



Alabama

# Prisoners wage massive strike

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Oct. 2 — Launched with the cry, “We will no longer contribute to our own oppression,” thousands of incarcerated workers in the Alabama prison system began a massive strike Sept. 26 to protest brutal conditions, racist sentencing and exploitation of their labor.

About 25,000 people are in the state’s 14 major prisons. They do all the labor of maintaining life in the facilities — cooking, cleaning, producing uniforms, doing repairs and equipment work.

Organizing for the strike began in June through the Free Alabama Movement (FAM), inside the walls, and the advocacy group Both Sides of the Wall. These groups estimated that about 80% of the people in Alabama prisons are on strike. (New York Times, Sept. 28)

On the first day of the strike, Both Sides of the Wall held a rally of formerly incarcerated people, family members and supporters at the Department of Corrections in the state capital, Montgomery. Speakers called for improvements in medical care and prison conditions and



Supporters, families and friends of Alabama prisoner workers rallied in front of the state Department of Corrections, Montgomery, Sept. 26, the first day of the labor strike.

for reforms to sentencing and parole laws.

In a Sept. 28 press release, the Alabama Department of Corrections took the unusual step of confirming there was a “work stoppage” in most of the prisons. The ADOC statement broke with the usual denial of political action by prisoners and reinforced the likelihood that

participation is widespread.

In an attempt to break the strike, prison authorities have cut food to cold meals, twice a day, and brought in work-release prisoners from outside the prisons, forcing them to do food preparation. The state is also mounting riot squads, according to FAM posts:

“Day 5: As the historic Alabama prison strike winds down the final days of its first week, it seems pretty clear that the ADOC wants violence. Over the past 72 hours, ADOC has started calling riot teams into the prisons in full CERT [correctional emergency response team] uniform, even though the work strikes have accounted for the most peaceful periods of incarceration in Alabama’s troubled prisons.”

## Incarcerated worker demands

In 2020, the U.S. Department of Justice sued the state, alleging that conditions in men’s prisons violate the Constitution because of a failure to protect men from prisoner-on-prisoner violence, sexual abuse and excessive use of force by staff and failure to maintain safe conditions. The report found that Alabama’s major prisons were at 182% of capacity.

The nine demands issued by those striking, through the Free Alabama Movement, address these issues and more, going to the heart of the racist and working-class injustice perpetrated by the state. (youtu.be/E8\_A2CLjiO4)

One important FAM demand is to “immediately repeal the habitual offender law.” This act punishes an incarcerated person who has three felony convictions, even if one or more are decades old or are for nonviolent offenses, with life in prison without parole. Of those punished with this horrendous penalty in Alabama, 75% are Black people. (alabamasmartjustice.org/reports/hfoa)

FAM demands include “mandatory parole criteria that will guarantee parole to all eligible persons who meet the criteria,” “a streamlined process for medical furloughs and review of elderly incarcerated individuals for immediate release” and “a return to earned good-time credit for all sentences.”

Other demands seek to repeal or amend laws to prevent racist bias in enforcement, such as presumptive sentencing, the “drive-by shooting” statute, or the 30-year minimum for parole for juvenile offenders.

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## One hurricane, two systems

Dramatic images and accounts of the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Ian continue to dominate the news. The death toll, approaching 100 as of this writing, is expected to rise. Over a million are still without electric power in Florida, hundreds of thousands without water. Homes were leveled, and roads and bridges washed away. And other horrors too numerous to list.

Lives have been turned upside down by a monster hurricane, one of the most powerful on record, with a diameter spanning the entire width of the Florida peninsula.

In the big business media, stories of damaged yachts and winter condos seem to outnumber reports on the storm’s disproportionate impact on low-income,

working-class people, especially people of color. But the reality can’t be hidden: Large numbers of low-income homeowners and renters — who could not afford insurance or are scrambling to find funds for deductibles required to file an insurance claim — are now homeless.

The class divide under capitalism reveals itself most brutally every time a so-called “natural disaster” is suddenly transformed into an economic disaster for the working class.

These crises expose the fact that the prime purpose of the capitalist state is not helping people in need. Just consider the number of deaths in Lee County, which includes Fort Myers, that might have been prevented if

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WORKERS WORLD

editorial



September 30.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



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# Hail Indigenous Peoples Day! Support Workers World

Boston’s proclamation last year that the second Monday of October every year would be Indigenous Peoples Day, “in lieu of” Columbus Day, was a victory for Native peoples, since the creation of U.S. settler colonialism, the theft and devastation of their lands and cultures, denial of all rights, the torture and genocide, began and continued in what is now the state of Massachusetts.

Then on Oct. 8, 2021, President Joe Biden proclaimed a federal Indigenous Peoples Day and acknowledged the atrocities “European explorers inflicted on Tribal nations and Indigenous communities.” These pronouncements came about due to the strong, unified struggles by Indigenous peoples and their allies, notably at Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline and the courageous, militant fight that shut down the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The movement for recognition of Oct. 12 as Indigenous Peoples Day began in Berkeley, California, following a huge march called by the American Indian Movement in San Francisco on Oct. 10, 1992, protesting the celebration of conquistador mass murderer Christopher Columbus’s arrival 500 years earlier. Since then, 14 states, Washington, D.C., and over 130 cities have dumped the holiday honoring the genocidal conqueror and recognize Indigenous peoples, their knowledge and cultures on that day.

Workers World has continually supported the righteous struggles of Native peoples on the streets and in our newspaper. WW joins Indigenous communities to demand: Drop “Columbus Day” as a federal holiday! Commemorate Indigenous Peoples Day in every city, town and state! Down with white supremacy!

### Your donations matter!

Workers World relies on our readers’ backing. The WW Supporter Program was founded 45 years ago to help build this socialist newspaper. Since the early 1990s, the fund has supported the website workers.org, where WW articles are posted daily and the PDF file of every weekly paper is displayed.

Workers.org contains news and an analysis of global and U.S. struggles and is a resource for political

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Unforeseen circumstances during the pandemic caused us to reduce the number of printed issues to once a month. But the weekly online newspaper has never been skipped during this 2 ½-year health crisis. While WW’s staff is voluntary, both the printed newspaper and the website require that monthly expenses be paid. Although many online publications require fees to read their articles, WW does not. Our articles are free to all readers.

But WW needs your help! Join the WW Supporter Program! Can you give \$50, \$100, \$200, \$300 or more per year? For a contribution of \$50 or more, you will receive 12 print issues a year and a weekly email of the online issue. Supporters can receive the book, “What road to socialism?” by notifying us. By donating, you help class truth reach more readers.

Write monthly or annual checks to Workers World. Mail them with your name, address and email address to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at workers.org. We appreciate your support. □



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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. □

### If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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Vol. 64, No. 40 • October 6, 2022  
Closing date: October 5, 2022

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published monthly by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$36; institutions: \$50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.



# Indigenous leaders target cathedral for Orange Shirt Day

By Will Hodgkinson  
Boston

Sept. 30 — Indigenous leaders of the United American Indians of New England (UAINE), the North American Indian Center of Boston (NAICOB), and supporters occupied the front entrance to the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston to commemorate today’s “National Day for Truth and Reconciliation” in Canada.

Known throughout the continent as Orange Shirt Day, Sept. 30 honors the thousands of Indigenous children who were kidnapped by government authorities and abused, many murdered, at hundreds of residential and boarding schools in Canada and the U.S. The Catholic Church operated many of the institutions where these atrocities took place.

Orange Shirt Day was created by Phyllis Webstad to connect the stories of other Indigneous children to her experience as a six-year-old, when she had her new and beloved orange shirt taken away on her first day at a residential boarding school, never to be returned. Webstad, born on Dog Creek Reserve, is Northern Secwepemc from the Stswecem’c Xgat’tem First Nation.

Despite Pope Francis’s widely publicized “apology” to Indigenous people this July while in Canada, the Church has refused to hand over even one abusive priest or nun who ran these “schools.” Nor did the Pope rescind the series of papal bulls establishing the “Discovery Doctrine” which continues to justify the genocide of Indigenous peoples and theft of their lands around the world.

As speakers at this gathering emphasized, the genocidal destruction of Indigenous nations and cultures, committed by the U.S. and Canada, is ongoing. In both settler colonies, racist foster-care systems continue to break up families by keeping thousands of Indigenous children from their relatives.

Jean Luc-Pierite of NAICOB added: “These governments further fail to address access to clean water on tribal lands. Canada and the U.S. continue to boost pipelines and other extractive projects. Meanwhile the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women goes underreported and underinvestigated.”

“The government and the church are good at putting up a facade of reconciliation,” said Mahtowin Munro, co-leader of UAINE. “But they can’t hide behind the horror of the residential school system nor the foster care system by burying the truth. We demand our children be brought home.”

UAINE and NAICOB’s press release reports: “On May 11, 2022, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland released Volume 1 of the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative investigative report. The investigation found that from 1819 to 1969, the federal Indian boarding school system consisted of 408 federal schools across 37 states or then-territories, including 21 schools in Alaska and seven schools in Hawaii.

“The investigation identified marked or unmarked burial sites at approximately 53 different schools across the school system. As the investigation continues, the



WW PHOTO: STEVE GILLIS

Indigenous activists and supporters protest at Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston, Sept. 30.

Interior Department expects the number of identified burial sites to increase.”

Other demands highlighted at the Boston action include the protection and expansion of the U.S. Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which gives tribal nations jurisdiction over adoption and custody proceedings for their citizens; the repeal by the Catholic Church of the “Discovery Doctrine,” as well as full restitution of all Indigenous lands and sovereignty.

To remember the victims of the residential schools and to honor the resilience of the children who survived them, Indigenous activists laid orange flowers and children’s toys on the steps of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, which, like the rest of Boston, is located on the Massachusetts Nation’s land.

Read the full UAINE/NAICOB press release: [tinyurl.com/uaine093022](https://tinyurl.com/uaine093022). □

# WAAR Workers Assembly celebrates dynamic victories and challenges

By Tony Murphy  
New York City

What was originally planned in New York City as an Oct. 1 Union Square protest — supporting unionizing workers and demanding an end to union busting — was transformed by stormy weather into a dynamic indoor workers assembly, with leaders participating from several consequential labor battles.

Tristan Dutchin, an Amazon Labor Union leader illegally fired for organizing, opened and closed the assembly with

his unique guitar performances — starting with “Our Union is a Lion” and closing with “Strike.” Oct. 1 was the six-month anniversary of the victorious ALU vote at the Staten Island warehouse — the first unionized Amazon facility in the U.S. Amazon bosses are still refusing to recognize the union; if the bosses continue to stall, strike may indeed be on the table.

Calling into the meeting by telephone was Beto Sanchez, Starbucks worker/leader and one of the Memphis Seven. Targeted in February by racist firings, the people of color-led organizing committee

fought back. They won the store’s union election, and they won reinstatement to their jobs at the Memphis, Tennessee, store. Sanchez credited mass street actions and solidarity from Memphis unions with winning this stunning victory, which Starbucks bosses were unable to stop, even with high-priced, union-busting lawyers.

The fighting Laundry Workers Center was represented by three members of the Cabricanecos Campaign. Through a Spanish translator, they reported to the meeting on their fight to unionize city construction and demolition workers forced to work in dangerous and harsh conditions. This struggle, begun May 2, has forced management to begin to talk to workers, after the bosses’ original stance of refusing to even respond to them. The workers still need solidarity at their weekly Friday picket line, at 416 Metropolitan Ave., Brooklyn.

Lorraine Lirriano, of Call to Action on Puerto Rico, reported on the situation on the archipelago after the devastation caused by Hurricane Fiona, with the people’s suffering made much worse by colonial subjugation and looting by Wall Street-connected forces. Tens of thousands of people in Puerto Rico are still without energy. The power grid actually went down before the hurricane struck, as has happened off-and-on, ever since privatization in 2021 by the Canadian company LUMA Energy.

