

Indigenous leaders, allies honor Orange Shirt Day

By Will Hodgkinson
Boston

United American Indians of New England (UAINE), the North American Indian Center of Boston (NAICOB) and their allies took over the entrance of Boston's Basilica Church Sept. 30 to commemorate the "National Day For Truth and Reconciliation" in so-called Canada.

Commonly known as Orange Shirt Day, Sept. 30 commemorates the tens of thousands of Indigenous children kidnapped and imprisoned by Canadian settler authorities in residential "schools." The U.S. government also operated a murderous system of boarding "schools," where settler authorities forced kidnapped Native children to "assimilate" into white settler culture.

Phyllis Webstad, a Northern Secwepemc citizen of the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation and a residential school survivor, led efforts to establish Orange Shirt Day. Webstad tied the suffering and trauma of other Indigenous children to an experience she had as a 6-year-old child, when residential school staff stripped her of her clothing, including the orange shirt her grandmother had bought her for her first day.

Stressing the importance of Orange Shirt Day, Mahtowin Munro, co-leader of UAINE, said: "We are here to support our Indigenous family across Turtle Island who have suffered trauma as a result of residential schools that tens of thousands of Indigenous children were forced to attend. In truth, we should not call these institutions 'schools.' Schools should not have graveyards



Participants in Orange Shirt Day on the front steps of Basilica Church in Boston, Sept 30, 2023.

WW PHOTO: MAIREAD SKEHAN GILLIS

and be places of horror for generations of children."

The Catholic Church ran many of these institutions where staff beat, abused and murdered Indigenous children. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has estimated that at least 4,000 Indigenous children died at residential schools, but the real figure is likely much higher.

Searches continue for mass graves

In Canada and the U.S., searches continue for unmarked mass graves containing the remains of thousands of children killed at residential and boarding schools. In 2022, an investigation found evidence of a mass grave of 215 children at the site of Kamloops

Residential School in British Columbia.

In June of this year, following a campaign led by relatives of five Native children killed at Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, the U.S. Army agreed to exhume and return the children's remains to their respective Tribal Nations. At least 189 children are buried in the cemetery of Carlisle Indian Industrial School, as well as several unidentified children buried in graves marked "unknown."

The Department of the Interior has identified at least 400 Indian boarding schools in the U.S. and reported 500 deaths so far, although the department expects that the actual death toll could be in the tens of thousands.

Although Pope Francis apologized to Indigenous peoples last year for his church's role in seizing Native children, Catholic organizations still refuse to release records for residential schools and have handed over no abusive nun or priest for prosecution.

As Munro and other speakers at the Sept. 30 rally emphasized, the genocidal destruction of Indigenous families and the kidnapping of their children is ongoing. In June, Indigenous-led activism pressured the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold the Indigenous Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in a major victory for Tribal Sovereignty. Even with the crucial protections ICWA provides, however, foster care authorities in both the U.S. and Canada continue to separate Indigenous children from their relatives.

Other Indigenous speakers, many of whom have relatives who survived residential schools, shared the trauma these experiences have caused and their struggle for

Continued on page 4

Week 3: Historic auto strike expands

By Martha Grevatt

The dynamic auto strike — the first time in the UAW's history that workers at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler are on strike at the same time — is now in its third week. On Sept. 29, UAW President Shawn Fain announced on Facebook that workers at two assembly plants, Ford's Chicago Assembly and GM's Lansing Delta Township, would join the strike that day at noon.

Now about 25,000 workers are on strike at five assembly plants of the three companies and all of the parts warehouses at GM and Stellantis. Stellantis, the fourth



UAW strikers outside Toledo, Ohio, Jeep plant, September 2023.

PHOTO: UAW

biggest auto company in the world, was formed by a merger of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and PSA Peugeot.

The union has made progress on some of its 10 core demands, which have included a sizable pay increase, elimination of pay and benefit tiers, restoration of the cost-of-living allowance (given up in the 2009 bankruptcy), a raise in pensions, pensions for all future retirees and a shorter work week (32 hours for 40 hours pay).

Workers not yet on strike are engaged in the contract struggle in a variety of ways, from collectively refusing voluntary overtime to solidarity rallies and car caravans to red shirt days in the plant. Many of these activities have been initiated by rank-and-file activists, local union leaders or the grass roots caucus Unite All Workers for Democracy.

