

# Abuse of Indigenous children demands reparations, sovereignty

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
October 5, 2021



Orange Shirt Day commemoration at the Federal Building in Boston, Sept. 30.  
Photo: Raquel Halsey-Arbona

*From a talk given at an Orange Shirt Day 2021 commemoration in Boston on Sept. 30.*

Orange Shirt Day has been commemorated in Canada since 2013, to honor the survivors and remember the children who never made it home from the Indian residential schools.

The Sept. 30 date was chosen because it is the time of year when children were forced to go into the residential schools. The orange shirt symbolism came about when Phyllis Webstad told [her story](#) of her first day at residential school in the

1970s, when her shiny new orange shirt, bought by her grandmother, was taken from her as a 6-year-old girl as she was violently stripped of her clothing and belongings.

Today is also the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation in Canada, although some provinces are refusing to honor it and there are too many Indigenous people saying they cannot even get the day off from work. Indigenous peoples have long been speaking the truth, and it is long overdue for settlers and newcomers to listen to that truth.

But honestly, there can be no reconciliation until reparations are made, Indigenous sovereignty is respected, Indigenous rights to consent and refuse are respected. Landback efforts and the right to decolonize need to be respected by Canada, a country that has still not changed its anti-Indigenous behavior or improved often deplorable conditions for Indigenous people, especially children. Apologies without actions do not mean anything.

More than 6,500 children have been found in unmarked graves on residential school grounds this year alone. They were not suddenly “discovered.” The survivors knew and testified about this. As children, some of the survivors were even forced to work on digging the graves.

One of the 2015 recommendations of the Canadian Truth & Reconciliation commission was that Canada fund and help Indigenous communities identify graves at the residential schools and reclaim their lost children. But Canada did nothing.

At least 150,000 Indigenous children were placed in the Canadian Indian residential school system. Some people now are referring to them as Institutions of Assimilation and Genocide, since that was the intent of the programs. And schools should not have graves full of children either, should they?

## **Genocide of Indigenous children**

The residential schools were created to alienate Indigenous children from their communities, spiritualities, cultures, languages and homelands. This genocide of children was an overt effort to destroy Indigenous family systems and remove Indigenous peoples from their lands. Mounties would raid some communities to snatch up all the children and take them away.

In some schools, the children were not allowed to go home at all for years, and families were prevented from visiting them. Even preschool aged children were in these schools and died there. Children died of malnutrition, tuberculosis, heartbreak, abuse, medical experimentation and more. Families were often not even told that their child had died, and their bodies were often not brought home. All of this resulted in profound intergenerational trauma.

The number of school-related deaths in Canada remains unknown due to incomplete records. Estimates now range from several thousand to over 30,000. Indigenous communities are urgently trying to raise funds to bring in specialists to examine the land and find graves at residential schools.

Many of the schools were run by the Catholic Church. One of the demands today is that the Catholic Church and its prelates not only apologize, but release all of its records, hand over the priests and nuns who did this to children, pay reparations out of its vast wealth, and take concrete actions to repair relationships with Indigenous peoples.

It's only now, after this year's revelation of thousands of unmarked graves of children, that more Canadians are finally listening to what has happened to Indigenous people in North America. Even now, there remain some genocide deniers who tell Indigenous people to get over it.

## **U.S. also stole children**

Today is also a National Day of Remembrance for U.S. Indian Boarding Schools.

Between 1869 and the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Native American and Alaska Native children were removed from their homes and families and placed in boarding schools operated by the U.S. government and churches, including the Catholic Church and several protestant denominations.

Though we don't know how many children were taken in total, by 1900 there were 20,000 children in Indian boarding schools, and by 1925 more than 60,000. The Native children who were removed from their homes, families and communities during this time were taken to schools sometimes thousands of miles away, where they were punished for speaking their native languages, stripped of traditional clothing and had their hair chopped off. They suffered physical, sexual, cultural and spiritual abuse, neglect and torture.

Many children never returned home and their fates have yet to be accounted for by the U.S. government, although U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland has recently promised that there will be a thorough investigation.

Both countries also had a long history of removing Indigenous children from their homes and placing them with white families to be adopted and assimilated and lose their ties to their communities, a practice that went on for decades and resulted in children we call "lost birds" because they grew up not knowing where they belong.

As a result, Indigenous people worked very hard to get laws such as the Indian Child Welfare Act passed so that this practice would end forever. Unfortunately, right-wing forces in recent years have been trying to overturn the Indian Child Welfare Act so that more of our children will be stolen and adopted by whites, and the future of ICWA will soon be determined by the Supreme Court.

In both Canada and the U.S., Indigenous children are disproportionately taken from their families and put into foster care, at least four times more often than white kids. This has led some people to say that foster care has in effect become the new residential school system.