Residents of New York’s outer boroughs reported to the meeting on difficulties in their communities, exacerbated by the U.S. proxy war in Ukraine. The Russian-speaking residents in southern Brooklyn are facing increasing discrimination, while



WAAR meeting, Oct. 1, New York City

WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

Bronx residents report a catastrophic lack of educational and health resources, with money being drained into a Pentagon weapons budget at the national level.

Richie Merino of the Bronx Anti-War Coalition announced an Oct. 15 rally at 1:00 p.m. at the Bronx’s Fordham Plaza, to feature the slogan “Money for Health care, Jobs and Housing! No to NATO, War & Racism!”

Because WAAR’s Workers Assembly coincided with the original date for the National Day of Action to End Violence and Genocide on Transgender People, organizers of both groups issued solidarity statements. Because of the weather, the Trans Day of Action was rescheduled from Oct. 1 to Oct. 8, at 1:00 p.m. in Union Square.

The Trans Day of Action statement reads in part: “The National Organizing Committee of the Oct. 1st National Day of Action to End Violence and Genocide on Transgender People stands firmly with Amazon and Starbucks workers on Oct. 1, 2022, the six-month anniversary of the historic Amazon Labor Union victory.”

An excerpt from the WAAR solidarity statement affirmed: “Fighting for workers rights means fighting for trans rights. Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz made that clear when he decided to exclude unionizing stores from gender-affirming health care, as well as abortion travel coverage and other benefits.” □

## In solidarity with trans lives

*This statement was delivered by WAAR during Oct. 1 strategy meeting.*

Workers Assembly Against Racism (WAAR) affirms its solidarity with the Oct. 1st National Day of Action to End Violence and Genocide on Transgender People.

Rain and wind in New York City has driven WAAR’s Workers Assembly Against Union Busting indoors today on Oct. 1. It has also caused the rescheduling of the Trans Day of Action originally planned at Union Square.

That has not, however, stopped the 10 other Trans Days from happening nationwide, in big cities like Washington, Seattle, Los Angeles and San Francisco, as well as smaller cities like Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Springfield, Illinois; and La Mesa, California.

WAAR celebrates this necessary day of fight-back to defend trans lives. Fighting for workers’ rights means fighting for trans rights. Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz made that clear when he decided to exclude unionizing stores from gender affirming health care, as well as from abortion travel coverage and other benefits.

For all of Starbucks corporate’s pro-LGBTQ+ posturing, Schultz’s anti-trans practices have put him in the same company as Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, whose proposed vile legislation attempts to criminalize gender-affirming medical care, make it unavailable through the Affordable Care plans, prevent colleges from offering it and deny visas to doctors who provide it.

In 2022, dozens of trans people have been killed, the majority of them people of color. As of mid-March, more than 150 anti-trans bills had been introduced in state legislatures seeking to limit trans people’s access to health care, sports, bathrooms and education. Oklahoma, for example, has passed three anti-trans laws this year.

The extreme weather caused by the pollution of capitalism is ruining lives all over the globe and in Florida as we speak. The only good thing to come out of today’s rain is that more WAAR members will be free to attend next week’s rescheduled New York Trans Day of Action, which will take place Oct. 8 at 1 p.m. EDT at Union Square! □



# Louisiana youth to be jailed on Angola former death row

By **Betsey Piette**

On Sept. 23, Louisiana Chief District Judge Shelly Dick ruled that incarcerated youth in New Orleans can be moved to the state’s Angola prison, even while admitting that this detention “will likely have deleterious psychological ramifications.”

Officially known as Louisiana State Prison, Angola is considered one of the most brutal prisons in U.S. history. Established in 1880 on the site of a former plantation, its nickname comes from the country of origin of many of its enslaved workers.

Incarcerated youth are slated to be assigned to the building that, until 2006, housed male prisoners sentenced to death.

On July 21, families and communities of impacted youth held protests outside Bridge City Center for Youth in New Orleans. Protests were also held outside Jetson Detention Center in Baker, Louisiana.

Gina Womack, executive director at Families and Friends of Louisiana’s Incarcerated Children, said, “The majority of the children incarcerated are young Black and Brown people. It’s completely outrageous to further traumatize these young people, whose families have been seeking support and services, by now moving them to a plantation.” (tinyurl.com/y4bcpdrm)

Angola, long known for bloody violence and beatings by guards, was originally set up to hold imprisoned Black workers under Louisiana’s 19th and

early 20th century convict-leasing system, which provided incarcerated workers for a fee to private corporations. More recently, incarcerated individuals were forced to work in the prison’s own fields for pennies an hour. Today many of the people jailed there are aging prisoners serving life sentences without the possibility of parole.

Several lawsuits were filed to challenge the proposed transfers as unconstitutional and in violation of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, which mandates complete separation between incarcerated adults and youth.

The Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice claims the youth will be held in a separate building from adult prisoners. In response to the lawsuits, the OJJ said it purchased “black-out” fabric to wrap around the fence line of the facility where the youth will be held, and that would create the required separation.

### **Incarceration as adults is not juvenile justice**

Youth advocates emphasize that the problem is not about changing locations or superficially separating youth from adults. Nancy Rosenbloom, a senior litigation advisor for the American Civil Liberties Union National Prison Project, pointed out that the location sends a message to youth “that they will be going into the grounds of a maximum-security prison, one of the most notorious in the country, and that this is how they will be treated.” (theappeal.org, Sept. 22)

Louisiana has a state mandate to rehabilitate young people in its care. Family and community members protesting the plan to move the youth to Angola say it is symbolic of the state’s profoundly broken juvenile justice system.



The inside of a cell at the proposed juvenile detention facility.

Various lawsuits criticized the state of Louisiana for ignoring comprehensive problems within their juvenile “justice” system for decades. These point to the numerous studies that show how incarceration has devastating and lifelong effects on youth, by separating them from families, disrupting education and mental health treatment options and exposing youth to more trauma and violence.

“The juvenile justice system is supposed to be about rehabilitation and creating opportunities for future success to override past missteps,” said Tammie Gregg, deputy director of the ACLU National Prison Project. “Placing

children in a notorious prison, rife with the history of slavery and racial disparity, instead paints a portrait of deep despair, failure and limitation...” (tinyurl.com/mtpdfp2r)

A March 2022 investigation into a Louisiana juvenile detention facility by The Marshall Project, ProPublica and NBC News found that teenagers were physically assaulted by staff, held in solitary confinement for weeks and denied court-ordered services. Staff flagged as high-risk for sexually assaulting youth were retained as employees by the Office of Juvenile Justice. (tinyurl.com/2p8b3cj7)

If they are transferred to Angola, the young people will be held in windowless cells with floor-to-ceiling metal bars, no privacy and open metal toilets. The conditions are clearly more punishing than at the state’s high-security juvenile facilities, where youth normally sleep in dorms.

Though the OJJ says the children will be separated from adults, in the event of a life-threatening medical emergency, the children would be treated at the hospital on prison grounds, where some staffers are incarcerated adults.

Those challenging the pending OJJ move reemphasize that the juvenile justice system is supposed to be therapeutic and rehabilitative, not punitive. There is no way that a facility designed to isolate adult men incarcerated on death row can suddenly change to a youth facility offering rehabilitation. □

# Alabama prisoners wage massive strike

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The Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles grants almost no pardons; at its Sept. 28 meeting, it heard 40 requests and granted only three. Alabama has had the highest state prison death rate due to COVID-19 in the U.S. (Brennan Center for Justice, Oct. 23, 2021)

According to Interrogating Justice, Alabama has the most dangerous prison system in the country. The average 2018 U.S. prison mortality rate was between 200 and 300 deaths per 100,000 incarcerated individuals; the state’s mortality rate was over 600 deaths per 100,000. Physical and sexual assaults were similarly high. (tinyurl.com/397peh9x)

Now Alabama plans to put \$400 million — nearly 20% of its federal COVID-19 funding — toward the construction of two men’s megaprisons of 4,000 beds each. Gov. Kay Ivey made this decision after her Republican administration was thwarted by community, Black Lives Matter and abolitionist organizing from signing contracts with private prison companies.

### **Enslavement behind prison walls**

In Alabama prisons today, forced labor, dehumanizing conditions and the disproportionate number of Black people are the continuation of enslavement under a different name. In letters from the inside, prisoner organizers sign themselves as “Alabama’s slaves” and say that the strike is “in protest of the continued institution of neoslavery.” (tinyurl.com/2bk43x3a)

Alabama began leasing prisons to private businesses in 1842. With the emancipation of enslaved people in 1865, the



CREDIT: @FREEALAMOVE

‘Day one breakfast at Bibb Correctional facility. This is [their] breaking tactic. Stay strong and persevere. This is the modern day “Pharaoh ... Let My People Go.”’

state then began the “convict leasing system” designed to re-enslave Black people by criminalizing them and selling their labor.

This system has continued to this day in the state — and the U.S. — because it was legalized by the 13th Amendment in the U.S. Constitution. This still permits “slavery” or “involuntary servitude ... as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.”

Alabama is one of only seven states that pay incarcerated people nothing at all for their labor, along with Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas — all formerly states of the Confederacy.

### **Rebellion, resistance, liberation**

But the state is home to a long history of Black-led resistance to any form of enslavement, from the unfulfilled 1864 uprising in Troy, named by Herbert Aptheker as the “last slave conspiracy”

in the U.S., to the militant organizing by Alabama prisoners from 1969 through the late 1970s. (“American Negro Slave Revolts,” p. 367)

Conditions at Alabama prisons 50 years ago were the same as today: overcrowding, denial of basic needs such as clean drinking water and eating utensils, unchecked violence and extended periods of solitary confinement.

Prisoners organized at that time as Inmates for Action and engaged in work stoppages and strikes in Atmore and

**One important FAM demand is to “immediately repeal the habitual offender law.” This act punishes an incarcerated person who has three felony convictions, even if one or more are decades old or are for nonviolent offenses, with life in prison without parole. Of those punished with this horrendous penalty in Alabama, 75% are Black people.**

Holman prisons. IFA also led classes for prisoners on revolutionary theory and Black history. IFA leaders Chagina (George Dobbins), Yukeena (Tommy

Dotson) and Frank X. Moore were killed in prison, and the Justice for the Atmore-Holman Brothers campaign fought to expose state complicity in their murder. (search.freedomarchive.org)

This lineage of resistance continues. In April 2014 members of the Free Alabama Movement went on strike to demand wages for the unpaid prison labor they did for the state, and they organized another strike in 2016. (“Alabama Prison Uprising, Workers World, March 24, 2016)

FAM’s “A Flicker Turns into a Flame” stated: “Mass incarceration, unconstitutional overcrowded prisons and inhumane treatment are more about economics than the humanity of people. ... The numbers support our contention that ‘MONEY’ is the motive and most important factor in explaining the policies and conditions within the Department of Corrections.” (freealabamamovement.com)

Alabama incarcerated workers continue the struggle to end slavery and forced labor. They join with thousands of other Alabama workers — like the Brookwood United Mine Workers in their second strike year and the Bessemer Amazon workers still fighting for a union — and billions of other workers around the globe, fighting for liberation.

At night Pratt can see the lights from Alabama’s Bibb Correctional facility, located four miles west of where she lives in Centreville. The companies that profit from people trying to maintain contact with the over 1,800 people incarcerated there are: Access Secure Deposit, Access SecurePak, Securus Technologies and Union Supply Direct.