UAWD led the campaign for a new, militant leadership — the Members United slate — which gave reformers a majority on the UAW's International Executive Board. This includes President Fain, the first president elected directly by the rank and file. Members wanted a change from the class collaborationist leadership of the past who had been giving up concessions to the companies going back to the first government bailout of Chrysler in 1979.

New York City activists held a solidarity picket line and rally on Sept. 30 outside the GM building in Manhattan. The action was sponsored by the December 12 Movement, Workers World Party, Teamsters Local 808, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and others. Speakers included



New York City solidarity rally, Sept. 30, 2023.

WW PHOTO: TONY MURPHY

UAW Local 3309 President Jeff Purcell, whose local is on strike at a Stellantis parts warehouse in Tappan, New York; CBTU New York City Chapter President Charles Jenkins; and Workers World Party First Secretary Larry Holmes.

Solidarity messages are pouring in from U.S.-based and international unions. Mexican autoworkers have said they will not accept overtime if any of the auto companies shift work to Mexico to break the strike. The working class around the world is in solidarity with this historic struggle to win back gains that workers have lost over the past few decades.

Martha Grevatt is a UAW retiree.

Make the firebombs boomerang

Make the firebombs boomerang: Take Cuba off ‘terrorist’ list!

It’s already out of the headlines. But its message still holds. We’re discussing the incendiary devices terrorists threw at the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C.

The message is obvious: There is something off-kilter if the world’s most dangerous rogue state — headquartered in Washington — can put Cuba on the list of “terrorist” countries, since Cuba extends more humanitarian solidarity per capita to the rest of the world than any other country.

This contradiction is a point to ponder, especially for anyone who dwells within the belly of the beast. Those who do live in the U.S. are subject to a Niagara of pro-imperialist propaganda, fogging their vision, depriving them of air to breathe and room to think. They might miss the point.

So those who got the message have the duty to repeat it, to share it with others.

No one representing socialist Cuba has done anything that in any way resembles a terrorist act, that is, an armed assault against civilians to achieve a political goal.

Socialist Cuba does offer trained and dedicated medical volunteers who have served in all corners of the world where disasters have occurred, sometimes at the risk of their own lives. Cuban medical workers have treated nuclear poisoning at Chernobyl, rescued victims of earthquakes and floods in Pakistan and Haiti and assisted with

care for COVID-19 patients in many countries including Italy, and in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.

They have saved the lives of thousands. With cataract operations they have restored the sight of more people throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Compare this with the acts of the U.S. government, working through the Pentagon and the CIA. This regime has invaded or terror bombed, without provocation, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya — in chronological order, tearing these countries apart, killing millions and sowing misery and chaos. And this is but a partial list.

Then, because despite its declining power, this same rogue state not only blockades Cuba, it has the unmitigated gall to place Cuba on a list that prevents other countries from trading with Cuba, thus making ordinary Cubans suffer.

It’s a crime that firebombs can be thrown against the Cuban Embassy. It is an admission of official U.S. participation in this crime that no one has been caught. But it’s hardly the worst crime U.S. imperialism has committed against the Cuban people. To blockade the Cuban economy, to slander Cuba as “terrorist” is a far worse crime.

Last year when the United Nations General Assembly voted on whether to lift the blockade of Cuba, lifting the blockade won, by 185-2. Only Israel joined the U.S. to vote against Cuba. Two rogue states. And the governments in the other 185 countries are convinced that it’s nonsense to call Cuba a terrorist state.

So if the attack on the Cuban Embassy has brought wider attention to the blatant lie used to make Cuban people suffer, let’s use that attention to mobilize to get Cuba taken off the list. There is already a petition to demand just that. It has gotten more than a third of the way towards the goal of one million signatures.

To sign and learn more of the effort, visit letcubalive.info. □



Movement grows to stop U.S. economic terror against Cuba.

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

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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.