*The writer is a leader of United American Indians of New England (UAINÉ), which hosts the annual National Day of Mourning commemoration in Plymouth, Mass., on the last Thursday of November. For more info, visit UAINÉ.org.*



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# **Wages cut by inflation: Building Back Better or return to austerity?**

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October 5, 2021

Wages are being cut by inflation — the worst round of inflation in 30 years.

The dollar store is officially dead. Dollar Tree, the last of the big dollar-store chains selling items for \$1 or less, said on Sept. 28 that it was officially “breaking the buck.” Today dollar stores are selling at \$10 or less, no longer devoted to \$1 items.

Personal [income](#) from all sources – wages, unemployment compensation, stimulus checks, Social Security benefits, etc. – when adjusted for inflation, fell in August.

Personal income should have grown as more workers got jobs, and wages increased for some jobs.

Congress and the Biden administration are locked in what almost seems like a game being played out for the TV cameras. The “Build Back Better” program promised by the Biden campaign had popular support. Already Democrats are talking about removing most of the plan’s popular provisions. That’d mean a return to the austerity budgets of previous years.

In April, Biden proposed another 2% increase in the Pentagon budget, taking it up to \$753 billion for 2022; there was no opposition from the Democrats or Republicans.

Biden’s “Build Back Better” plan before Congress is reported as being \$3.5 trillion, but if that’s broken down into a single fiscal year amount — as is done with the Pentagon budget — then it is only \$350 billion, less than half of annual war spending.

### **Inflation rate now as high as 13.5%**

The most well-known inflation measure is the Consumer Price Index (CPI), produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics; the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) is produced by the Bureau of Economic Analysis. In general, the CPI tends to report higher rates of inflation, which may be why the Federal Reserve prefers the PCE.

According to the Fed’s preferred [PCE measure](#), with food and energy included, inflation is at a rate of 4.8%. This is the highest PCE inflation measure since January 1991.

The CPI report of [inflation for August](#) put it at 5.3%.

The CPI and PCE reports are controversial and not universally accepted. On Wall Street, other measures are frequently used.

The CPI used to be determined by comparing the price of a fixed basket of goods and services spanning two different time periods. A few years ago that was changed to a cost-of-living index, a purposeful manipulation that allows the U.S. government to report a lower rate of inflation.

[Business Insider](#) reports that John Williams at Shadow Government Statistics says that the real inflation rate is now 13.5% and it is going to get higher. Williams uses [the original CPI methodology](#) based on a basket of goods and services.

In the spring, the Fed dismissed rising inflation as something that was “transitory,” caused by bottlenecks and supply chain problems, that would be gone by the end of the year. Now the Fed is saying that “transitory” inflation will continue into late 2022.

On Sept. 29., Fed Chair Jerome Powell told a European Central Bank forum, “Inflation is high and well above target and yet there appears to be slack in the labor market,” making an apparent reference to the 1970s “stagflation” that combined high unemployment (Powell calls that “slack”) and fast-rising prices.

Today, employment is still almost [7 million jobs short](#) of where it was before the pandemic.

Actually, the cause of inflation is not a quickie supply chain disruption that’ll just go away, Powell seemed to admit.

“The current inflation spike is really a consequence of supply constraints meeting very strong demand, and that is all associated with the reopening of the economy, which is a process that will have a beginning, a middle and an end,” he said.

## **Fed handed out \$4.5 trillion**

What is “very strong demand”? The Federal Reserve Bank handed out \$4.5 trillion over the last 18 months, along with short-term interest rates near 0% and long-term interest rates at record-low levels. The Fed’s trillions are the source of the “demand,” meaning spending, that Powell refers to.

The other part of the “demand” comes from Congress, which put out \$5 trillion over the past 18 months in forgivable small business PPP loans (over \$800 billion); funds sent to states to spend how they see fit; and bailouts for airlines and other big companies.

While some say that the inflation is “transitory” (over within the next year or so), other capitalist economists think it will be long term, such as [Nouriel Roubini](#), professor of economics at New York University’s Stern School of Business. He says that what’s coming is 1970s-style “stagflation” — a situation in which the inflation rate is high, the economic growth rate is slow, and unemployment remains high.

## **Trump’s trade war against China**

The focus on supply-chain disruption ignores the fact that the supply chain was already disrupted before the pandemic began, though the pandemic did add to the disruption in some areas.

Trump’s MAGA trade war against China, which has been continued by Biden, had already created chaos in the supply chain. Tariffs raise prices and reduce availability of goods and services.

As [Forbes](#) noted: “Donald Trump’s tariffs and the trade war his administration launched against China turned out to be far more damaging than many believed. ... The U.S. economy paid a heavy price for the Trump administration’s protectionist trade policies.”