# Support the strike at Philadelphia Museum of Art

By Joe Piette  
Philadelphia

Since Sept. 26, almost 200 workers have been on strike — not reporting for work in person or virtually — at one of the oldest and largest art museums in the U.S. with over 240,000 works of art from around the world.

Members of the Philadelphia Museum of Art Union, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 397, affiliated with AFSCME District Council 47, voted for union representation in a landslide, 89% “yes” vote in August 2020. Since then, the PMA Board of Trustees and executive management have refused to come to an agreement with the PMA Union.

After over two years of fruitless talks, after filing a lengthy Unfair Labor Practice charge against museum management, after a strike authorization vote of 99% and after holding a one-day warning strike Sept. 16, workers finally walked off the job Sept. 26.

Union members and supporters are holding daily fast-paced picket lines at the Museum’s North and West entrances, the loading dock, PMA’s Perelman Building across the street and the Rodin Museum a few blocks away. A strike fund—to which donations can be made at [tinyurl.com/397strikefund](https://tinyurl.com/397strikefund)—has allowed the union to give its members some funds to help tide them over until the strike is won.

**‘What does PMA have to hide? They exploit workers inside!’**

In a letter delivered to the Philadelphia City Council Sept. 28, AFSCME DC 47 President Kathy Scott reported that following the Sept. 16 one-day strike, some progress was made. PMA agreed to limit the use of temporary workers and subcontractors, and they moved from two weeks to four weeks of paid parental leave.

But pay and health care remain major stumbling blocks. Despite being in the top 7% of U.S. art museums in terms of endowment size, PMA has not increased wages since 2019, amid high inflation. Full-time jobs at the museum pay 33% percent less than other art institutions with similarly sized budgets. And PMA

pays no rent on the city-owned facilities; the city pays for its utilities.

PMA proposed a total 11% wage increase over 33 months, but union members reject a 3.6% annual wage increase when inflation is over 8%. Many museum workers, despite their often having college degrees and specific skill sets, made only \$10 an hour until January, when the Museum was obligated to increase minimum wages to \$15 an hour under the city’s living wage ordinance. PMA is refusing to agree to Local 397’s proposal to raise minimum pay to \$16.75.

Union demands include that all raises be retroactive to July 1, when nonunion employees received pay increases. PMA refuses to provide longevity pay, which would amount to \$500 a year for every five years of service. Management refuses to provide any relief from the sky-high costs of health care; 90% of workers are forced into a high-deductible plan.

**‘No Justice, No Peace! No Contract – No Matisse!’**

This popular chant is a reference to the upcoming exhibition of the works of French impressionist painter Henri Matisse, called “Matisse in the 1930s,” which is scheduled to open Oct. 20. The show will include more than 100 drawings, paintings, prints and sculptures,



Sept. 29 protest

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

from public and private collections in the U.S. and Europe, as well as archival photos and documentary films.

Crucial installation work ahead of the exhibition, including safely handling the most highly valued art itself, is not yet finished. Local 397 President Adam Rizzo reported: “Everyone who installs the paintings—they’re out here today on the lines.”

**‘The art museum is not fine. Please don’t cross our picket line!’**

Constant picketing at all five museum facility entrances throughout the day by Local 397’s 180 members is aided by Philadelphia area labor and community organizations. In response to PMA Union’s appeal to join the picket lines, members of the Teamsters union, AFSCME, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers,

UNITE HERE and other unions; progressive members of the city council and state legislature; activists in the Save UC Townhomes Coalition; and others have helped make the picket lines effective.

When bigger numbers are on the lines, more people agree to not cross the picket line and turn away. Instead of entering the PMA, customers are urged to visit the Barnes Foundation Museum, one of the world’s greatest collections of impressionist, post-impressionist and modern art, just a few blocks away.

Management failed to even show up at a scheduled negotiations meeting Sept. 28 with Local 397 officials. The end of this strike doesn’t seem imminent. What will force PMA big shots to give in? More solidarity! Visit [tinyurl.com/3sugjpkp](https://tinyurl.com/3sugjpkp) for information about how to support the strike. □

## Together we rise, together we will win!

*This statement was issued by Tsukuru Fors (he/they), Lead Organizer of the Oct. 1st National Day of Action to End Violence and Genocide on Transgender People*

The National Organizing Committee of the Oct 1st National Day of Action to End Violence and Genocide on Transgender People stands firmly with Amazon and Starbucks workers on Oct. 1, the six-month anniversary of the historic Amazon Labor Union Victory.

Today under late stage capitalism, workplace violence has become commonplace. Poverty wages is a form of workplace violence. So is wage theft, unsafe working conditions, forcing people to work long hours,

bullying, sexual harassment, racism, sexism and gender violence.

As workers, transgender and other gender-nonconforming people often face a unique blend of workplace violence as well.

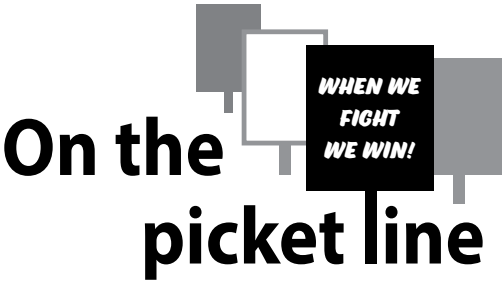
Being barred from employment, being subjected to unfair performance evaluation and discipline, being forced to endure name-calling, misgendering, ridicule, sexual harassment and other forms of physical, verbal and emotional abuses cause serious harm to our personhood, which often results in injury, illnesses or even death.

The courageous workers of Amazon and Starbucks who are standing up against their multibillion-dollar employers are facing retaliation and harassment. They are being fired with no justifiable reason and

facing intimidation. At Starbucks, transgender and nonbinary workers are being threatened that they may lose their health care coverage for gender-affirming care if they vote to unionize.

The Oct 1st National Day of Action to End Violence and Genocide on Transgender People organizers are administrative workers; health care workers; teachers; retail workers; service workers; baristas; drivers; warehouse, factory and farm workers; and sex workers. Together we are raising our collective voices to say no to the unfair economic system that benefits only a select few and impoverishes the rest.

Together we will fight till we win equality, justice and dignity for all. □



By Marie Kelly

### Striketober 2022

It’s been a year since last October was dubbed Striketober, referencing the 2021 uptick in strike activity and the wave of union organizing by Amazon and Starbucks workers. The resurgence of worker power has gained momentum in these past 12 months, with union drives, strikes and fighting corporate union-busting tactics.

Workers everywhere have been on the move from Frito-Lay factory workers to the St. Vincent hospital nurses, to unorganized workers at REI and Chipotle. Even the national pastime is not spared with the successful union drive of minor league baseball players. And there is no sign that the strike and union organizing wave is breaking anytime soon.

In Washington and Oregon, lumber giant Weyerhaeuser is feeling the pressure from workers. The 1,200 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) District W24 rejected the latest contract offer, which would cut paid time off and increase health care costs. The union called a strike Sept. 13.

The strikers have been joined on the picket line by

other unions and community supporters. Longshore union and railway union workers are refusing to load or transport lumber, virtually shutting down plywood distribution to Western states. The last strike at Weyerhaeuser was in 1986.

In Indiana, the 100 workers at piping manufacturer Elkhart Products rejected the company’s offer to give workers a measly 50-cent raise, while health care deductibles would rise. IAM Local 2018 members have been on the picket line since Sept. 23. “It’s the worst contract I’ve ever seen here,” said Glen Hershberger, a nearly 46-year employee, who has experienced several contract negotiations with the company. “People are fed up,” Hershberger said, and added the last strike at Elkhart was over 50 years ago. ([tinyurl.com/4j2wzy3e](https://tinyurl.com/4j2wzy3e))

### California health care workers

In Santa Rosa, California, a health care workers’ strike began Sept. 27 at Sutter Santa Rosa Health. The lab technicians, occupational and physical therapists, pharmacists, dieticians and social workers belong to the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers Local 21. And they have been without a contract since July 2021. They accuse Sutter executives of dragging their feet in negotiations.

Citing grievances familiar to professional nurses’ unions, Sutter health care workers want safe adequate staffing to meet patients’ complex needs. For example, lab technicians process COVID-19 tests that are critical to protecting patients. Adequate staffing ensures that results will be available in a timely manner with little margin for error.

Social workers and therapists have been swamped with patients dealing with lingering mental and physical

health issues following COVID-19 infections. Three-quarters of the Sutter staff face a wage freeze, which threatens recruitment and retention of these critical workers if the company has its way.

### Wins for nurses and farmworkers

The Michigan Nurses Association-University of Michigan Professional Nurse Council ratified a new contract Sept. 24. In August 96% of the 6,200 members voted for strike authorization.

“Through our months of solidarity and collective action, nurses have stood strong to reach an agreement that meets our members’ priorities of protecting patients and investing in nurses so we can provide the best care possible,” said Renee Curtis, a registered nurse and the union’s president. The new contract ends mandatory overtime, improves mechanisms in place to promote safe staffing and increases wages, all of which are critical for recruitment and retention.

And the UFW farmworkers in California have more protection for union organizing now, as Gov. Gavin Newsom finally caved to pressure from the union and the community and signed Assembly Bill 2183. The UFW had launched an aggressive campaign: organizing a 335-mile march across the state to Sacramento, following the 1966 march route from Delano to the state capital during the historic Grape Strike; then the UFW and their many supporters held a 24/7 occupation of the state capitol building.

The new Agricultural Labor Relations Voting Choice Act facilitates voting in a union election for farmworkers. (Read more about this most recent example of the militancy of the UFW at [workers.org/2022/09/66893/](https://workers.org/2022/09/66893/) and at [ufw.org](https://ufw.org).) □



# The case of Alex Saab: U.S. hybrid war on Venezuela

By John Philpot and Roger D. Harris  
Sept. 29, 2022

*Reprinted from Resumen LatinoAmericano and the Third World at [tinyurl.com/4xb5cxrt](https://tinyurl.com/4xb5cxrt)*

Ambassador Alex Saab, a victim of the U.S. economic war to achieve regime change in Venezuela, has been under arrest for over two years. This article recounts the developments in the diplomat’s court case. Saab is fighting against his illegal detention and extradition before the 8th District Court in Miami.

As Venezuela’s special envoy and a deputy ambassador to the African Union, Saab has diplomatic immunity from arrest and detention under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Although a party to the convention, the U.S. has flouted this principle of international law.

### Judicial overreach on political grounds

Alex Saab was targeted by the U.S. because of his role in helping circumvent their sanctions imposed on Venezuela. These measures, a form of collective punishment, are intended to make conditions so onerous that the people would renounce their elected government. Such unilateral coercive measures constitute hybrid warfare and are illegal under international law.

Ambassador Saab was on a humanitarian mission from Caracas to Tehran to procure food, fuel and medicine in legal international trade but in contravention of the illegitimate U.S. sanctions. When his plane made a fuel stop in Cabo Verde on June 12, 2020, he was seized and imprisoned at Washington’s behest.

He was tortured and held in solitary confinement until December 2020. Then he was released to strict house arrest but without visits from his wife and children and without necessary medical care.

Although the regional Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) Court of Justice and the United Nations Human Rights Committee ordered his release, Saab was held captive. The \$200,000 award in damages by the ECOWAS court was unpaid.

According to distinguished Nigerian human rights lawyer Femi Falana, the arrest and detention of Alex Saab in Cabo Verde is an example of “extraterritorial politically motivated judicial overreach” and a “21st century form of colonialism.”

On Oct. 17, 2021, the opposition party won the national election in Cabo Verde on a platform which included freeing Alex Saab. However, the day before the long arm of Washington “justice” had simply seized the Venezuelan diplomat, dressed him in an orange jumpsuit and deposited him in a U.S. prison.