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

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- ♦ **In the U.S.**
 - Indigenous leaders, allies honor Orange Shirt Day . . 1
 - Week 3: Historic auto strike expands 1
 - The liberated space of Palestine Writes Festival . . 3
 - Seattle: Orange Shirt Day protest 3
 - NYC Anti-NATO protest 4
 - Seattle: Orange Shirt Day protest 4

- ♦ **Editorial**
 - Make the firebombs boomerang 2

- ♦ **Mundo Obrero**
 - Triunfo del Festival Palestine Writes. 4

Online articles

- ♦ **In the U.S.**
 - Protest brings truth of Ukraine war to public. .LINK
 - Zionists will always call us antisemiticLINK
 - Writers’ strike gains in tentative agreement. . .LINK
 - Seattle city workers fight for wagesLINK

- ♦ **Around the World**
 - Canadian Parliament applauds WWII Nazi . . .LINK
 - ‘Wuthering Heights’ at four summitsLINK

- ♦ **Tear Down the Walls**
 - A plea from U.S. incarcerated: Stop killing us . .LINK
 - It’s time to put Virginia’s prisons on trial!LINK

- ♦ **Mundo Obrero**
 - Cuatro ‘Cumbres borrascosas’LINK

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The liberated space of Palestine Writes Festival

By Nicki Kattoura
Philadelphia

This slightly edited article first appeared in Mondoweiss, Sept. 28. The Palestine Writes Literature Festival, Sept. 22-24, was a liberated space for Palestinians to speak and dream freely. It was an unequivocal display of love for a land and her people, their history and their future. The author, a Palestinian writer and editor based in Philadelphia, was a volunteer at the festival. Workers World was a sponsor of the festival.

During the second Palestine Writes Festival this past weekend in Philadelphia, two floors of Irvine Hall, a rotunda-shaped building on the University of Pennsylvania’s campus, were crowded with vendors selling kefiyehs, embroidered dresses, and bags, notebooks, shirts, jewelry and olive oil, among other things.

Of course, a vast selection of books, in both Arabic and English, were piled high on tables and available for perusal and purchase. The selection was diverse in genre, from memoirs, poetry, and children’s stories to essays, novels and translations. Two hallways were lined with rooms that were packed with audiences rapt in silence as they witnessed, in both Arabic and English, discussions, interviews, panels, lectures and readings.

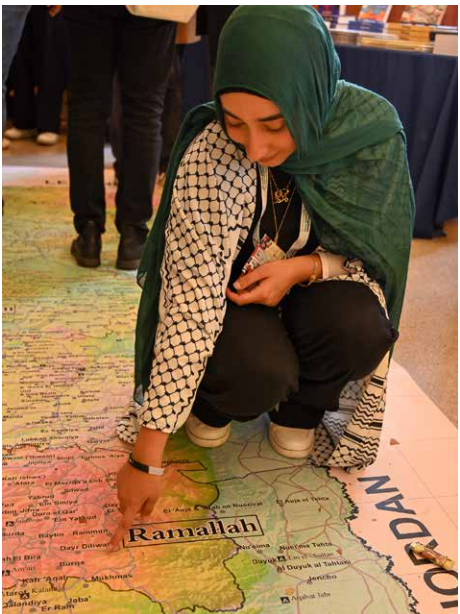


PHOTO: JOE PIETTE / PALESTINE WRITES

A visitor to the Palestine Writes Literature Festival points to a location on a giant map of Palestine on Sept. 23, 2023.

While the subject matter was vast and the speakers were from all around the world, a singular undercurrent existed that bound all of Irvine Hall together: a deep love for Palestine and an unshaken commitment to her freedom.

Zionist backlash

Despite the event being met with the all-too-familiar racist, Zionist backlash in the form of false accusations of antisemitism, Palestine Writes was a beautifully moving success. Setting out to celebrate anti-colonial, cultural resistance, and the long, rich, multi-faceted history of Palestine, the festival delivered a forum to confront, in the words of Edward Said, the “culture of power with the power of culture.”

In her opening remarks, Executive Director Susan Abulhawa described this weekend as a way “to help see, hear, enjoy, and appreciate the Indigenous heritage of one of the most fabled and tortured places on Earth.” Indeed, with over 1,500 attendees coming from Palestine and the diaspora and 100 speakers and cultural producers working in every medium, the three-day festival elevated the immense cultural contributions coming from the



PHOTO: JOE PIETTE / PALESTINE WRITES

The Freedom Dabka Group performing at the opening of the Palestine Writes Literature Festival in Philadelphia, Sept. 22, 2023.

small strip of land nestled between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

One of the most striking aspects of the weekend was the almost immediate sense of kinship between all festival goers. Whether illegal Israeli checkpoints, an apartheid wall that separates historic Palestine, or forced, violent displacement from our homeland, fragmentation and separation have seemingly become intrinsic to Palestinian identity. Yet, contrary to this shared trauma, those in attendance — most of whom were Palestinian — came together and forged deep connections, making every introduction feel like a long-awaited reunion.