Protectionist tariffs are inflationary; they increase prices as they keep out lower-priced foreign imports. Also, Trump's trade policy and his protectionist, anti-globalization policies hurt shipping. The [shipping industry](#) was already limping, and supply chains were disrupted before the pandemic.

## **War spending and inflation**

Sanctions are a form of economic warfare. In its hybrid wars against Iran and Venezuela, Washington has imposed sanctions against both countries that block oil trade. The sanctions, no surprise, mainly benefit Big Oil and are responsible for increasing the consumer price of fuel.

Also left out of the discussion of inflation is the ever-increasing Pentagon budget, perhaps the most important factor driving the inflation surge.

The Pentagon budget routinely eats up more than half of annual U.S. discretionary spending. By the Department of Defense's own accounting, military spending in the U.S. budget was \$13.34 trillion from 2000 through fiscal year 2019 in inflation-adjusted 2020 dollars. Add to that another \$3.18 trillion for the Veterans Administration, and the yearly average comes to a whopping \$826 billion.

Every year for the last seven years — under both Democratic and Republican administrations — the U.S. military budget has set a new historic high. The U.S. is spending more on its military than at any point since World War II.

## **Do weapons have use value?**

In "[Generals Over the White House,](#)" Marxist theoretician Sam Marcy wrote that "military production in the epoch of imperialism is a special case of commodity production. ... The products of the military-industrial complex are by Marxist definition commodities. However, in addition to having an exchange value, commodities must also have a use value. ...

“The products of the military-industrial complex enter into the process of capitalist production not as commodities in general but as ... commodities of a peculiar type. While they have use values in the narrow economic sense, their broad sociological significance is that of a cancer which tends to consume the entire body politic.

“The process of capitalist production and exchange in the final analysis does mean that the capitalist, in order to realize his profit, must produce a useful product. If not, it undermines the very process of capitalist reproduction.

“The sum total of the product that emanates from the military-industrial complex is devoid of usefulness to society. This is not readily apparent in the U.S., which was the victorious country in World War II. At the end of the war, after having spent billions and billions of dollars, the U.S. appropriated most of the profitable world markets and sources of scarce raw materials which had belonged to its allies and its adversaries, thereby vastly enriching monopoly capitalism at home.

“However, since the Korean War, the U.S. imperialist establishment has consistently lost ground in its military adventures. It has flooded the U.S. as well as the rest of the world with small pieces of paper whose decreasing value gives evidence of the indebtedness it has incurred as a result of military adventures for which there has been no material return to compensate for the vast expenditures entailed in producing the planes, guns, tanks and other sophisticated equipment employed. ...

“Cranking up the war machine in the very early 1930s was a stimulus to the capitalist economy. Cranking it up again in a period of hyperinflation and worldwide capitalist stagnation will operate as a depressant instead.”



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# Thousands in Los Angeles march to defend abortion rights

written by Struggle - La Lucha

October 5, 2021

On Oct. 2, women's marches were held all across California. Los Angeles hosted the largest of those marches with thousands in attendance.

In an interview given at the march, Emiliana Guereca, president of Women's March Foundation and founder of the Women's March LA Foundation, which initiated the action here, said the movement has grown "into a really strong feminist movement for women, pro-choice ...

"This moment, Oct. 2 for us, represents standing in solidarity with our Texas sisters so that SB8 is struck down and does not happen in Mississippi, does not happen in Florida.

"Unless all of us women rise up to this occasion, we are not going to be able to stop it. And, I think we've got the momentum and we've got to take to the streets and

fight,” Guereca said.

At the rally, representatives from the Socialist Unity Party [distributed a statement](#) condemning the misogynistic, anti-working-class Texas abortion law. The SUP also made the point that the movement cannot depend on the Democratic Party, or politicians from either ruling class party, to sincerely or effectively fight this major attack against women.

Maggie Vascassenno, co-coordinator of the Socialist Unity Party in Los Angeles, said: “Many of the speakers made great points. But the fact that our literature was so greatly in demand showed a thirst for a more class-conscious perspective, going beyond the Democratic Party politicians.”





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# Puerto Rico: Resistencia contra Luma

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October 5, 2021

Un pueblo responde cuando su nivel de tolerancia se agota ante las injusticias y los abusos. Eso precisamente está sucediendo aquí.

¿Qué la lucha no es unitaria? ¿Que no es lo suficientemente enérgica? No importa, lo que realmente vale es que comiencen focos de resistencia a través del archipiélago y que las organizaciones progresistas, independentistas y las luchas de pueblo en otros sectores se inserten para encausarla hacia una meta que adelante la independencia y soberanía.