The U.S. has no extradition treaty with Cabo Verde, and no notice of Saab’s extradition was given to his family or lawyers. Nor had Saab’s legal recourse in Cabo Verdean courts been completely exhausted. His extradition was an illegal fait accompli.

### U.S. dropped money-laundering charges

The original charges against Saab related to money laundering in Venezuela, with Venezuela as the alleged victim. Even if charges related to defrauding the Venezuelan government were justifiable, they should be laid in Venezuela and not in the U.S., which is attempting to starve Venezuela into submission.

Then on Nov. 1, 2021, after what amounted to a judicial kidnapping to the U.S., Washington dropped all money-laundering charges against Saab, leaving the single charge of conspiracy to launder money.

An exhaustive three-year investigation of money-laundering charges by courts in Switzerland, where the activity was allegedly perpetrated, had found no evidence to support the U.S.’s claim.

Conveniently for the prosecution, the remaining charge of “conspiracy” is quite easy to prove, since it only requires proof of an agreement without the objective being realized. Fighting vague conspiracy charges is a nightmare for defense lawyers. The charge is often called “the darling of the prosecutor’s nursery.”

### The labyrinth of the U.S. ‘justice’ system

Ambassador Saab is presently detained in a federal facility in Florida. He has been unable to have family visits, because his relatives have no guarantee of safe passage. His prison conditions are difficult; there is insufficient food, and [he is in] a dangerous environment without medical care for his cancer and other ailments.

During his unlawful detention in Cabo Verde, Saab’s

counsel challenged the U.S. extradition proceedings with a “motion to vacate,” based on his status as a diplomat.

That motion was first refused in a U.S. “lower” trial court and then appealed “up” to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. His appeal challenging the charges based on diplomatic status was then sent right back “down” in June 2022, from the appellate court to the trial court.

In anticipation of his Dec. 12 hearing, Saab filed preliminary motions for disclosure of evidentiary materials with a view to filing a motion to quash the indictment based on his diplomatic status. If diplomatic immunity is recognized, Saab should be released. If not, there will be a trial for conspiracy to launder money in Venezuela.

### Saab’s motion to compel disclosure of discovery materials

Exculpatory material could be held by the U.S., which would prove Saab’s status as a diplomat. Under what are known as the Brady rules, the prosecution must provide all evidence available and under its control, which might help in his defense.

Accordingly, Saab requested all information material to his defense held by the U.S. government regarding diplomatic status, including evidence on:

- His service as Venezuelan special envoy or other diplomatic roles;
- Whether any other country, or international or supranational organization, considered him to be a Venezuelan special envoy or any other diplomatic role;
- His role in Venezuela’s state-to-state activities with Iran and the purpose of his travel to or from Iran;
- The flight, diversion or detention of the plane on which he was traveling, which landed in Cabo Verde;
- Knowledge by U.S. government personnel of his diplomatic status, appointment as a special envoy or activities taken on behalf of Venezuela; [and]
- Documents found on his person or plane, following his detention and arrest in Cabo Verde, and any information relating to such documents.

Saab asked the court to order the disclosure of information held by the U.S. Departments of Defense, Justice, State and Treasury; the Office of International Affairs; the National Security Division; the Drug Enforcement Agency; the FBI; the Customs and Border Protection; Homeland Security Investigation; the CIA; and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Saab’s counsel anticipates that all these agencies would have information regarding his diplomatic status. Comprehensive disclosure could lead to recognition of full immunity.

### U.S. government tries to prevent disclosure of discovery materials

The U.S. government prosecutor made a series of somewhat specious arguments asking the judge to reject the Brady motion, dismissing it as a simple “fishing expedition” with no merit. In short, this was a legal tactic by the government to hide the truth.

The U.S. prosecutor argued that the requests to review documents outside of the prosecution team’s immediate control should be denied, even if they were held by a government agency and even if they supported Saab’s claim of diplomatic status. The prosecutor contended that only material under the prosecutor’s direct control and related to the investigation can be disclosed; other material held by other branches of the government cannot be sought and disclosed under Brady.

This would mean, if the U.S. government has definitive proof of Saab’s status or recognition thereof in agencies outside of the prosecutor’s control, Saab cannot obtain such information under the Brady rule.

Saab’s defense counsel argued that he requires disclosure of information from all branches of the U.S. government. This is because the entire U.S. government is engaged with his extradition and prosecution. The prosecution, for instance, even asked to allow someone from the National Security Division to attend the hearing, although they were not previously part of the prosecution team.

### Saab’s diplomatic immunity argued

The following describes the prosecution’s arguments followed by those of the defense. This is based on the respective court statements filed by the two sides, particularly on the transcript of the Sept. 13 hearing.



Venezuela protest

PHOTO: MARIA ISABEL BATISTA

The prosecution argued that the issue of ignoring diplomatic immunity had been settled in Cabo Verde when it granted extradition. The U.S. court should not depart from precedent and second-guess the legitimacy of a foreign country’s decision to extradite an individual. Such an approach would be contrary to the

act-of-state doctrine with respect to Cabo Verde.

Saab’s defense counsel countered that no authority requires deference to Cabo Verde’s decision to allow the extradition. Cabo Verde’s law applies in Cabo Verde and not in the U.S.

The prosecution maintained that Saab has never been entitled to immunity under either the Diplomatic Relations Act or the International Organizations Immunities Act, because he had never been identified to the U.S. State Department as a member of any foreign mission in the U.S., including Venezuela’s bilateral mission and delegation to the African Union.

Saab’s defense counsel disputed that; regardless, Saab was traveling from Venezuela to Iran and at no point transited the U.S. He had “transit immunity.”

The prosecution contended that U.S. law (U.S. v. Alvarez-Machain, 1992) allows prosecution even if the accused were wrongly sent to the U.S. Even forcible abduction does not prevent trial in the U.S. for violations of U.S. laws.

Saab’s defense stated that this is a baseless excuse which would allow U.S. agents to kidnap a person in any country, and that person could be tried for crimes under U.S. law.

Central to the U.S. government’s case is the self-serving notion that since Washington does not recognize the Maduro government, no Venezuelan diplomatic nominee enjoys immunity. In other words, the imperial power arrogates to itself the authority to determine whom other countries may appoint as their diplomatic representatives.

Saab’s defense counsel noted that it is an undisputed fact that Venezuela, the sending state, and Iran, the receiving state, not only recognize each other’s government, they recognize that Saab is a special envoy.

In that context, to accord Saab diplomatic immunity is independent of the U.S.’s position as to which government of Venezuela they recognize. To hold otherwise would completely distort and rob of any meaning both the U.S. obligations and the Vienna Convention and the Diplomatic Relations Act. Failure to do so would be devastating to the diplomatic world and international relations.

### Court’s current ruling

Arguments in Saab’s defense were presented to the court on Sept. 13. On Sept. 15, Judge [Robert] Scola ruled partially in favor of Saab, granting him circumscribed access to discovery materials. Disclosure under [the] Brady [rule] would include materials under the control of the prosecution: DEA, FBI and ICE.

Excluded from Brady disclosure are materials held by the Department of State, the Office of International Affairs, the National Security Division, the Department of Treasury, the Department of Defense and the U.S. Coast Guard. The judge held that none of these entities were involved in the investigation leading to Saab’s indictment, so these entities need not be searched for proof of diplomatic status.

The U.S. court’s narrow interpretation of the Brady obligations risks causing a major injustice. If, in its many international relations and contacts, the U.S. has evidence of Saab’s status, the U.S. can hide this, if this evidence is outside the scope of the criminal investigation against him.

This would even be possible if the U.S. had recognized Saab’s status as a diplomat in some special context outside of the investigation of the alleged conspiracy to launder money. This denial of justice could be likened to a form of judicial lynching.

### Trial for Dec. 12 and a proposed nonjudicial solution

Saab’s diplomatic immunity will be argued in Southern District Court on Dec. 12. For now, Ambassador Alex Saab is still being unjustly detained pending trial.

We believe Mr. Saab must be recognized as a diplomat,

*Continued on page 7*



# Where’s the \$60+ billion for the Bronx?

The following is excerpted from a statement issued by the Bronx Anti-War Coalition, a grassroots, community-based peace group, dedicated to challenging U.S. militarism at home and abroad and fighting for community reinvestment in the borough.

The coalition’s goal is to end the \$800-billion per year military budget used to uphold U.S. imperialist interests all over the world. The coalition is made up of antiwar peace groups and community organizations, veterans, tenant unions, racial and environmental justice activists, workers, abolitionists and anyone else fighting in the Bronx for the liberation of all oppressed people worldwide.



March 26 protest in the Bronx

WW PHOTO: RICHARD MERINO

The South Bronx, a community composed of 98% Black and Latino families, is one of the most poverty-stricken and oppressed districts in the U.S. More than 40% of South Bronx children live in poverty. Described as a food desert, the South Bronx has one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the country. Neighborhoods lacking affordable supermarkets cause people to rely on small bodegas, which typically lack fresh produce or nutritious options. Obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure affect more than one-third of adults.

The South Bronx neighborhood of Mott Haven, located only six miles north of Trump Tower on Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue, is nicknamed “Asthma Alley” because it has some of the worst air pollution levels in the U.S. Mott Haven residents see rates of asthma hospitalizations 21 times higher than other New York City neighborhoods.

And for the third year in a row, the Bronx led the state in eviction filings and had the highest unemployment rate in the country in 2020.

### The police state is domestic imperialism

U.S. imperialism, rooted in white supremacy, manifests itself both at home and abroad. Every dollar spent on war, militarism and policing is money that could be spent on providing vital social services to the people.

The U.S. government has stolen trillions of dollars from health care, public schools, public housing, transportation and infrastructure budgets and sent them around the world, to Ukraine and elsewhere, in the form of weapons. With countless U.S. communities suffering, Congress recently approved another \$12 billion in military aid to Ukraine, in addition to the \$54 billion in

weapons provided so far.

And every expansion in U.S. overseas military capacity has subsequently advanced the sophistication of domestic warfare against African, Latino and Indigenous people. U.S. militarism and policing are so intertwined that they exchange more than just personnel but also equipment, suppression tactics and white-supremacist, chauvinist ideology. Empowering the military empowers policing.

### We, the workers, demand –

We, the workers of the South Bronx, demand an end to U.S. military provocations, occupation, war and sanctions against Russia, China, Puerto Rico, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Palestine, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and everywhere! We understand corporations profit from these endless wars at the expense of poor and working-class people, overseas and domestically.

We, the workers of the South Bronx, demand an end to the billions of dollars devoted to the war, death and destruction of U.S. militarism and demand that billions instead be spent on the dire economic and social needs of people for housing, jobs, schools, infrastructure, clean air and water.

We, the workers of the South Bronx, demand that Mayor Eric Adams and the New York City Council restore the \$469 million in cuts to the Department of Education budget and end the privatization of public education via charter schools. At a time when the pandemic exacerbates students’ severe learning loss, the City is funding more cops instead of funding more teachers, counselors and social workers for our youth.

We, the workers of the South Bronx, demand that Mayor Adams shut down migrant tent encampments and provide asylum seekers with safe, private and permanent housing. We understand that U.S. imperialism is the root cause of the migration crisis, and a direct result of U.S. regime-change operations and colonialism.

We, the workers of the South Bronx, demand an end to union busting and defend the right of workers to unionize. By supporting union struggles for Amazon, Starbucks and all workers, we fight racism, colonialism and imperialism — as the imperialist war machine seeks to “open up” Global South markets to shift jobs to areas with cheaper wages. We will continue to struggle for a world free of imperialism — where workers are not compelled to leave their homelands due to violence and superexploitation.

End the wars at home and abroad! No to NATO, war and racism! Money for jobs, schools and housing! Invest in our youth and communities now!

