have themselves blocked.

Countries around the world, including most of the countries of the continents of Asia and South America and all those of Africa, have, however, refused to accept or acknowledge the U.S./EU sanctions.

The head of the African Union, Macky Sall, linked U.S. sanctions to the continent’s food shortages. “Anti-Russia sanctions have made this situation worse, and now we do not have access to grain from Russia, primarily to wheat.” Sall continued, “And, most importantly, we do not have access to fertilizer. The situation was bad, and now it has become worse, creating a threat to food security in Africa.” (bloomberg.com, July 3)

What is completely scrubbed from the U.S. media is any mention of the U.S. sanctions that were already imposed for years on 17 African countries. These have had a destabilizing impact on the whole region.

The ruling class with their military and policy planners well understand the impact of their decisions. But to preserve the rulers’ fabulous wealth and dominant position, “the administration is willing to countenance even a global recession and mounting hunger.” (Washington Post, June 17). □

# Reproductive rights vs. Federalist Society

By Marie Kelly  
Philadelphia

Protesters gathered outside the Mellon Bank building in Center City Philadelphia July 13 to denounce the Federalist Society meeting there. Society members include the ultra-conservative members of the U.S. Supreme Court, many Republican members of Congress and Amy Wax, a University of Pennsylvania law professor who spouts white-supremacist rhetoric.

Security guards barred their entrance, but protesters set up a sound system to address office workers on their way home, handing out literature against proposed SB106, a constitutional amendment to eliminate the statewide right to abortion.

The DSA-Philadelphia chapter called the action, which was endorsed and attended by Workers World Party-Philadelphia. Members

spoke out against the Federalist Society’s right-wing, white-supremacist, anti-reproductive rights and transphobic stance. □



July 13, Philadelphia.

PHOTO: KELSEY ROMANO



# Internationalists' role in Nicaragua's 1979 Revolution

## Part 1: Fidel prepares for expanding Southern Front

By Hernán Cano

*The author, an Argentine journalist in Venezuela, conducted this interview with Venezuelan Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein for the news agency Sputnik in preparation for the July anniversary of the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution. Its introduction noted that Rodríguez Gelfenstein, whose guerrilla father was forced out of Chile by the 1973 coup led by Augusto Pinochet, was, at 22, an officer in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces and participated in the last month of Nicaragua's war of liberation with an international contingent fighting the Somoza dictatorship and later in the training of the national army. Translation: John Catalinotto. The following is Part 1 of 2.*

Since that July 20, Nicaragua has been an accumulation of indelible, eternal memories, of enormous happiness that demand a continuous commitment to the revolution. "Just as we [Venezuelans] have [Simón] Bolívar, Nicaragua has Sandino, and that creates an imprint, a way of being and looking at ourselves," says Rodríguez Gelfenstein.

And he recalls that "It is not in Playa Girón, where the first defeat of imperialism in America took place, but in Nicaragua [in 1933], when General Augusto César Sandino expelled the invading Yankee army." Today, four decades after those convulsive years, "Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela have configured, not an axis of evil, but a triangle that continues with the tradition of anti-imperialist struggle," he emphasizes.

**Hernán Cano:** How did you connect with the Sandinista Revolution?

**Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein:** My father was imprisoned in the National Stadium in Chile after the coup d'état against Salvador Allende. Then he left for Peru and could not return to Venezuela, because he had pending cases from when he participated in the guerrilla struggle.

Under those conditions and after receiving several offers, he chose to go to Cuba. I was 17 years old, and when I arrived in Havana, I requested military training. Together with a group of Chilean comrades, because I was also Chilean, we received military training in the Cuban regular army.

It was the period when almost all the Cuban military were going on internationalist missions, for example in Africa, and many of us asked to be sent on one of those missions. But Fidel, in his infinite wisdom, said no, we should wait, that the time would come for those of us who were not Cubans.

**HC:** Excuse me for interrupting. Were

you an officer in the Cuban Armed Forces?