In the middle of Irvine Hall, organizers displayed a map of Palestine. 29.5 feet in height and 10 feet in width, the map was populated with the original names of Palestinian villages. Children and adults crowded around it, pointing to which village they were from, finding others from the same place, and exchanging last names in the hopes that there was perhaps some shared ancestry or imagining what life in those small communities would have looked like before Israel.

Unlike the oft-cited David Ben-Gurion quote that falsely assumed the “old will die and the young will forget,” Palestine Writes was a ritual of remembrance and a preservation of a beautiful history that is often victim to Zionist erasure.

During the weekend, I was deeply moved by the sacredness of gathering this many of us in one space. Not only because, as someone who has never been to Palestine, it was the first time I was around this many Palestinians, but also because it was a place for all of us to engage each other and confront the politics, strategies, and means through which we would achieve our liberation.

Shared goal of Palestinian freedom

Beyond just preserving narrative histories of our stolen homeland, Palestine Writes represented a free and organic exchange of ideas that emerged out of our shared goal of Palestinian freedom. The generative nature of the event, building an intellectual community around Palestinians and accomplices, represented a profound act of resistance.

Whether it was a panel on the history and significance of tatreez and Palestinian embroidery, a lecture on the production and distribution of prison literature, a colloquium on the necessity of anticolonial solidarity within the Global South, or reflections on the revolutionary writings and contributions of Ghassan Kanafani, every event took seriously not

just the possibility, but also the necessity of a free Palestine.

Palestine Writes, therefore, demonstrated the people’s ongoing refusal to be turned into static subjects of the military occupation and instead became a space in which we could reclaim our agency as creative, militant, knowledge-producing forces for Palestinian freedom.

With over 1,000 Palestinians present, ideas around our identity, oppression, and strategies against occupation were exchanged, debated, critiqued, reshaped and rearticulated. It is precisely this engagement and the space we took to foster and tend to the Palestinian-led liberation movement that made Palestine Writes so powerful, and what made it such a threat to Israel and its Zionist supporters.

In his essay on the role of culture in Palestinian liberation, Mohammed El-Kurd questions how cultural workers, specifically those with “mobility and access ... can transcend symbolic identitarian gestures.” And while there isn’t a singular answer to this question, quoting Basel al-Araj, El-Kurd reiterates that to be “an intellectual is to be engaged.” (The Arabic word for “engaged” here has a much more militant connotation.) Perhaps this is what made Palestine Writes such a crucial political event.

El-Kurd writes, “collective struggle should be informed by the collective” and “without criticism or challenge, the dialectical relationship between the artist and the ‘street’ cannot be maintained or interrogated.” Palestine Writes revolved around engaged intellectuals, writers,

and cultural producers — those whose artistic practices are only a means for liberating Palestine — often running parallel to other forms of organizing.

With over 1,000 Palestinians present, ideas around our identity, oppression, and strategies against occupation were exchanged, debated, critiqued, reshaped and rearticulated. It is precisely this engagement and the space we took to foster and tend to the Palestinian-led liberation movement that made Palestine Writes so powerful, and what made it such a threat to Israel and its Zionist supporters.

Liberated space for Palestinians

In August 1967, Israel illegitimately institutionalized Military Order 101, denying Palestinians the right to free assembly by criminalizing unpermitted political gatherings of more than 10 people. Unsurprisingly, Israeli-issued permits for protests against Israel are incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. Fifty-six years later, and still Palestinians cannot gather, cannot raise their flag, and are criminalized for any way they choose to struggle.

Although this order only applies in the occupied territory, the backlash to the festival represents how these strictures are often enforced against Palestinians worldwide — those of us who struggle to find the space and opportunity for political community. Palestine Writes was a threat to Zionists just by virtue of uncompromisingly gathering Palestinians from all around the world to talk about our shared condition and freedom dreams.