The South Bronx Rally Against U.S. Wars, Militarism and Imperialism will take place Saturday, Oct. 15, at 1:00 p.m. EDT in Fordham Plaza. This demonstration is held in coordination with United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), which is calling for a week of actions Oct. 15-22 to stop Washington’s military aggression against Russia and China and to stop the endless wars in Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Palestine and everywhere. Visit [bxantiwar.org](http://bxantiwar.org) for more information.” □

# Houston Starbucks workers hold a one-day strike

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

A spirited 12-hour demonstration was held Oct. 1 outside Houston’s first unionized Starbucks store from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. It was an unfair labor practice strike, in response to the unjust and illegal firing of one of the union organizers.

Josh Deleon had worked at Starbucks for almost nine years; but in retaliation for his union organizing leadership, the bosses fired him days before the election votes were counted. The workers at Starbucks on Shepherd and Harold streets did win the election; and Josh celebrated with them, even though he no longer had a job.

“I’m only one of over a hundred Starbucks workers/organizers who have been fired around the country. I have a case open with the NLRB for the unfair labor practice of firing organizers. Today none of the workers came in, so there’s a couple of managers working the store.”

All day long, cars passing this picket line, located on a



PHOTO: MADELYNE AUSTIN

Gloria Rubac, center, with Starbucks workers Madeline Gierkey and Josh Deleon, who was fired.

very busy street, were honking, waving and putting fists in the air to show their support. □

# ‘Who shut it down? We shut it down!’

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

Ansley Mall Starbucks workers chose National Coffee Day, Sept. 29, as the time for their strike. A robust and loud picket line formed in front of the mall location in northeast Atlanta early in the morning. Dozens of supporters came throughout the day from the Atlanta Labor Council, the Painters Union, community organizations, political groups, Amazon workers and others.

Inside, two store managers and a district manager attempted to keep the location open. Despite having to serve only a handful of customers who had crossed the picket line, they had apparently had enough by noon, locked the door and abandoned their strike-breaking duties.

The sign-waving picketers moved to busy Monroe Drive, where there was more traffic and drivers who responded to the “Honk to Support Starbucks Workers” sign. Upon learning that the managers had left, the workers enthusiastically chanted: “Who Shut it Down? We



Solidarity with Ansley Mall Starbucks workers — Dianne Mathiowetz holds one side of the banner.

Shut it Down!”

Just a footnote: When the workers came back on Friday morning, the place was a mess — trash, dirty dishes, unstored ingredients! Proving again that workers are the essential force in society. □

# The case of Venezuelan diplomat, Alex Saab

Continued from page 6

and trial should be terminated. There is a nonjudicial means to resolve this. The Biden administration can engage in a prisoner exchange that would unite Mr. Saab and also U.S. citizens imprisoned in Venezuela with their families. Venezuela is willing, and the U.S. should do the same.

John Philpot, an expert in international criminal law, is a defense attorney and a member of the Barreau du Québec and of the Consultative Council Asociación Americana de Juristas. Roger D. Harris is a recovering political scientist. Both authors are active with the FreeAlexSaab campaign and the Task Force on the Americas, a human rights organization.



# A long history of war lies

By Jorge Cadima

*This article was published Sept. 29 in Avante, the newspaper of the Portuguese Communist Party, to which the author contributes analytical articles, often about imperialist militarism. Translation: John Catalinotto.*

If hypocrisy and lies paid taxes, the speeches made by the leaders of the U.S., the European Union and Britain at the recent United Nations General Assembly would have eliminated their colossal public debts. It is amazing how those responsible for practically all the wars and aggressions of the last three decades (at least) present themselves as pure innocents, demanding rights, the U.N. Charter and the sovereignty of the peoples, the same peoples they crush every day with their actions.

The Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) refuses to be an apologist for the global confrontation that the United States and NATO have prepared for a long time, against Russia and China or for the suicidal policy of sanctions that destroys the European continent to serve U.S. imperialist interests.

These leaders speak as if the Russian military intervention in the war in Ukraine acted as a detergent to wash away their endless crimes and the rivers of blood they have caused to flow all over the world, in the recent and not so recent past. They talk as if the offensive by the U.S. and European powers to impose their domination over the entire planet is not at the root of the extremely dangerous crisis that humanity is facing today. They lie to hide the reality. And they censor in an increasingly open way to try to sustain the lie.

What these leaders advocate and organize is not peace but a direct confrontation with a great nuclear power (Russia) and the most populous country on the planet (China). The danger of a catastrophe unprecedented in human history is very real, but the leaders of the U.S./Britain/European Union are not just playing the lyre; they are constantly blowing to fan the flames they have ignited.

Pelosi's visit to Taiwan and the instigation of the ongoing escalation illustrate the old technique of throwing the stone, hiding the hand that threw it and blaming others for the damage.

## Old war plans

U.S. plans for confrontation and war are nothing new. More than 20 years ago, General Loureiro dos Santos [former head of the Portuguese Armed Forces and an author] formulated them in an interview to *Diário de Notícias* (March 13, 2000), to which the newspaper dedicated the headline: "World war is inevitable."

At that time, 2000, the planetary hegemony of the United States was uncontested. Putin had just come to the presidency of a Russia on the brink of collapse after years of economic dictates from the U.S. China's current President Xi Jinping was the leader of a local area in a country that had not yet made its great economic leap.

Nevertheless, Loureiro dos Santos had already foreseen that "it is natural that other powers will emerge [...]" that will have the capacity to oppose or challenge the United States. And the United States will need to act. That won't be right away; but in 15, 20 years, it's almost inevitable."

The U.S. "will need to act," not because it is the victim of any aggression but to prevent anyone from being able to "oppose" or "challenge" its planetary dictatorship. And act how? Loureiro dos Santos, who through his duties surely knew the prevailing thinking in the U.S. and NATO, explicitly foresaw a war "in 20 years."

Three years before the Russian intervention in the war in Ukraine, another high-ranking Portuguese officer, Major General Carlos Branco [known as a political general who served in international organizations], warned of the danger of a global confrontation: "The situation we are experiencing bears little resemblance to the Cold War. We are already in a more advanced phase of confrontation that is reflected in the militarization of speeches and political agendas. ... A new war that could end life on Earth is becoming increasingly likely and must be prevented."

There is an intense campaign around Putin's statements about nuclear weapons, which have been misrepresented but cannot leave all those who understand the seriousness of the current situation indifferent — and it's worsening.

But it is worth recalling that in 2017, Major General Branco wrote: "British Defense Minister Michael Fallon has admitted the possibility of a preemptive nuclear strike against Russia. ... There is no memory during the Cold War of senior officials of the major powers threatening their opponent with preemptive nuclear strikes

or the audacity to violate their diplomatic premises," in a reference to the hijacking of a Russian consulate in the U.S. in Trump's time.

In his 2020 book, General Branco discussed the new U.S. military doctrines, how they aimed at nuclear supremacy and broadened the conditions allowing the use of nuclear weapons. He wrote: "The tactical nuclear option was also intended for regional confrontations, against Iran and/or North Korea [...] where conventional interventions are considered inadvisable."

One is reminded of the article by [President Bill] Clinton's former Defense Secretary William Perry and Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, who in 2002 wrote, euphorically, about how in 1994, "we prepared plans to attack North Korea's nuclear facilities and to mobilize hundreds of thousands of American troops for the war that was likely to follow." (Washington Post, Oct. 20, 2002) Nicholas Kristof spoke of "secret and frightening plans," where "there is even talk of using tactical nuclear weapons." (New York Times, Feb. 28, 2003)

The U.S. attack never materialized, because the then-President of South Korea, Kim Young-Sam, unlike Zelensky, was unwilling to sacrifice his country to U.S. hegemonic designs. (France Presse, May 24, 2000; Avante, Jan. 22, 2015)

General Branco also said of the dangers of the new U.S. military strategies: "In a context in which the dominant power sees its leadership threatened, it is not a mere figure of speech to consider the possibility that the United States employs violence to halt the rise of its competitor. There are several indications that lend credence to this hypothesis. ... One wonders at the silence of Trump's critics on this central issue, while they consume their energies on peripheral issues of dubious importance."

The reasons for this silence are plain to see; the objective of imposing the U.S. planetary dictatorship by force is not exclusive to Trump. It is shared by the entire U.S. ruling class.

That fact has long been evident. Remember NATO's war against Yugoslavia in 1999. This was an illegal war of aggression. It violated international law, redrawing the borders of Europe and violating everything else that is now proclaimed to not only be unacceptable but must be fought even at the cost of global war. It was a war unleashed by NATO at the height of U.S. unipolar hegemony, accompanying the first of successive expansions of NATO toward Russia. In this war, the U.S. bombed the Chinese Embassy [in Yugoslavia].

This war showed that the end of the "Cold War" represented the beginning of a new phase of planetary expansion of imperialism, with the U.S. at the head and (hot) war as the central tool. This war was led by the Democratic Party in the U.S. (Bill Clinton) and the social democracy (and German "Greens") that then governed in most European countries. This included, in Portugal, a Socialist Party (PS) government, then headed by António Guterres, current U.N. Secretary-General.

## Lies and censorship

The current media offensive is ferocious. As always happens with war propaganda, it is based on lies repeated a thousand times until they become "truth" in the heads of those who listen.

Whoever heard [President Joe] Biden at the U.N. will find it hard to believe that he was talking as the president of the country that has unleashed the most wars and aggressions; that has destroyed the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans, Vietnam, Korea; that systematically organizes coups, subversions and blockades against those who do not submit (such as Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba or Brazil); that has more than 750 military bases in some 80 countries (Al Jazeera, Sept. 10, 2021); that has the largest military budget on the planet (even without counting the CIA and other agencies); that thinks it has the right to appoint "presidents" of other countries (such as Juan Guaidó in Venezuela).

The U.S. is the only country that has ever used nuclear weapons. It has a long history of using chemical and biological weapons.

Lying accompanies every war of U.S. imperialism: in the colonization and extermination of the Indigenous peoples of North America; in the "sinking of the Maine,"



New York protest, September 2013

WW PHOTO

which marked the beginning of U.S. overseas expansion; in the Gulf of Tonkin fraud (Pentagon Papers), which was the pretext for 1964 escalation of the war in Vietnam; in the nonexistent "genocide" to justify the war against Yugoslavia; in the well-known nonsense about "Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction."

The extensive list includes the lies of the U.S. president to justify his atomic crime against Japan. In his speech on Aug. 9, 1945, [President Harry] Truman said: "The world will record that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. This is because we wanted, in this first attack, to avoid civilian deaths as much as possible." (Truman Library recording)

What the world took note of was that President Truman (whom Biden evoked in his speech before the U.N.) blatantly lied. The atomic bomb was dropped on downtown Hiroshima, a city of 250,000 people. At least 70,000 people died immediately, the vast majority of them civilians. Three days later the U.S. dropped another atomic bomb on another city, Nagasaki. No U.S. president has ever condemned these crimes.

For lies to prevail, you also need to silence information. That is why censorship and intimidation are widespread. The regime's media is more and more mere propaganda. It has hidden the role of the fascists in the coup in Ukraine, the repression of its opponents, the Odessa massacre in May 2014 and the eight-year war of the Kiev regime on the people of the Donbass.

Julian Assange, persecuted since 2010, is being held in a maximum security prison in Britain, not for committing or preparing any act of violence but for spreading on WikiLeaks the truth about the lies of U.S. wars. Facebook and other antisocial networks are increasingly censored and directly controlled by the secret services. (mintpressnews.com, July 12) The EU bans television channels. A judge has just decreed that the U.S. Senate report on torture in CIA concentration camps will be kept secret, because it "compromises national security." (Los Angeles Times, Sept. 15)

The ferocity of the attacks on the PCP is part of this campaign. The PCP is attacked, not for being "Putinist" (which it is not) or for supporting the war in Ukraine (which it does not support), but for not agreeing to be an apologist for the global confrontation that the U.S. and NATO have long been preparing against Russia and China nor for the suicidal policy of sanctions that destroys our continent to serve U.S. imperialism.