**SRG:** Yes, at that time I was a lieutenant; I was head of an artillery battery, and I was in charge of 64 soldiers, with six 122 mm howitzers, and I performed duties like any regular officer of the Cuban army. That was already 1979; I was 22 years old.

**HC:** Then, your time came with Nicaragua. How did you find out that you were going to fight with the Sandinistas?

**SRG:** I was returning to my unit from a maneuver at a firing range; it was after 11 o'clock at night; and since we returned all the weapons to a safe place, with all the security measures in place, it was 1 o'clock in the morning.

When I left everything ready, and the soldiers went to bed to sleep, I went to the General Staff of my regiment and reported that everything was in order and everything was safe. And I retired.

When I had walked about 40 meters, an officer came running and told me that I had to return to the General Staff. I thought the worst. And then I was informed that an order had arrived to report to the General Staff of my division, in Havana, at 5 a.m., and that we were going on a maneuver to Camagüey, where the Armed Forces main polygon was located.

I was 40 kilometers away from Havana, bearded, full of mud. I could not go like that. They put me in a truck to get to the first town, and then I found a taxi and arrived at my mother's house at 2:30 a.m. She lived two blocks away from my house.

My mother woke up and asked me what I was doing at that hour. I told her that I was called to a maneuver and that I had to leave early. And my mother, who never knew why, told me: "No, you are going to Nicaragua."

**HC:** At 5 a.m., Lieutenant Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein arrived in Havana. ...

**SRG:** I arrived, and other comrades from other divisions began to arrive. We were informed that at 6 o'clock we had to be at the Army General Staff. And the first surprising thing was that there were not only officers, there was a lot of movement, a lot of secrecy; and we began to see officers from the special troops of the Ministry of the Interior.

They gathered us together; they told us that we were going to a school — I later learned that it was one of those schools where guerrillas were trained — and they informed us that we had to get ready, because we were going to Nicaragua. And that night Fidel arrived to tell us about the mission.

**HC:** What was the mission he proposed to you?

**SRG:** Fidel's idea was that there was a



Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein: Fidel told us that the balance in Nicaragua had to be broken by the Southern Front.

PHOTO: HERNÁN CANO, SPUTNIK MUNDO

stalemate in Nicaragua that could not be broken; and that to break that stalemate, it had to be broken on the Southern Front by creating a large contingent that would initiate an offensive that would break with the Sandinistas' traditional form of combat, which was to strike and retreat.

For Fidel it was necessary to "strike and stay, occupy the territory." He said that with the arrival of a large contingent of internationalist fighters, [President Anastasio] Somoza would sell the idea that he was fighting against international communism in order to ask for help from the whole world. This would force Somoza to concentrate most of his military force on the Southern Front, loosening the tension on the other guerrilla fronts and allowing the Sandinistas to go on the offensive.

That was Fidel's great strategic conception. He told us: "You have to go in, advance as far as you can, dig a trench, stay there, resist and create a liberated territory." That was the mission he set out for us.

**HC:** When did you arrive in Nicaraguan territory?

**SRG:** We left Havana on June 16, [1979], slept in Panama on the 17th; and on June 18, we arrived in Nicaragua on a Panamanian Air Force plane that Omar Torrijos had arranged. We arrived at a landing paddock that had been set up for us, some 20 kilometers from Nicaragua in Costa Rican territory, because there had been an agreement between Fidel, General Torrijos and the president of Costa Rica, Rodrigo Carazo, who was an enemy of the Somoza dictatorship.

**HC:** What references did you have at that time about the insurrection in Nicaragua and the Sandinista Front?

**SRG:** When we arrived at the place where we were concentrated in Cuba, which was called Punto Cero, a legendary place in the history of the Latin American revolutionary movement, we knew the history of Sandino's resistance and the defeat of the U.S. in Nicaragua. We knew about the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front], because the Cuban press reported on the actions being carried out, but it was general information.