The festival provided a liberated space for Palestinians to speak freely on their condition. No time was wasted on defending our humanity and right to live with dignity, and no one (during the conference at least) had to apologize or be held to account for fabricated accusations of antisemitism from Zionist discontents. Coming into the space together with a shared understanding of the crises that face us allowed us to reflect on where the movement stands, what its strengths and weaknesses are, and where it goes from here.

A gathering of Palestinians as intimate as this one doesn’t come often. Elders and 1948 survivors, academics and intellectuals, young activists and thinkers, children and siblings, filmmakers and journalists and artists and poets and writers and tailors and cultural producers of all kinds congregating, collaborating, and connecting was a powerful show of solidarity and a culmination of a long, arduous, continuing struggle against Israeli occupation.

While Zionists may be convinced that the festival was designed to spew hate, anyone in attendance would know that it was unequivocally one of the most beautiful displays of love, not just for a land and her history, but for her people and their future. □



PHOTO: JOE PIETTE / PALESTINE WRITES

An overflowing session at the Palestine Writes Literature Festival featuring writers Isabella Hammad and Saleem Haddad on Sept. 23, 2023.

El histórico Festival Palestine Writes triunfa sobre la oposición

Betsey Piette
Filadelfia

La resistencia suscitada por un asalto sionista al Festival Palestine Writes este fin de



FOTO: JOE PIETTE / PALESTINE WRITES

La directora ejecutiva del Festival Palestine Writes, Susan Abulhawa, da la bienvenida a los participantes en la sesión plenaria de apertura, 22 de septiembre de 2023. Detrás de ella, una gran marioneta de Handala proporcionada por Spiral Q.

semana del 22 al 24 de septiembre en la Universidad de Pensilvania convirtió el evento de lo que ya habría sido un marcado éxito en un triunfo desafiante sobre el sionismo y la represión.

Si los sionistas y sus aliados del Consejo de Administración de la Universidad de Pensilvania hubieran permanecido en silencio, si hubieran permitido que el primer Festival Palestine Writes de Estados Unidos celebrado en persona siguiera adelante sin ser cuestionado, la asistencia habría seguido siendo significativa. Habría sido un éxito. Las primeras inscripciones superaron las 800 personas.

Pero los sionistas llevaron a cabo una vitriólica campaña de ataque durante varios días. Condujeron un camión de carteles digitales móviles por el campus de UPenn. Hicieron llamadas, amenazando con detener el evento. Inventaron un intento difamatorio de relacionar el festival con un

supuesto ataque a la organización Hillel del campus. Y finalmente exigieron que el festival renunciara a algunos oradores clave, entre ellos Roger Waters, antiguo miembro de la banda de rock Pink Floyd.

Incluso antes de que se abrieran las puertas el viernes 22 de septiembre por la tarde, la inscripción había superado las 1500 personas, y siguió creciendo durante el fin de semana. En respuesta a los ataques, muchas personas y organizaciones se movilizaron para defender el acto, entre ellas más de 36 profesores de la UPenn, varios grupos de estudiantes de la UPenn, Jewish Voice for Peace y otros. Incluso periodistas de medios de comunicación corporativos, como The Philadelphia Inquirer, cubrieron positivamente el evento.

En el interior del Auditorio Irvine, todo se transformó en un ambiente pro Palestina. Un enorme mapa de la Palestina histórica de 3 por 9 metros, en el que se identificaban los pueblos

y aldeas anteriores a la Nakba de 1948, se expuso inicialmente en el exterior, pero luego se trasladó al interior debido a las condiciones meteorológicas. En las paredes de todo el edificio se colocaron carteles y fotos históricas ampliadas de la sociedad y la cultura palestinas.