We are faithful to the example of the founders of our communist movement, who refused to support the disaster that their governments were preparing more than 100 years ago [World War I]. There are others who choose to serve the path of disaster. □

## 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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# In the end, who promotes fascism?

By Manuel Raposo

*The author is editor of the Portuguese Marxist webzine [jornalmudardevida.net](http://jornalmudardevida.net), where this article was published Sept. 30. Translation: John Catalinotto.*

One hundred years after Mussolini took power, fascism is once again governing Italy. For weeks before the election, Giorgia Meloni's expected victory drew no comments from European leaders, and it seemed that they all saw it not only as inevitable but also as normal and acceptable.

Only on the eve of Election Day, the Eurocrats' spokeswoman Ursula von der Leyen decided to issue a warning, as useless as it was stupid, brandishing the threat of sanctions if Italy's new leaders did not play by Brussels' rules.

## A new balance of power

This fascist victory has a different quality from the victories won in recent years by the extreme right in Europe. This time, it was not the ordinary right, more or less extreme, that took smaller fascist parties in hand in order to obtain the majorities necessary to govern. It was the opposite — the Brothers of Italy (who are open admirers of Mussolini) dragged behind them another fascist party, the Northern League [now called the League] and the extreme right of Forza Italia [Silvio Berlusconi's party].

The balance of power between the right and fascism was inverted, to the point that the ordinary right was now dispensable for the fascists to gain access to the government.

The victory in Italy followed by a few days another victory of a party of Nazi background in Sweden, one of the much praised homelands of European social democracy.

Not to mention that in France almost half the electorate voted for [pro-fascist] Marine Le Pen a few months ago; that Austria has remained governed by the extreme right for some years now; that in Netherlands the second parliamentary force is the extreme right; that in Portugal and Spain, parties admiring António de Oliveira Salazar and Francisco Franco [fascist dictators in those countries for decades in the mid-20th century] have gained strong popular support and parliamentary representation. Et cetera.

Far from being episodic and localized, the movement is widespread and seeks hegemony in Europe.

## Compromised silence

The silence of the European leaders is understandable.

Those who hold out their hand to the extreme right in order to stay in government, those who unabashedly adopt parts of their extremist programs to capture votes, those who use elections as a mere formality to legitimize a political power that is really based on the power of money, have no moral right to criticize fascists when the fascists take the bit between their teeth and rise to that same power in electoral processes as normal as any others.

Those who use Nazi shock forces to bring Ukraine into their orbit, those who fuel an endless war disposing of people's lives and imposing unacceptable sacrifices on them, those who paint Vlodymyr Zelensky's fascist regime in the colors of democracy and freedom, have no political standing to attack fascist parties wherever they raise their heads threatening to subvert democratic regimes.

The mainstream voice of the powers that be has used the easy argument that it is the "autocracies" (taken, of course, as alien to the "Europe of democratic values") that are the promoters of the European far right — in particular Putin's Russian regime is blamed. That is as if fascism was not historically born precisely in Europe.

They act as if Trump's presidency had not charged his henchmen with the mission of creating an international that would bring together the European fascist formations. As if the current Polish regime, furiously anti-Russian, was not one of the pioneers of institutionalized fascism within the European Union and NATO's main spearhead against Russia.

They claim Russia's invisible hand is behind the rise of the fascists. But this explains nothing and serves only as

a smokescreen to hide the true roots of the phenomenon, and Meloni proves it. The new leader of Italy's destiny is a convinced "Atlanticist," aligned with U.S. imperialism.

## The root of fascism

Where, then, does the resurgent fascism in Europe spring from?

The difficulty of the European bourgeoisies in approaching this question, other than through the derivative route of the "external hand," stems from the fact that it is the very maladies of European (and world) capitalism and the corresponding degradation of its institutions that are at the root of the problem.



Sign reads: "Make Italy anti-fascista again."

The democratic regimes of the capitalist West (parties and institutions) were consolidated on the basis and condition of continuous economic growth that somehow provided some degree of progress for their populations.

At the expense of colonial and imperial exploitation [of oppressed peoples and nations], they created a vast middle class (both petty and middle bourgeoisie), which was content if it could avoid being part of the proletariat and which maintained its social status by politically supporting the dominant classes, as long as they reciprocated by securing privileges for them.

The prolonged stagnation of Western capitalism, which is aging and losing its hegemony, has, however, for decades been sacrificing not only the working masses but a large part of the middle classes. The social gap between "rich" and "poor," or rather between the haves and the have-nots, is continuously growing, generating an absolute impoverishment of the lower social strata and pushing even the so-called middle classes down the social scale.

Faced with this regression, the middle classes — who were the mainstay of parliamentary regimes, of bipartisanship, of political stability "in the center" — no longer have any reason to bet on such regimes. The parties "of the center" lose support in favor of right-wing extremist proposals, and institutions (from elections to parliaments and "politicians") are rightly discredited. The "mystery" of the breakdown of the "center" has its origin here and not in the mere demagoguery of the "populists."

The lack of an alternative, with mass influence of an anti-capitalist left, leaves a large part of the working and popular classes vulnerable to the "change" demagoguery of the fascist forces, which win votes even on this social terrain.

To this background are now added the disastrous consequences of the policy pursued by European regimes in the face of war.

## War accelerates disaster

Europe has given up any semblance of autonomy, whether in the face of the war in Ukraine or the confrontation promoted by the U.S. against China. Unthinking alignment with the U.S. drags European economies into disaster and nullifies any semblance of independence, leading all of Europe and each of its countries to the status of U.S. vassals.

To the effects of the decadence of the economic system itself, barely recovered from the 2008 crisis and the pandemic, are now added, as a consequence of the war, unprecedented sacrifices imposed on people under the pretext of defending already discredited "values"

of freedom and democracy — a path that can only accelerate even more the masses' contempt for the powers that be.

The arguments in defense of national and popular interests are left in the hands of the extreme right and fascists, who thus (even if doing so out of opportunism) assume the role of the only ones who seem to care about the suffering of the populations.

The accusations of "populism" leveled against the fascists — as if trying to win the support of the people were in itself reprehensible — only boosts their popularity, for two reasons. It absolves them as fascists, reducing them to the status of demagogues, and it promotes them as those who dare to make the "popular" promises that the ruling power is unable to make. This is why you hear far-right voters saying: "Let's at least see what these candidates do."

The inconceivable statements (in Prague on Sept. 1) of the German "democrat" Foreign Minister, the "Green" Annalena Baerbock — saying, with all effrontery, that Germany will continue to support Ukraine even against the will of German voters ("it doesn't matter what my German voters think") — contrasts with the position of the "autocratic" Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who claims to put the interests of the Hungarian population first and therefore refuses to go along with the sanctions against Russia. This is one example, among many, of

the service provided by "democrats" to "autocrats" and "populists."

## The EU's suicidal choice

What we are all witnessing is an updated proof of what history has shown: Imperialism promotes war, and war feeds fascism.

The head of world imperialism today, the U.S., using Britain as its jack, created the conditions that detonated the war in Ukraine by making it inevitable.

The rejection of the compromise contained in the Minsk agreements and later the sabotage, by U.S. and British action, of the peace negotiations between Russians and Ukrainians — in Belarus and then in Türkiye [formerly Turkey] in the first weeks of the war — show beyond doubt who promoted the conflict and who wants to prolong it.

Almost all the powers of continental Europe committed to NATO have chosen to collaborate in the U.S. war enterprise. The price of this capitulation is the drastic downgrading of Europe, namely the EU, as an economic power and translates into an accelerated poverty of the working population.

That this should not have to be the case is proven by the solitary examples of Serbia, Hungary and Türkiye, which, in one way or another, are resisting pressure from Washington or Brussels. Beyond the material reasons that tie Europe to U.S. imperialism, perhaps simple cowardice helps explain the behavior of Europe's leaders.

The EU, rendered irrelevant, torn apart by huge, barely disguised internal tensions, is on the verge of disintegration.

It is on such fertile ground that the extreme right and fascist rise, in this case with the additional help of a war promoted, financed and armed by regimes which, 24/7, fly the banners of "freedom" and "democracy." □

## The Klan & the Government Foes or Allies?



By Sam Marcy

Founder, Workers World Party

Examines the special relationship with the state that has allowed the Ku Klux Klan to exist for over a century despite its criminal history of lynchings, murders, and intimidation. Published in 1983.

Read it for free at [workers.org/books](http://workers.org/books)



# One hurricane, two systems

Continued from page 1

the evacuation had been better organized. Responsibility for the poor timing lies with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Lee County officials.

Even after the mandatory evacuation orders were issued, Lee County Sheriff Carmine Merceno refused to evacuate the 457-bed county jail, leaving prisoners in harm’s way. Across the state only 2,500 or so prisoners, out of 81,000, were evacuated. (Democracy Now, Sept. 29)

Because the situation is so dire, Gov. DeSantis has had to put his ultraright ideology aside and request federal assistance. Whatever the federal government provides, it may be more than what people in Puerto Rico get after the devastating impact of Hurricane Fiona — given the history of U.S. colonial domination there.

### True humanitarian assistance, 90 miles south

Prior to reaching Florida, Hurricane Ian landed in Western Cuba. Cuba was prepared: People were evacuated; shelters were constructed, and schools were closed ahead of time.

Socialist Cuba is known worldwide for its hurricane preparedness and responses designed to minimize the

cost to humans and animals. Since 1985, “the “Ejercicio Meteoro” (Meteoro Exercise) held each year is an example of the resolve of the Cuban government to implement measures to protect, as far as possible, people’s lives, property and the resources of the national economy from disaster situations and has become a key factor in national efforts in this field over the last three decades.” (Granma, May 4, 2016)

UNICEF reports only two fatalities in Cuba. The storm knocked out the power grid for the entire island. Immediately work brigades began to restore power to residents, prioritizing areas around hospitals along with supermarkets and food processing facilities — in order to replace food that had to be thrown out during the power outage.

Typically, the New York Times focused on protests over the speed of the process, but this capitalist mouth-piece had to admit the demonstrations were “small.” The Times can’t hide the obvious contrast between hurricane responses in socialist Cuba and the capitalist U.S.

Why the disparity? The two countries have two different social systems. The U.S. is the most powerful imperialist country in the world — and the profit motive is what led it to become so. In fact the profit motive drives the overreliance on fossil fuels, which led to the climate



PHOTO: GRANMA

This and another wind farm in Cuba have enabled the country to reduce fossil fuel consumption by 53,000 tons.

catastrophe that is causing more frequent and more severe weather disasters.

Cuba is a socialist country, where human needs not profits are the priority, despite the inhumane U.S. blockade in place since 1961. Cuba’s socialist priorities make all the difference in the world. As Alejandra Garcia wrote in Resumen Latinoamericano Sept. 30, “Cubans show that no matter how hard the circumstances are, solidarity, hope and the will to overcome the impossible remain intact.”

For humanity and for the planet, socialism is the only way forward. □

# Cuba slowly begins to recover from devastating Hurricane Ian

By Alejandra Garcia
Havana, Cuba

The following slightly edited article appeared in the Sept. 30 online edition of “Resumen Latinoamericano and the Third World.”