But for us it was like going to Uruguay or Honduras, because in Cuba we were trained in an internationalist spirit, and we had the conviction that we had to fight against imperialism, as Che said, wherever it was. And it was Fidel, who went there every day, who explained to us what was happening in Nicaragua, the political situation, the issue of the internal unity of

the Sandinista Front, the general conception of the war.

Moreover, at that time there were no projectors; and one of those days, Fidel took a piece of chalk and drew the map from memory. At the place where we were going to arrive, he detailed the hills, the river, the nearby towns, the road, an incredible level of detail, all from memory, so much so that when we arrived we said: "Fidel was here." No, he was a genius.

**HC:** You arrive on the 18th, and what do you find?

**SRG:** On the 18th I took part in my first combat, a crazy one, because without authorization from the higher command, the leader of a column tried to take a completely bare hill and sent the Sandinista troops to cross the river and advance. And the machine guns swept them away.

I was there directing the artillery fire, and they radioed me the order to withdraw. There were dozens of casualties that day. That was my baptism of fire in the Southern Front, in a contingent where there were Chileans, Uruguayans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Sandinista fighters who were being trained in Cuba and who were sent back but subordinate to us. It was a very curious thing, a true internationalist contingent.

**HC:** You were in combat for a month until the Sandinista victory — how do you remember it?

**SRG:** This is a look from the perspective of the knowledge I have today; at that time, I was a low-ranking officer who had a mission to accomplish and did not have the big picture.

At some point it became clear that the stalemate was going to be maintained; we did not have the capacity to break it, but they did not have the capacity to defeat us. Especially because we had open logistics, we had the border with Costa Rica and through there everything could reach us, we could continue supplying ourselves with ammunition, weapons, food, everything.

And as expected, Somoza concentrated, first the EEBI, which was the School of Basic Infantry Training, an elite force whose chief was his son, and then the little aviation that Somoza had was concentrated in the Southern Front, the artillery also — they had a battery of multiple rocket launchers that had been sent by the military of the Argentine dictatorship. It was a month of tug of war, but what Fidel predicted finally happened. □



### WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

*"By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity."*

— Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,  
President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;  
Foreign Minister of Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

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Filadelfia, 9 de julio

MO FOTO: JOE PIETTE

# Residentes resisten desarrolladores millonarios

Por Joe Piette  
Filadelfia

Darlene Foreman, una mujer negra de 60 años y una de las representantes de los inquilinos de UC Townhomes, dijo a la prensa reunida el 11 de julio: “Esta es una lucha por los Townhomes, pero no sólo por los Townhomes”. Es por la gente “de todo el país que se enfrenta al desplazamiento”.

Detrás de ella había unos 50 residentes y simpatizantes que sostenían pancartas o teléfonos móviles mientras ella continuaba: “No voy a ser desplazada. ... Yo, los residentes de aquí y la gente de todo el país estamos hartos. Así que, si esta lucha se lleva a cabo hoy, mañana, la semana que viene, el mes que viene, el año que viene, ivamos a estar aquí luchando!”.

En el fondo había unas 15 tiendas de campañas, que se instalaron en el césped verde de la propiedad después de una “Fiesta de Protección de la Cuadra” el 9 de julio. Los residentes y los simpatizantes de los activistas de vivienda se están turnando para pasar la noche como parte de la campaña “No nos vamos a ninguna parte”, uniéndose a la resistencia de los residentes.

Durante la rueda de prensa, los organizadores anunciaron el nuevo nombre del centro de viviendas, mientras los residentes cubrían el cartel oficial de cinco metros por cinco metros con su propia pancarta nueva que proclamaba “The People’s Townhomes”.

El día anterior, se colocó una enorme pancarta blanca con letras negras en el tejado inclinado que da a la calle 40 que decía “La vivienda es un derecho humano”.

Dominique Walker, de Moms for Housing, con sede en Oakland (California), dijo: “Estamos aquí para mostrar nuestra solidaridad con los People’s Townhomes. Sabemos de primera mano cómo es el



Residentes de People's Townhomes y simpatizantes marchan, Filadelfia, 9 de julio.