Ahora, la lucha más crucial, porque toca a toda la población y el futuro económico del país, es contra la privatización del sector energético. El primero de junio, la compañía gringa-canadiense Luma tomó el control de la transmisión y distribución de electricidad y desde entonces el pueblo ha sufrido 2 alzas de tarifas y crecientes apagones que a veces llegan a 3 veces por día, con las consecuencias nefastas en la

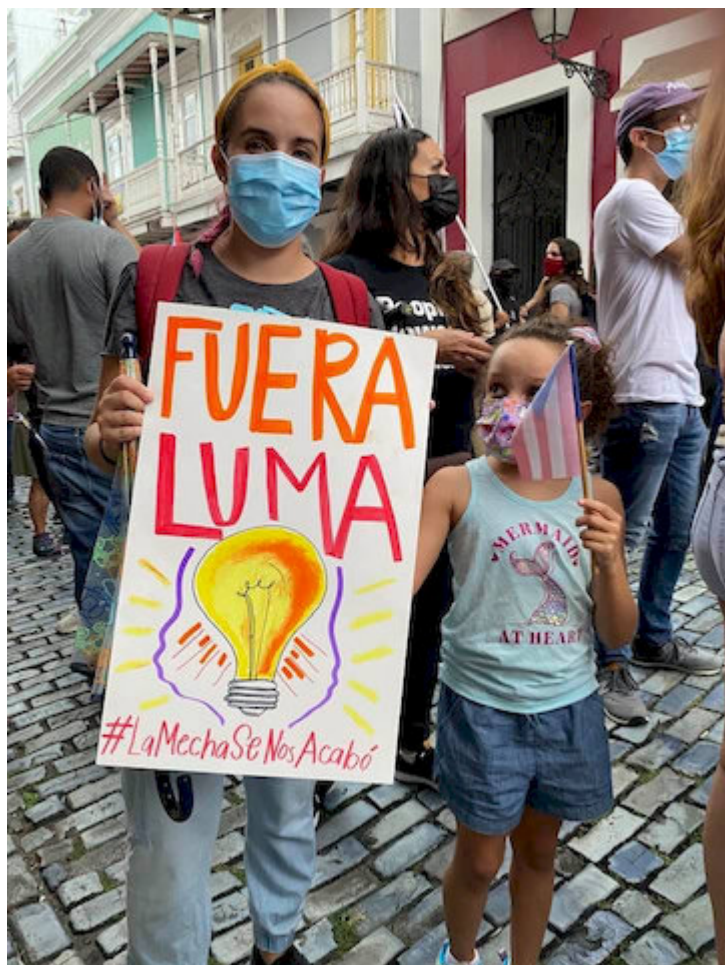
salud, economía e incluso en la salud mental del pueblo.

Pero la resistencia también va en aumento con convocatorias en contra del gobierno y de Luma. También en contra de la impuesta Junta de Control Fiscal que ha impulsado las privatizaciones desde que comenzó en el 2016.

Ha habido manifestaciones espontáneas convocadas por las redes, cacerolazos a las 8 de la noche, múltiples protestas alrededor del país, y ahora hay convocadas varias por organizaciones y partidos de izquierda que seguramente desembocarán en actos multitudinarios que por fin dará fin a la dictadura de los entes privatizadores.

Seguiremos informando del desarrollo de esta lucha.

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











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# **Solidarity with longtime anti-war activist Joe Lombardo!**

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On the heels of its defeat in Afghanistan, the United States government has made it clear it is now once again setting its sights on anti-war activists in the United States. Their latest target is Joe Lombardo, a leader of the country's largest anti-imperialist coalition.

Joe Lombardo is 73 years old and has been an organizer in the anti-war movement for decades. He is a cofounder and lead organizer for Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace, a local anti-war group based near Albany, New York. Lombardo also serves on the administrative committee for the country's largest and most active coalition of anti-intervention organizations, the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC).

UNAC and its member organizations are consistent in their unequivocal and vocal opposition to all forms of U.S. imperialism, from criminal sanctions and embargos to illegal coups and military interventions.

As one of the coalitions' main leaders, Joe has helped to coordinate conferences, mass mobilizations and webinars around the issues of peace and justice at home and abroad for UNAC. In his long time as an activist, Joe has travelled to countries throughout the world as an ambassador for peace and human rights.

This week, federal agents once again made their move against the anti-war movement. Out of the blue, they called Joe's ex-wife for questioning. The FBI agents pressed her to answer questions over the phone and to meet in person discuss Joe's past activities and travels. They specifically asked about Joe's 2019 trip to Venezuela, which he took as part of a U.S. Peace Delegation.

The feds rely on the fact that the average person is caught off guard and gets very nervous when federal agents come knocking with demands for information. Luckily, Joe Lombardo's ex-wife knew to reach out to him and to a movement lawyer and made the correct decision not to meet or speak with the FBI about Joe.