Sept. 29 — Cuba is slowly rising from the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, which left desolate images in the western part of the country. Fallen trees and power lines crossed in the streets are part of the scene of many of the communities that felt the force of its winds, especially Pinar del Río. It is very common to see the same neighbors cutting down trees with axes in hand, sweeping the streets, piling up the leaves that are already beginning to dry on the pavement.

Cuba does not stop, despite the fact that one of Ian’s aftereffects was the almost total collapse of the national electrical grid. Cafeterias are opening their doors as long as daylight permits; people are traveling between municipalities to meet

up with relatives; public transportation has resumed its service; the press reports uninterruptedly.

Since Wednesday afternoon and evening, some communities have been recovering their electricity, while authorities of the Union Electrica de Cuba (UNE) are working tirelessly to restart the country’s thermoelectric plants, severely impacted by Ian but also by the shortages and the technological obsolescence.

According to authorities, only 37% of Havana’s customers had electricity at home as of midday today; that is, 316,000 of the 856,000 customers here in the capital.

The commercial director of the UNE in Havana, Leisy Hernández González, explained that most of the damages were caused by cracked poles and conductor cables and damaged transformers. “One hundred-and-twenty-three of Havana’s 285 electrical circuits have experienced breakdowns, while around 80 are in operation,” she explained.

Hernández added more data: Only 13 of the 25 hospitals in the capital have electric-

ity, and the municipalities most technically affected were Playa, La Lisa and Boyeros.

The figures hurt. There are families who have been without electricity for more than 50 hours and who have resigned themselves to throw away their food, because their refrigerators can no longer withstand being disconnected for many more hours. But, at the same time, there is no dismay.

Authorities are prioritizing repairs in those areas where hospitals, supermarkets and the main food-processing centers are located. Meanwhile, neighborhoods are pulling together. Families and friends of those who haven’t had their service restored yet, offer them any possible space inside their refrigerators to cool their food or power sockets where they can charge their cell phones, so that they are not left out of communication.

When Cubans believe that things cannot get worse, they do. For more than half a century we have been suffering from an economic blockade that prevents us from living in normal conditions; we have been

living through an unprecedented pandemic that has left in its wake — along with the blockade — inflation and shortages of food and fuel. For months we have been suffering from programmed blackouts due to failures in the main thermoelectric plants of the country. A devastating fire evaporated a good part of our crude oil reserves.

And now, not even two months later, one of the most powerful hurricanes of the season left two people dead and devastation and pain on the island.

But, once again, Cubans show that no matter how hard the circumstances are, solidarity, hope and the will to overcome the impossible remain intact. For over 60 years, we have lived through the most severe blockade in modern history, and during that time we have learned to be resilient and to adjust to inconvenience, difficulties and complications. Getting back up is part of our character; and while Hurricane Ian has delivered us a powerful blow, we will get through it together as we always do. □

## Deadly cost of climate change

# Typhoon rips through Western Alaska

By Paddy Colligan

A New York Times weekly news quiz Sept. 9 asked which of these climate disasters happened this summer: floods in

Pakistan; drought in China; heat wave on the U.S. West Coast; wildfires in Europe; or all of the above. To these are added September’s disasters: historic hurricanes in the Caribbean and the southeast U.S. and Typhoon Merbok in Alaska. And the season has just begun.

The destructive remnants of Typhoon Merbok are a recent example of an unexpectedly catastrophic weather phenomenon.

Merbok formed in cold waters off Japan; it regained power and moisture as it moved east across water that “historically would not have supported

tropical storm formation,” said Rick Thoman, Alaska climate specialist from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

From this new origin site, Thoman explained, Typhoon Merbok traveled a shorter distance and remained unusually powerful as it reached Alaska. It brought massive amounts of rain, waves, salt water, sand and high winds, wreaking havoc along a 1,300-mile swath of coast from the Kuskokwim River north to the Bering Strait. (KTOO, Sept. 28)

From Sept. 16 to 18, Typhoon Merbok destroyed numerous buildings and much of the infrastructure of Western Alaska’s coastal communities. According to the state government’s early damage assessment, 40 communities suffered significant damage and would need emergency

assistance. Essential infrastructure like water purification, power and sewage plants, seawalls, berms, roads, bridges and large fuel tanks were hard hit.

Airport runways were temporarily flooded and covered with debris. Homes, stores, sheds and boats were swept away. Tidal waves and flooding reshaped river courses, islands, lagoons and deltas, undoubtedly impacting animal migration patterns. Tons of sand buried large areas of tundra covering important food resources like berries. Native women have raised concerns that the berry harvest will now suffer long-term damage from inundation by salt water.

Alaskan coastal communities are “off the grid,” connected to the rest of Alaska

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Typhoon aftermath



# Nord Stream sabotage – ‘cui bono’? who benefits?

By Sara Flounders

Underwater explosions Sept. 26 severely damaged the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines from Russia to Germany.

World leaders, technical experts and engineers are nearly unanimous that the pipelines were attacked by a planned powerful underwater explosion of a highly complex nature.

Such industrial sabotage will impact millions of people, raise prices and seriously undermine Germany and other European Union countries’ industrial capacity.

German officials fear that both Nord Stream pipelines could be permanently unusable, depending on the amount of salt water that has entered and corroded their insides, the newspaper Tages Spiegel explained. Others predict months to years to repair.

And the ruptures further threaten the global climate. These pipeline leaks are the largest single release of methane — a powerful climate-damaging, greenhouse gas — ever recorded, the United Nations Environment Program said.

The gas pipelines, each four feet wide, consist of concrete-coated, reinforced steel pipes laid on the seabed. They are designed to last 50 years under harsh conditions and very high operating pressures and to withstand sabotage, earthquakes, landslides and other disruptions. The seas are full of sensors and monitors.

Who is responsible?

In an insurance investigation or a crime novel, the first question the investigator should ask is a centuries-old Latin phrase: Cui bono; or who benefits? Look first to those who stand to gain from a crime and who have a motive for committing that crime.

Even though the pipelines were a joint Russian-German effort costing \$23 billion, Ukrainian and U.S. politicians and media immediately blamed Russia for the destruction. That this charge is ridiculous is only obscured by the last decades of fever-pitch propaganda slandered Russia and Vladimir Putin.

The continued delivery of gas to the EU was Russia’s most valuable bargaining chip for resolving the war in Ukraine, ending sanctions and arriving at a negotiated agreement. Russia is the world’s largest exporter of gas and oil. While new markets opened, with many countries in the Global South buying Russia’s energy products, Russia’s largest market remains in Europe. Russia has no motive to destroy its own valuable, long-term assets.

However, any investigation controlled by NATO member countries is likely to find only Russia guilty.

On the other hand, U.S. imperialism can benefit from this crime, and the U.S. military has the equipment and access to the pipelines. Washington has both motive and means.

This widespread conclusion that the destruction of the pipelines was planned by the U.S. was captured by pro-NATO former Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorsky, who tweeted immediately after the explosions: “Thank you, USA.”

## U.S. opposition to pipelines

Both the Trump and the Biden administrations have publicly and in the strongest terms opposed these gas pipelines from their inception, because they integrate the economy of Russia and the European Union.

Demonstrations in Germany, calling for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to be opened and sanctions lifted before winter, have had growing mass support, as well as reflecting German industrial interests.

Nord Stream 1 had accounted for 40% of the European Union’s gas supplies via Germany, keeping energy costs low in the EU’s largest economy, for the last 10 years. Nord Stream 2 was due to double export capacities to 110 billion cubic meters.

The project began in 1998 with seabed studies and complex financing and technical expertise, involving many European countries. Nord Stream 1 opened November 2011; Nord Stream 2 was due to open February 2022.

U.S. Ambassador to the EU Gordon Sondland warned on Nov. 13, 2018, that then-President Donald Trump had many ways to stop Nord Stream 2: “We have not deployed the full set of tools yet that could significantly undermine if not outright stop the project.” (Reuters, Nov. 13, 2018)

And U.S. Ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell sent openly threatening letters to German companies working on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Grenell reportedly warned: “We emphasize that companies involved in Russian energy exports are taking part in something that could prompt a significant risk of sanctions.” (Bild am Sonntag, Jan 13, 2019)

Germany is a member of the NATO military alliance, and it is the country with the strongest economy in the EU. For U.S. imperialism to openly threaten its German imperialist ally with economic sanctions was a brazenly aggressive act.

President Joe Biden repeated these open

threats, even as German Chancellor Olaf Scholz stood by his side during a February 2022 state visit. At a White House press conference, Biden boasted that the U.S. was “able” to shut down Nord Stream 2 in the Baltic Sea if Russia invaded Ukraine.

As shown on a Feb. 7 video that was reposted on Twitter, a reporter asked Biden, “But how will you do that, exactly, since ... the project is in Germany’s control?” Biden said, “I promise you; we will be able to do that.”

## Sanctions failed to collapse Russia

Last winter Washington promised that the hundreds of economic sanctions imposed on Russia would lead to hyperinflation, shortages and massive unemployment, and this would lead to regime change. This stated goal never happened.

The Russian economy is self-sufficient in grain, energy and other essential products, and it has access to global markets. China and the whole Global South in Africa, Latin America and Asia have refused to comply with U.S.- and European-imposed sanctions on Russia.

Washington understood that only by prolonging the war in Ukraine could the sanctions on Russia last. Thus, billions in weapons and growing numbers of trainers, advisors and contractors have continued to pour in.

The corporate media in Germany and throughout the EU reported that U.S. opposition to the pipelines was rooted in U.S.-based companies anxious to sell liquified natural gas (LNG) obtained from fracking to EU countries. LNG is far more expensive than Russian gas.

## U.S. naval operations above pipelines

Numerous social media posts have pointed to the highly suspicious role of U.S. naval operations in the immediate area of the explosions. The Baltic Sea is controlled by NATO.

The BALTOPS 22, a Naval Strike Force Exercise, held 13 days of naval maneuvers in the area of the pipelines, with 47 ships, 89 aircraft and 7,000 personnel, in June, joined by 16 NATO-allied nations. The exercises centered on new technology, including submarine and mining and demining operations.

The U.S. 6th Fleet, led by the USS Kearsarge, coordinated BALTOPS 22. The Kearsarge remained in the immediate area for months after BALTOPS 22 ended. The

Nord Stream pipelines from Russia



USS Kearsarge tested special drone underwater-vehicle, mine-hunting technology in the Baltic Sea, just off the coast of the Danish island of Bornholm, near the Nord Stream pipelines. (seapowermagazine.org, June 14)

Investigative journalist Diana Johnstone examined the political significance of the sabotage and how a major state actor could carry out a naval operation in the middle of a densely monitored area, full of countless sensors and monitors. The presence of the USS Kearsarge until just days before the explosions is highly suspicious. Modern explosive devices can be detonated remotely.

Johnstone points out: “By an odd coincidence, only a few hours after the sabotage of Nord Stream 1 and 2, ceremonies began opening the new Baltic Pipe carrying gas from Norway to Denmark and Poland.”

The most ominous result of the destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines was that until the explosion, the pipelines remained ready for use as soon as an agreement was reached on Ukraine. But now, Johnstone writes, “The sabotage has virtually announced that the war can only intensify with no end in sight.” (tinyurl.com/2632bwdw)

U.S. strategy aims to close off every possibility of negotiations in Ukraine and to pull every country in Europe into the war against Russia. Closing off any possibility of negotiations makes the European countries more dependent on U.S. energy supplies, and this forcibly dismantles European industry.

In the U.S., endless funds to continue the war mean escalating inflation and economic insecurity for millions of working people and the growing danger of wider war. □

# Typhoon rips through Western Alaska

Continued from page 10

only by boat or plane. A few communities have thousands of residents but most are small, home to a few hundred people at most.

## ‘The sea is our garden’

Many Alaskans put together their livelihood from a patchwork of seasonal labor, the annual “Permanent Fund” check from state oil revenues, and a very important component of subsistence hunting and fishing.