MO FOTO: JOE PIETTE

desplazamiento. En Oakland, ha habido muchos desplazamientos de nuestros residentes negros y otras personas racializadas. Sabemos que si no resistimos, seguirán haciéndolo”.

Aliyah Phelps, de Moms for Housing, dijo: “Eso es algo que perdemos cuándo se produce la gentrificación: ese sentido de comunidad, ese sentido de pertenencia, ese sentido de seguridad que es tan importante. Cuando se pierde eso, se acaban perdiendo otras cosas. La salud mental se deteriora, tu red de seguridad, la delincuencia, todo”.

El residente Sheldon Davids dijo: “Este es un lugar especial, donde nuestros niños pueden jugar con seguridad, donde nuestros ancianos pueden acceder a hospitales cercanos. Los People’s Townhomes están situados junto a la estación de la calle 40. El acceso a este importante centro de transporte no es poca cosa; ies una de las razones por las que no nos vamos a ningún sitio!”

## La vivienda es un derecho humano

Los residentes de UC Townhomes y sus simpatizantes organizaron una marcha “Families4Housing” para dar comienzo a un verano de eventos el 9 de julio. Su objetivo es detener el desplazamiento de 68 familias del oeste de Filadelfia de las viviendas de bajos ingresos cerca de la

Universidad de Pensilvania y la Universidad de Drexel, que está en el punto de mira de los gentrificadores.

Justo antes de que la marcha comenzara a formarse, el grupo de tambores de Filadelfia Positive Movement Entertainment Drumline dio vueltas entre la multitud, captando la atención de todos con sus potentes golpes de tambor. Poco después, al iniciarse la marcha, Krystal Strong dirigió los cánticos de “Cuando se ataca a los Townhomes, qué hacemos: ¡levantarnos y luchar!”.

Los manifestantes tomaron una ruta circular que les llevó por los campus. En las calles 38 y Chestnut, Darlene Foreman, residente de UC Townhomes, inició un cántico mientras los manifestantes bloqueaban un tranvía y el tráfico de automóviles durante 15 minutos. “Ellos están reteniendo nuestras vidas; nosotros estamos reteniendo el tráfico”.

Strong señaló que los organizadores están cambiando el nombre de UC Townhomes por el de “The People’s Townhomes”, como proclamaba una pancarta principal.

De vuelta a los Townhomes, una concentración permaneció en la calle durante una hora en las calles 40 y Market. Entre los oradores se encontraban la Madre Pam, las dos oradoras de Madres por la Vivienda de California y varios residentes más.

Para aumentar los efectos visuales de la marcha, Spiral Q proporcionó un recorte de cartón de tres cuartos de tamaño natural de una excavadora, además de tres pancartas altas que decían: “Recuérdese el legado negro”. Las Townhomes están situadas en lo poco que queda de una comunidad negra histórica que desde hace tiempo está en el punto de mira de los gentrificadores.

## La punta del iceberg de los gentrificadores

En los próximos cinco años, otras 37 viviendas de bajo coste de Filadelfia se enfrentarán a la renovación de los contra-

tos del HUD, incluido un rascacielos para personas mayores situado al otro lado de la calle. Otro es Center Post Village, a dos manzanas de distancia, en la calle 40 y la avenida Powelton. La semana pasada, al pasar por el barrio de Powelton Village, donde este escritor repartió el correo, me sorprendió la cantidad de casas unifamiliares que habían sido derribadas y sustituidas por nuevos apartamentos de alto alquiler.

Los residentes de estas comunidades negras y personas racializadas están siendo desplazados a un mercado de la vivienda con cada vez menos vacantes asequibles. Muchos padres y ancianos tendrán dificultades para encontrar una vivienda segura y saludable que ofrezca servicios similares a los de su barrio actual. Según informes ampliamente publicados por Realtor.com, la tasa de vacantes de alquiler en Filadelfia está muy por debajo del 5%, y a los residentes a menudo se les ofrecen unidades en zonas periféricas con crecientes índices de violencia y pocos servicios.