All those active in the movements for peace and justice should use this moment as a reminder to never speak with agents of the federal government prying into your political activism or the activism of others. "I have nothing to say, please speak with my lawyer," are all that need to be said. Activists should also take the time to educate friends and family members on this subject as well. Although not necessary, having the name of a movement or civil liberties lawyer on hand could help people feel less nervous in such a situation.

All this begs the question: why is the federal government once again going after anti-war activists? The powers that be, Democrat or Republican, feel threatened by the influence and power of our people's movements and will use any opportunity to try to criminalize, silence or destroy them. An attack on one is certainly an attack on all. Solidarity is always the order of the day.

The Committee to Stop FBI Repression (CSFR) stands in unwavering support of our

brother in the movement, Joe Lombardo. We oppose all efforts by the U.S. government to target activists in any progressive movement in this country. We call for an end to investigations, political harassment and threats against activists and our movements.

Source: [\*Committee to Stop FBI Repression\*](#)



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# **Los Angeles: End deportations and racist attacks on Haitian refugees!**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
October 5, 2021

On Sept. 23, Los Angeles activists and progressive organizations held a protest to join the [week of actions held around the country](#) in solidarity with Haitian refugees at the Texas border.

The protest was held at the LA County Courthouse, where U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla's office is located, in order to send a message to the Biden administration demanding the immediate end of deportations and the inhuman, racist and genocidal treatment

of Haitian refugees by the Border Patrol.

Endorsers and participants at the rally included the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, Unión del Barrio, Comités de Resistencia, Black Alliance for Peace, BAYAN-SoCal, Occupy LA, American Indian Movement SoCal, Puerto Rican Alliance, National Young Lords Organization, Full Rights for Immigrants Coalition and the Socialist Unity Party.

All of the organizations spoke at the rally, which was livestreamed. They made the following demands:

Temporary Protected Status should be extended and those facing deportation should be granted immediate asylum;

Title 42, the law that both Trump and Biden have used as an excuse to deny refugees the international right to asylum, should be revoked;

Haitians should be given reparations in acknowledgment of the historical and present U.S. destruction of political and economic institutions in Haiti – resulting in the refugee crisis today;

No tolerance for white supremacy, as witnessed by the world with the Border Patrol's use of whippings and abusive and racist treatment of the refugees;

Solidarity with immigrants must increase, especially for Haitian peoples who, like any African immigrants in general, face the most racist treatment by the U.S. government — from both the Democratic and Republican parties.

The organizations are now discussing a followup action, including a car caravan to the San Diego border, to expand this fightback.



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# Haiti and the visible pain of racism

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October 5, 2021

I have fresh in my mind those images of those guards on horseback chasing Haitians with whips at the southern border of the United States just like in the days of slavery. The pictures taken on September 21 scream from the shadows of that country's racist past that remains today.

The crisis took place when hundreds of Haitian migrants were trying to cross into the Ciudad Acuna, in Mexico, from a camp set up under a bridge in the town of Del Rio, Texas. They just wanted to buy food and water, which are basic goods they could not find on the US side.

In that camp, over 12,000 migrants, the great majority Haitians, were waiting for political asylum in the United States to escape from their country's violence and extreme poverty. Instead of taking into account the unfolding human tragedy there the Biden Administration panicked and quickly implemented Title 42 of the United States code that allows immediate expulsion for anyone trying to get into the US who has recently been in a country where a communicable disease was present. In

lieu of Covid this would mean just about anywhere but the White House's decision can only be viewed as one that is an overtly racist move.

Thrust into planes, the images of people arriving back in the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince on September 22, were just as painful as the ones taken by photojournalists at the southern border of the United States. Many people can be seen desperately running to get their belongings, which were left on the landing strip without any identification following their deportation from North America. While another group of migrants desperately tried to re-enter the planes in which they had arrived, the rest of the people threw shoes and objects at the aircraft.

"They are only deporting Haitians. People of other nationalities were left in the camp. That is discrimination," deportee Yranese Melidor told the local press in Port-au-Prince on September 22.

"The U.S. government has no conscience. This hatred against us proves they don't like us just for the color of our skin," said Haitian Maxon Prudhomme.

But Haiti's pain seems imperceptible to the international gaze. Today, not only the U.S. is closing its doors to undocumented immigrants from this Caribbean nation, which faces a constant humanitarian crisis, aggravated by the assassination of President Jovenel Moise and the recent earthquake, two events that shook the country with equal intensity last August.

The alarming situation faced by Haitians in Texas is only a small part of the reality they are facing on other borders of the continent.

The Colombian Ombudsman's Office reported, for example, that there are some 19,000 undocumented migrants (a record number) stranded in the Necocli city, from where they are waiting for a turn to cross into Panama for the trek North with the distinct possibility of another tragic showdown like the one we just saw play out at

the Rio Grande River.