Subsistence means hunting and harvesting fish, birds, sea mammals, land animals, fur-bearing animals, berries, and materials that are made into everyday functional objects and crafts for sale. These resources provide food as well as cash income. In addition to the serious damage experienced in towns and villages, the typhoon destroyed and damaged many of these

subsistence-hunting and fishing camps the Native people rely on.

Families move out on the land when it is time to start harvesting and processing. During this time they live and work in stationary, seasonal camps that families maintain and improve for decades. They are often located near camps of relatives and longtime friends. Family members, scattered all around Alaska the rest of the year, often return seasonally to spend time sharing work and camp life.

Over the decades people add to their camps, building fish weirs and traps, fish wheels, boats, boat rests, processing tables, drying racks, storage caches, smokehouses, cabins and outhouses, so they can live and work efficiently and comfortably for months at a time. People outfit their camps with generators, all-terrain vehicles, motor boats, fuel storage, pumps and other equipment for safety and more productivity. These are longtime family

enterprises.

Besides destroying the camps and equipment, the typhoon struck at the end of the harvest season, destroying much that had already been prepared for winter and for selling.

## Winter is coming soon

Recovery in Western Alaska will be difficult and expensive, because of the weather and inaccessibility. Snow is already beginning to fall, with ice not far behind. The annual supply barges must make their long anticipated deliveries within a week or two. However, since these orders were placed months ago, the cargoes do not reflect people’s current needs.

The situation is dire. Aiding these communities will not only require temporary shelters, restoring essential infrastructure, food and fuel for the immediate future, but figuring out a long-term strategy to help people regain their livelihood.

The people of Western Alaska are resilient and innovative, but most construction supplies and equipment will not come until next year’s barge. Air cargo is enormously expensive.

In addition to all the material damage, subsistence camps are a vital part of the Yup’ik, Inupiaq and other Native Alaskan cultures of the region. They provide multigenerational cultural instruction, where the youngest and the oldest live, talk, learn, laugh and share the stories, the language, and the history and memories of the people. The loss of subsistence camps is a huge threat to human culture.

The destruction being experienced on the coast of Alaska gives an insight into the high cost of global warming being paid by millions of people around the world, as they experience the disruption and destruction of their lives and cultures due to unmitigated human-induced climate change. □





La central nuclear de Zaporizhzhia

COMENTARIO DE MO/MW

# ‘Puerto Rico no está en venta’

By Deborah Rodriguez

El 23 de septiembre de 1868, estalló el Grito de Lares en la ciudad de Lares, Puerto Rico, el primer levantamiento armado de la isla por la independencia y contra el dominio colonial español. Campesinos, africanos esclavizados y obreros lideraron una revuelta por la independencia de Puerto Rico, para abolir la esclavitud y acabar con el abuso y la explotación de los trabajadores a través de la “libreta de jornalero”. Lucharon por mejoras sociales y económicas y por el control de las finanzas del archipiélago.

Han pasado 154 años y Puerto Rico sigue bajo dominio colonial. Estados Unidos sustituyó a España y creó una relación neocolonial con el archipiélago. Estados Unidos ha otorgado algunas concesiones con el pretexto de la “libertad”, pero en realidad el gobierno puertorriqueño y su pueblo tienen poco control. Esto ha sido más notable desde la creación de la Ley PROMESA y su Junta de Control Fiscal, que está autorizada a gestionar las finanzas del país.

Con el pretexto de reestructurar la

deuda de Puerto Rico, la Junta ha vendido servicios esenciales a empresas privadas, incluida la red de suministro eléctrico, que actualmente está bajo el



Estatua del Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances, llamado padre de la nación puertorriqueña, quien dijo ‘No quiero colonia ni con España ni con Estados Unidos. Quiero a mi patria libre, soberana e independiente’.

control de LUMA Energy. La empresa de servicios públicos ha sido implacable en su trato con el pueblo puertorriqueño, subcontratando puestos de trabajo, imponiendo siete aumentos de precios de los servicios en un año y dejando a la gente sin energía durante horas, a veces incluso días, con sus constantes apagones.

### Todavía bajo el dominio colonial

Han pasado 154 años y los trabajadores de Puerto Rico siguen siendo explotados. En los últimos años, los trabajadores han protestado por los recortes en sus salarios y pensiones. Tras el huracán María, la isla sufrió un éxodo de profesionales de la salud, debido al desmoronamiento del sistema sanitario que dejó a la gente en un estado precario durante una época muy angustiosa. Los médicos, que ya estaban mal pagados, no fueron compensados en su totalidad, lo que obligó a su salida de Puerto Rico porque sus salarios estaban comprometidos.

En 2022, los trabajadores públicos, concretamente los maestros, protestaron por el primer aumento salarial en más de 14 años, que fue de apenas

400 dólares. Esta cantidad se sumó a un salario ya de por sí pésimo, y hubo amenazas de recortar aún más las pensiones. Además, los trabajadores se enfrentaron a la subida de los precios de los bienes y servicios esenciales, como con LUMA, y al aumento del coste de la vivienda.

Han pasado cinco años desde que el huracán María asoló Puerto Rico, y ahora el pueblo es testigo de los efectos que el huracán Fiona ha tenido en el ya desmoronado sistema de la isla. Si los puertorriqueños alguna vez tuvieron la impresión de que estar bajo el dominio yanqui beneficia a nuestro pueblo, los últimos 154 años son reveladores. En los últimos años, las condiciones de deterioro han quedado al descubierto, y la ira del pueblo se ha ido gestando y ya no se puede reprimir.

El 25 de septiembre, en el desfile puertorriqueño de Filadelfia, vi a mi gente ondeando nuestra bandera en alto con orgullo, escuchando nuestra música, bailando y disfrutando. En medio, un pequeño pero poderoso grupo, mis camaradas, los Boricuas de Filadelfia, repartían propaganda denunciando la venta de la isla a los explotadores gestores de fondos de cobertura y a los “crypto bros”. □

## La propaganda bélica amenaza con el colapso nuclear

Por G. Dunkel

Estados Unidos y sus aliados imperialistas de la Unión Europea tienen un gran problema político. El embargo/boicot que tan rápida y alegremente impusieron a las exportaciones energéticas de Rusia, principalmente de petróleo y gas, tuvo la consecuencia imprevista de garantizar a Rusia unos beneficios mucho mayores en la venta a mercados fuera del control de Estados Unidos/UE, así como un fuerte aumento de los costes energéticos en Europa occidental.

Goldman Sachs predice que los costes de la energía para los hogares de la UE este próximo invierno aumentarán en 2 billones (millones de millones) de dólares, es decir, alrededor del 15% del PIB de la UE. (Bloomberg, 6 de septiembre)

Dado que Estados Unidos cuenta con sus propios suministros nacionales tanto de gas como de petróleo, este aumento de los costes energéticos es una amenaza menor para su economía.

La propaganda suele ser la herramienta más utilizada para conseguir apoyo político en un frente interno para las tropas en el frente. Aunque la UE y Estados Unidos no tienen oficialmente soldados sobre el terreno en la actual guerra por delegación, ambos están canalizando enormes cantidades de ayuda militar a Ucrania.

El Secretario de Estado estadounidense, Antony Blinken, prometió el 5 de septiembre una nueva ayuda de 2.000 millones de dólares a Ucrania para apoyar una nueva ofensiva. La ministra de Asuntos Exteriores alemana, Annalena

Baerbock, en una visita a Kiev el 10 de septiembre, “prometió a Ucrania más ayuda militar”. (Deutsche Welle)

### Propaganda de ‘amenaza’ nuclear para el ejército ucraniano

En el primer arrebato de la propaganda de guerra, la exclusión de la participación de rusos y bielorrusos en lugares deportivos o culturales fue ampliamente aceptada. Las cintas azules y amarillas –los colores de la bandera de Ucrania– estaban por todas partes.

Pero el fervor se ha desvanecido. El impacto de los artículos y vídeos –que elogian el heroísmo del pueblo ucraniano, sus victorias, la “incompetencia” de Rusia, las “atrocidades”– ha disminuido a medida que la guerra avanza mes tras mes.

Estados Unidos ha dado mucha importancia a la condena de las Naciones Unidas a la “operación militar especial” de Rusia, presentándola como una condena mundial e ignorando el hecho de que tanto India como China (cada una con más de 1.400 millones de habitantes) estaban entre las 35 naciones que se abstuvieron en esa votación.

Ahora parece que la UE y Estados Unidos han elegido la central nuclear de Zaporizhzhia (ZNPS) como el nuevo tema de propaganda para utilizar contra Rusia, jugando con los temores mundiales de otro Chernóbil, que también se encontraba en Ucrania.

El 26 de abril de 1986, cuando Ucrania aún formaba parte de la Unión Soviética, se produjo un catastrófico accidente nuclear en el reactor número 4 de la

central nuclear de Chernóbil, cerca de la ciudad de Prípiat, cuando los trabajadores intentaban llevar a cabo un experimento mal diseñado. Dos personas murieron en una explosión que esparció una enorme cantidad de radiactividad por toda Europa; muchas más murieron durante los años siguientes debido al envenenamiento por radiación.

La ZNPS es ahora la mayor central nuclear de Europa y una de las 10 mayores del mundo. Construida por la Unión Soviética cerca de la ciudad de Enerhodar, se encuentra en la orilla sur del embalse de Kakhovka, en el río Dniéper.

Se encuentra en una zona de Ucrania que está bajo control ruso desde principios de marzo. Gran parte del personal ucraniano de la ZNPS se quedó después de que los rusos tomaron el control. La central producía energía tanto para la red ucraniana como para la rusa hasta hace poco.

Enerhodar, donde viven las familias del personal, ha sido recientemente desconectada de la red. No hay energía para el agua, el alcantarillado, la cocina o la calefacción, lo que supone una gran presión para las familias del personal. La degradación de las condiciones de vida en Enerhodar va a obligar a las familias de los miembros del personal de ZNPS a marcharse, lo que hará que los miembros del personal se marchen con ellos.

La ZNPS ha sido objeto de fuertes bombardeos, lo que ha llevado al Organismo Internacional de la Energía Atómica, una agencia de la ONU, a exigir que la planta y sus alrededores se conviertan en “una zona de protección de la seguridad

nuclear”. (AIEA, 9 de septiembre)

Ucrania acusó a Rusia de llevar a cabo el bombardeo. Rusia respondió preguntando por qué iba a bombardear una zona que había controlado durante meses.

Avivando los temores, el presidente de Ucrania, Volodymyr Zelensky, declaró recientemente: “El OIEA y otras organizaciones internacionales deben actuar mucho más rápido de lo que lo están haciendo ahora. Porque cada minuto que las tropas rusas permanezcan en ZNPS es un riesgo de desastre radiológico mundial”. (bigthink.com/hard-science/, 9 de septiembre)

Tom Hartsfield, físico experimental del Laboratorio Nacional de Los Álamos, dijo que Zelensky está exagerando. Señala que el diseño de la ZNPS, y la física en la que se basa este diseño, hacen que una catástrofe sea altamente improbable. Los sistemas de seguridad de la central tendrían que ser destruidos repentinamente, mientras que los recipientes del reactor se dañarían pero no se destruirían.

¿El veredicto? La catástrofe nuclear es científicamente improbable. La eliminación de los combates en la zona sería más segura, pero no es absolutamente urgente.

La amenaza de catástrofe nuclear se está exagerando para asustar a la población de Estados Unidos y de los países de la UE para que respalden una guerra que se está librando para que las empresas armamentísticas estadounidenses obtengan beneficios y para reforzar el poder de Estados Unidos a nivel mundial. □