Todo ello contribuyó a hacer de este festival una victoria de resistencia al sionismo

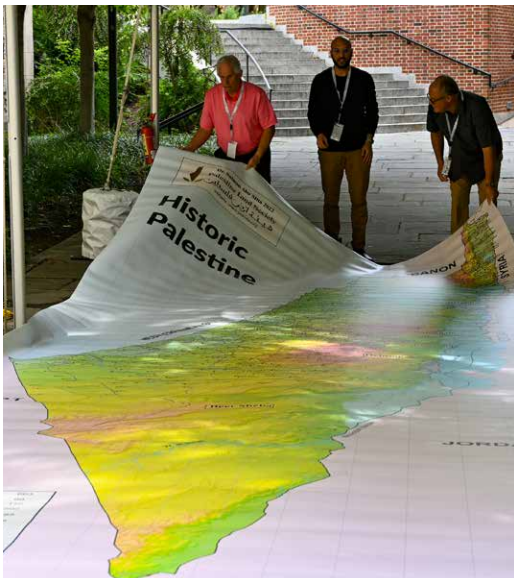


FOTO: JOE PIETTE / PALESTINE WRITES

Un mapa de 3 x 9 metros de Palestina antes de la Nakba de 1948 expuesto en el Festival Palestine Writes, en el campus de la Universidad de Penn en Filadelfia, del 22 al 24 de septiembre. Los participantes señalaron sus pueblos y ciudades ancestrales.

estremecedora, emotiva, unificada y desafiante, muy en consonancia con la resistencia histórica del pueblo de Palestina contra más de 75 años de ocupación.

Más información sobre este evento en Workers.org. □



FOTO: JOE PIETTE / PALESTINE WRITES

Sesión plenaria final "Informar sobre Palestina" sobre el asesinato por Israel de la periodista palestina Shireen Abu Akleh, con la participación de sus compañeros de trabajo, presentada por Amer Zahr, y el presentador Marc Lamont Hill, 24 de septiembre de 2023.



NYC Anti-NATO protest

Protesters leave CNN headquarters at Columbus Circle in Manhattan to walk down Broadway and through crowds in Times Square to end at the headquarters of The New York Times. They protested NATO's proxy war in Ukraine and the lies promoted by these corporate media monopolies. The Oct. 1 action was part of over 60 planned worldwide for the first week in October.

— Photo and report by John Catalinotto

Boston Orange Shirt Day

Continued from page 1

survival against ongoing settler colonial genocide. Each speaker received an orange flower, which they laid on the steps of the church in memory of the Indigenous children imprisoned, abused and murdered in residential schools.

To close the action, Indigenous activists and allies took part in a ceremonial round dance that both honored the suffering and trauma caused by residential schools, and demonstrated Indigenous resilience and ongoing resistance to settler colonialism worldwide. □

Seattle

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Mazaska Talks, Indigenous tribal members and their allies marched from the Seattle Federal Office Building on Sept. 30 to observe Orange Shirt Day, an event created to expose, oppose and rectify the damage done by Canadian government-sponsored residential schools, and U.S. government-backed American Indian boarding schools.

The day of actions are held to honor Indigenous children stolen by settler authorities in the U.S. and Canada through the boarding school system. It is estimated that 4,000 to 6,000 children died at residential schools in Canada. In 2022, a report from the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative identified marked and unmarked burial grounds at 53 separate U.S. sites.

Chants on the march led by Indigenous youth included: "No pride in genocide since 1492, no pride in genocide in boarding schools too."

The march went to Westlake Center for a rally, where Lummi Nation member Freddy Lane spoke of his experience in the Chemawa boarding school in Salem, Oregon, still in operation since 1880. Records show

Orange Shirt Day protests

that at least 270 children died at Chemawa. Lane introduced an Indigenous man who had crossed the U.S. border with his family when he was 5 years old, uplifting the struggles of undocumented immigrants.

Matthew War Bonnet of the Sicangu Lakota Nation, who previously testified before Congress about his experiences at the St. Francis Indian Boarding School on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota, addressed the gathering: "For 100 years the church operated by Jesuit priests had our children in their school."

He spoke of a priest throwing his brother down the stairs, breaking his arm. He spoke of

Indigenous youth being killed. He pulled out a leather razor strap and talked about it being used constantly in the infirmary of the school. He ended his remarks by singing a memorial song about his experiences.

Another event honoring Orange Shirt Day was held on the Tulalip Indian Reservation north of Seattle on the site of the former Tulalip Indian School.

Orange Shirt Day should serve as a teachable moment for all students in this country from grade school to college, for them to learn of boarding school genocidal violence and how to stand up and protest the crimes committed against their Indigenous siblings. □



PHOTO: ERIKA SCHULTZ

Ixtli White Hawk, Mexika-Tenochca, center, and others gather for National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools, also known as Orange Shirt Day, in Seattle on Sept. 30, 2023.