Most of them come from the island of Hispaniola. They make their way north from Central America, through the jungles and swamps of the Darien Gap in Colombia and Panama to the Mexican-Guatemalan border, where they have faced brutal mistreatment, including rapes, robberies and deaths.

“Migrants are victims. Instead of re-victimize, punish, persecute, expel, and deport them, we have to look for mechanisms to protect and receive them,” urged Professor María Teresa Palacios Sanabria, director of the Human Rights Research Program of the Universidad del Rosario, in Bogota.

“This migration has been motivated by the exclusion, discrimination, lack of opportunities, and poverty they experience in their country,” she added.

The region is sitting on top of an immigration time bomb. Haiti, the poorest country in Latin America, has been living through decades of one crisis after another, of power struggles, of diseases growing as fast as criminal gangs, of arbitrary school closures, of children growing up amidst violence, bullets, and food insecurity.

They are alone in a world that does not want them for one reason, as Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano would say: “The history of harassment against Haiti, which in our days has tragic dimensions, is also a page out of the history of racism ingrained in Western civilization.”

Source: [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)



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# En Afganistán, la población empobrecida vive rodeada de riquezas

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
October 5, 2021

El 25 de septiembre de 2021, el ministro de Economía de Afganistán, Qari Din Mohammad Hanif, [declaró](#) que su Gobierno no quiere “ayuda y cooperación del mundo como el Gobierno anterior. El antiguo sistema fue apoyado por la comunidad internacional durante 20 años, pero aún así fracasó”. Es justo decir que Hanif no tiene experiencia en la gestión de una economía compleja, ya que ha pasado la mayor parte de su carrera haciendo labores políticas y diplomáticas para los talibanes (tanto en Afganistán como en Qatar). Sin embargo, durante el primer Gobierno talibán (1996 – 2001), Hanif fue [ministro de Planificación](#). En ese puesto, se hizo responsable de los asuntos económicos.

Hanif tiene razón al señalar que los Gobiernos de los presidentes Hamid Karzai (2001-2014) y Ashraf Ghani (2014-2021), a pesar de recibir miles de millones de



dólares en ayuda económica, no atendieron las necesidades básicas de la población afgana. Al final de su mandato - y tras 20 años de ocupación estadounidense -, una de cada tres personas pasa hambre, el 72% de la población permanece por debajo del umbral de la pobreza y el 65% no tiene [acceso](#) a la electricidad. Nada de lo que digan las capitales occidentales puede ocultar la evidencia de que el apoyo de la “comunidad internacional” no se tradujo, prácticamente, en ningún desarrollo económico y social para el país.

## **El pobre Norte**

Hanif, el único miembro del nuevo gabinete de Afganistán que pertenece a la minoría étnica tayika del país, procede de la provincia nororiental afgana de Badakhshan. Las provincias del noreste de Afganistán son zonas dominadas por los tayikos, y Badakhshan fue la base desde la que la Alianza del Norte se desplazó rápidamente bajo la [cobertura aérea](#) de Estados Unidos para lanzar un ataque contra los talibanes en 2001. A principios de agosto de 2021, los talibanes arrasaron estos distritos. “¿Por qué íbamos a defender a un Gobierno en Kabul que no hizo nada por nosotros?”, pregunta un antiguo funcionario del Gobierno de Karzai que vive en Fayzabad, la capital de Badakhshan.

Entre 2009 y 2011, el 80% de los fondos de USAID que llegaron a Afganistán se [destinaron](#) a zonas del sur y el este, que habían sido la base natural de los talibanes. Incluso este dinero, según señaló un informe del Senado estadounidense, se destinó a “programas de estabilización a corto plazo, en lugar de proyectos de desarrollo a más largo plazo”. En 2014, Haji Abdul Wadood, entonces gobernador del distrito de Argo en Badakhshan, [declaró](#) para Reuters: “Nadie ha dado dinero para invertir en proyectos de desarrollo. No tenemos recursos para invertir en nuestro distrito, nuestra provincia es remota y atrae menos atención”.

La provincia natal de Hanif, Badakhshan, y sus zonas vecinas, [sufren](#) una gran pobreza, con [tasas superiores](#) al 60%. Cuando habla de fracaso, Hanif tiene en

mente su provincia natal.

Durante miles de años, la provincia de Badakhshan ha albergado minas de piedras preciosas como el lapislázuli. En 2010, un informe militar estadounidense [estimó](#) que había al menos un billón de dólares en metales preciosos en Afganistán; ese mismo año, el entonces ministro de Minas afgano, Wahidullah Shahrani, [declaró](#) a la radio de la BBC que la cifra real podría ser tres veces mayor. El empobrecido norte podría no ser tan pobre después de todo.