De vuelta a la sede de People’s Townhomes, la “Fiesta de Protección de la Cuadra” continuó hasta altas horas de la noche. La gente bailó al ritmo de la música de varios DJs. Se instaló un juego de bádminton y los niños disfrutaron haciendo pompas de jabón gigantes. Cindy Lou pintó la cara de niños y adultos. Los participantes recibieron pizza, galletas, agua y hielo gratis. La protesta continuó durante la noche con una docena de tiendas de campaña instaladas para los que pudieran quedarse.

Organizaciones como Iffy Books, Mundo Obrero, Iglesias Community Garden, Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance, la organización ecologista Thrive, Food Not Bombs Solidarity, Community Action Relief Project, Abortion Liberation Fund of Pennsylvania y Critical Resistance se presentaron en el evento. □

## UN COMENTARIO DE MO/WW

# Los trabajadores de Starbucks y Amazon necesitan un arco iris de solidaridad de clase

Por Martha Grevatt

“Nos posicionamos como un aliado de la comunidad de lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, transexuales y queers, afirmando todas las formas en que las personas pueden elegir identificarse”.

Así dice Starbucks. (stories.starbucks.com)

Pero en una tienda de Starbucks tras otra, los trabajadores LGBTQ+ están entre los que votan mayoritariamente por un sindicato. Saben que los tópicos agradables y “afirmativos” no sustituyen a los salarios y beneficios sindicales, a las condiciones de trabajo seguras y a la voz en el trabajo. Los trabajadores LGBTQ+ se encuentran entre los organizadores sindicales despedidos por Starbucks... lo que para los trabajadores trans significa perder la cobertura para la atención de afirmación de género, incluida la cirugía.

Una trabajadora trans de Ithaca, Nueva York, fue malgenererizada por su supervisor y amenazada con perder la atención de afirmación de género si su tienda se sindicalizaba.

Amazon es aún más agresivo a la hora de presentarse como una empresa respetuosa con el colectivo LGBTQ, hasta el punto de proponer que el Orgullo de Seattle pase a llamarse “Desfile del Orgullo de Seattle presentado por Amazon”. Pero el comité que ha organizado la marcha anual en Seattle desde 1974 rechazó la propuesta de Amazon, junto con la donación de \$100,000 dólares que llevaba consigo. El Orgullo de Seattle citó las contribuciones de 450.000 dólares de Amazon a la campaña de los políticos anti-LGBTQ+ en 2021.

La única manera de hacer retroceder realmente el fanatismo es enfrentarse al sistema capitalista, que utiliza el racismo,

el sexismo, la homofobia, la transfobia y todo tipo de odio imaginable -con trágicas ramificaciones, como ejemplifica la masacre de Buffalo, Nueva York, sede del primer sindicato de Starbucks- para mantener a los trabajadores divididos.

Lo que necesitan los trabajadores de Starbucks, Amazon y otras muchas empresas capitalistas no es una bandera arco iris ondeando en la sede de la empresa. Necesitan la solidaridad masiva de la comunidad LGBTQ2S+, que es mayoritariamente de la clase trabajadora.

Asimismo, a la comunidad le conviene unirse a los trabajadores que luchan por un sindicato. Seguir el dinero deja claro que todos tenemos los mismos enemigos. Y una marea creciente levanta todos los barcos.

Como dijo Arjae, un trabajador bisexual no binario de Starbucks y organizador sindical en Buffalo: “No puede haber ninguna esperanza de liberación LGBTQ2S+



Un botón sindical de Starbucks incorpora los colores de la bandera del Orgullo

a través del capitalismo. Las personas queer y trans se enfrentan al mismo tipo de discriminación y opresión en Starbucks que en cualquier otra empresa, a pesar del autoproclamado aliancismo de Starbucks”. Concluyeron que “en definitiva, el compromiso de Starbucks con la liberación del colectivo LGBTQ2S+ empieza y termina donde se puede ganar un dólar”. □