### **Ladrones en el norte**

Siendo la producción de opio una parte considerable del [PIB](#) de Afganistán, la economía suele ser un foco de atención en la cobertura de los medios globales, en parte financiando las guerras terribles que han asolado al país los últimos años. Las piedras preciosas de Badakhshan, por su parte, [financiaron](#) la facción Jamiat-e Islami de Ahmad Shah Massoud en la década de 1980. Después de 1992, cuando Massoud se convirtió en el ministro de defensa de Kabul, hizo una alianza con una empresa polaca - [Intercommerce](#) - para [vender](#) estas piedras por unos 200 millones de dólares al año. Cuando los talibanes expulsaron a Massoud del poder, éste regresó al valle de Panjshir y utilizó las piedras de Badakhshan, Takhar y Panjshir para financiar su resistencia antitalibán.

Cuando la Alianza del Norte - que incluía a la facción de Massoud - llegó al poder bajo los bombardeos de Estados Unidos en 2001, estas minas pasaron a ser propiedad de los comandantes de la Alianza del Norte. Hombres como Haji Abdul Malek, Zekria Sawda y Zulmai Mujadidi - todos ellos miembros de la Alianza del Norte - se convirtieron en los [dueños de las minas](#). El hermano de Mujadidi, Asadullah Mujadidi, era el [comandante de la milicia](#) de la Fuerza de Protección Minera, que protegía las minas para estas nuevas élites.

En 2012, el entonces ministro de Minería de Afganistán, Wahidullah Shahrani,

[reveló](#) el alcance de la corrupción en los acuerdos, que había [dejado claro](#) ante la embajada de Estados Unidos en 2009. Sin embargo, el intento de transparencia de Shahrani se [entendió](#) dentro de Afganistán como un mecanismo para deslegitimar los intereses afganos en las minas e impulsar una nueva ley que permitiera a las empresas mineras internacionales una mayor libertad de acceso a los recursos del país. Varias [entidades](#) internacionales – entre ellas Centar (Reino Unido) y el multimillonario polaco Jan Kulczyk – intentaron acceder a las minas de oro, cobre y piedras preciosas de la provincia. Centar formó una [alianza](#) con la Compañía de Oro y Minerales de Afganistán, dirigida por el ex ministro de Desarrollo Urbano Sadat Naderi. El equipo de minería de este consorcio fue confiscado por los talibanes. A principios de este año, Shahrani fue [condenado](#) a 13 meses de cárcel por el Tribunal Supremo afgano por abuso de autoridad.

### **¿Qué harán los talibanes?**

Hanif tiene una agenda imposible. El FMI ha [suspendido](#) los fondos para Afganistán, y el Gobierno estadounidense [sigue bloqueando el acceso](#) a los casi 10.000 millones de dólares de reservas exteriores afganas que tiene en Estados Unidos. Ahora ha entrado algo de ayuda humanitaria en el país, pero no será suficiente. La dura política social de los talibanes – sobre todo en contra de las mujeres – disuadirá a muchos grupos de ayuda de volver al país.

Funcionarios del Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), el banco central del país, me dicen que las opciones que tiene el Gobierno son mínimas. No se ha establecido un control institucional sobre la riqueza minera. “Los acuerdos que se hicieron beneficiaron a unos pocos individuos y no al país en su conjunto”, declaró un funcionario. Uno de los principales acuerdos para desarrollar la mina de cobre de Mes Aynak, realizado con la Corporación Metalúrgica de China y con Jiangxi Copper, lleva inactivo [desde](#) 2008.

En la reunión de la Organización de Cooperación de Shanghái (OCS) celebrada a

mediados de septiembre, el presidente de Tayikistán, Emomali Rahmon, [habló](#) de la necesidad de impedir que los grupos terroristas atraviesen las fronteras afganas para perturbar Asia Central y el oeste de China. Rahmon se [posicionó](#) como defensor de los pueblos tayikos, aunque la pobreza de las comunidades tayikas a ambos lados de la frontera debería ser tan objeto de atención como la defensa de los derechos de los tayikos como minoría en Afganistán.

La OCS no ha indicado públicamente que vaya a impedir no sólo el terrorismo transfronterizo, sino también el contrabando transfronterizo. Las mayores [cantidades](#) de heroína y opio del norte de Afganistán van a parar a Tayikistán; se obtienen incalculables sumas de dinero en el movimiento ilegal de minerales, piedras preciosas y metales fuera de Afganistán. Hanif no ha planteado este punto directamente, pero los funcionarios del DAB afirman que, a menos que Afganistán controle mejor sus propios recursos (algo que no ha hecho en las últimas dos décadas) el país no podrá mejorar las condiciones de vida de su población.

*Este artículo fue producido para [Globetrotter](#). Vijay Prashad es un historiador, editor y periodista indio. Es miembro de la redacción y corresponsal en jefe de Globetrotter. Es editor en jefe de [LeftWord Books](#) y director del [Instituto Tricontinental de Investigación Social](#). También es miembro senior no-residente del [Instituto Chongyang de Estudios Financieros](#) de la Universidad Renmin de China. Ha escrito más de 20 libros, entre ellos [The Darker Nations](#) y [The Poorer Nations](#). Su último libro es [Washington Bullets](#), con una introducción de Evo Morales Ayma.*



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# **Webinar: The Importance of Solidarity with Palestine, Oct. 6**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
October 5, 2021





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## Happy birthday socialist China!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

October 5, 2021

Seventy-two years ago, on Oct. 1, 1949, Mao Zedong declared “China has stood up!” The socialist People’s Republic of China was born after decades of struggle.

Chinese women stepped forward with unbound feet. No longer could U.S. and British warships prowl the Yangtze River. Peasants, workers and progressive intellectuals knew their liberation had come.

China shook the world as its revolution inspired oppressed people everywhere. In his

autobiography, Malcolm X wrote how the Chinese Revolution boosted his spirits while he was in prison.

China gave refuge to Mabel Williams and Robert F. Williams, who organized self-defense against the Ku Klux Klan in Monroe, North Carolina.

While 80% of China's population couldn't read or write before the revolution, [illiteracy was practically wiped out](#) by 2015.

In 1949 there were just 117,000 college students in China. By 2015, [there were 37 million](#).

People in China had an [average lifespan of just 36 years](#) in 1949. By 2019, life expectancy had [more than doubled](#), to reach nearly 77 years.

In 2021, [Black men in the United States](#) had a life expectancy at birth of just over 68 years.

All of the peoples and nationalities in socialist China have shared in these gains. One of the greatest triumphs of human rights was the abolition of serfdom in Tibet.

The coronavirus pandemic shows the failure of U.S. capitalism. While nearly 700,000 people have died of COVID-19 in the U.S., less than 5,000 people died in socialist China. That's despite China having a billion more people than the U.S.

China's President Xi Jinping announced plans to provide other countries with [two billion vaccine doses](#) this year. Despite President Joe Biden's promises, the United States has so far distributed [only 160 million doses](#).

## **The world's workshop**

None of these gains would have been possible without a socialist revolution and the leadership of the Communist Party of China. While the bankers tell the politicians

what to do in Washington, communists control China's banks.

The result has been fantastic economic growth. China today manufactures more goods than the United States. It has built more miles of high-speed rail than the rest of the world combined.

Back in 1949, the urban working class accounted for just 1% of China's population. By 2019, there were [442 million people employed](#) in the cities.

China started its industrialization with the help of the then-existing Soviet Union and other socialist countries in Eastern Europe. Today China is helping countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America with its Belt and Road Initiative.

Building bridges, housing, hospitals, railroads and schools takes a lot of steel. While China made less than a million tons of steel in 1949, it currently produces more than a billion tons.

That's over 50% of world production. In the capitalist U.S., [steel production has shrunk](#) to 72 million tons, less than what was made in 1945.

The deliberate deindustrialization in the United States has thrown millions of workers out of a job and helped to keep wages down for everybody. But it wasn't China that closed nine of the 10 auto plants in Flint, Michigan. General Motors did.

While Flint's children were lead poisoned by their drinking water, China has been going full speed ahead with its own Green New Deal. China spent \$100 billion to [reforest 123,000 square miles](#). That's an area larger than New Mexico.

### **China won't go backwards**

U.S. billionaires have never forgiven the Chinese people for making a revolution. Their fortunes started with enslaving Africans, killing Indigenous people, stealing

half of Mexico and smuggling opium into China.

One of the biggest drug dealers was Warren Delano, a grandfather of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

A few months after the People's Republic of China was founded, Washington started the Korean War. Four million people were killed in this dirty war.

Among them was Mao Anying, a son of Mao Zedong. He was one of many Chinese volunteers who gave their lives to defend Korea.

U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur wanted to drop atom bombs on both China and Korea. The U.S. Air Force burned Korean children alive with napalm and phosphorus bombs, just as it did later in Vietnam and Laos.

The capitalist media is now trying to blame China for the coronavirus pandemic. Scientists reject the lie that COVID-19 was started in a Wuhan laboratory. We shouldn't be fooled by it either.

Three decades ago, the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Eastern Europe were overthrown. This tragedy was a greater defeat than the crushing of the German working class by Hitler.

Poor and working people still have the socialist countries of China, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Laos and Vietnam on their side. Bolivia, Iran, Nicaragua, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe are fighting U.S. economic sanctions. Palestine will be free.

History is on our side. Happy birthday to the socialist People's Republic of China!

