

Judicial persecution corrupts the case Of Mumia Abu-Jamal

written by Struggle - La Lucha
December 2, 2022



Philadelphia, Oct. 26. SLL photo: Gary Wilson

Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge Lucretia Clemons is the latest addition to an odious list of appellate court jurists who craftily construct legal barriers specifically to bludgeon evidence that undermines the corrupted conviction of

Mumia Abu-Jamal, the acclaimed writer/activist who millions worldwide consider a 'political prisoner.'

The 1982 conviction of Abu-Jamal, for killing a Philadelphia policeman, arose from gross violations of "international standards that govern fair trial procedures..." according to a seminal study on Abu-Jamal's case released in February 2000 by Amnesty International. AI is the prestigious, Noble Prize-winning human rights monitoring organization.

Judge Clemons, an African American, continues the peculiar appellate court practice of whitewashing wrongs that deny Abu-Jamal his constitutional fair trial rights.

As that Amnesty study noted, the "politicization" of Mumia Abu-Jamal's case "may not only have prejudiced his right to a fair trial but may now be undermining his right to fair and impartial treatment in the appeal courts."

Judge Clemons, during an appeal proceeding in October 2022, released a 31-page "Notice of Intent to Dismiss" Abu-Jamal's latest appeal . That appeal is perhaps the last appeal he can file.

Clemons' "Intent" ruling wraps fictions with legalese to justify her rejection of Abu-Jamal's appeal. The reply to Clemons' intended ruling from Abu-Jamal's lawyers reminds her that some of her legal reasoning is "precisely the approach" that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the United States Supreme Court have both "deemed incorrect."

A unique aspect of Judge Clemons' engagement with Abu-Jamal's appeal is her rejection of extraordinary evidence documenting disturbing wrongdoing during Abu-Jamal's 1982 trial for the murder of Officer Daniel Faulkner.

This extraordinary evidence that Clemons finds "unpersuasive" includes rare documentation of both racist procedures the trial prosecutor used during jury

selection and improper inducements prosecutors provided two prime trial witnesses. One item in that extraordinary evidence is a handwritten note from one of those prime witnesses to the trial prosecutor demanding the “money” that witness said the prosecutor promised him.

Fair trial rights, for example, bar prosecutors from purchasing testimony. Fair trial rights also bar prosecutors from racist jury selection practices.

Judge Clemons, consistent with prior appellate practice to block Abu-Jamal appeals, has declared intent to disregard the fundamental fact that fair trial rights require prosecutors to disclose evidence favorable to a defendant.

Philadelphia prosecutors failed to follow that requirement in the Abu-Jamal case by withholding that extraordinary evidence for over 36-years.

Clemons cavalierly whitewashes this outrageous failure by prosecutors. She contends Abu-Jamal was not “prejudiced” either at trial or during subsequent appeals because prosecutors improperly withheld evidence of obvious improprieties against Abu-Jamal.

The fact that prosecutors withheld favorable evidence from defense lawyers for over 13,000-days should be an automatic basis for a new trial – a proverbial no-brainer. However, Judge Clemons intends to reject Abu-Jamal’s request for a new trial seeing no legal unfairness in prosecutors withholding that evidence for over 21-million minutes.

Truly unique context of this extraordinary evidence Clemons’ stated she is prepared to dismiss is that Philadelphia’s current District Attorney personally discovered it. DA Larry Krasner found six boxes of Abu-Jamal case documents stashed in a storage closet while exploring the physical layout of DA’s office one month after his November 2018 election.

Krasner's discovery of those six boxes came shortly after the DA's Office told another judge hearing an Abu-Jamal appeal that all material about Abu-Jamal's case had been given to Abu-Jamal's defense team.

While Abu-Jamal's defense argues evidence in those six withheld boxes constitute a "watershed revelation" Judge Clemons deems that evidence irrelevant, essentially old wine in a new bottle that prior appellate rulings rejected.

Consider Judge Clemons' posture on one document in those six boxes. That document is handwritten notes by the trial prosecutor where that prosecutor placed a big 'B' by the names of potential Black jurors and a big 'W' by potential white jurors. Prosecutors employing race as a criterion in jury selection is forbidden by the Pa and U.S. supreme courts. For decades, Philadelphia prosecutors denied any improprieties in Abu-Jamal's jury selection citing a lack of conclusive evidence of any impropriety that the handwritten notes now provide.

Clemons blasted Abu-Jamal's defense for not probing the trial prosecutor on his jury selection rationales during a mid-1990s appeal hearing.

But, as noted in Abu-Jamal's reply to Clemons, defense lawyers could not have questioned the trial prosecutor on those handwritten notes because prosecutors improperly withheld those notes from the defense. Abu-Jamal's reply stated there was no notice before January 2019* that the trial prosecutor in 1982 "took jury notes showing he was tracking jurors by race." (*January 2019 is when the DA's Office released those six boxes of documents to Abu-Jamal's defense team.)

Clemons made an astoundingly absurd assertion in her 'Intent' when she declared that either Abu-Jamal or his trial lawyer could have easily observed "with their own eyes" the prosecutor making those improper racial notations during jury selection. Clemons' assertion ignored the virtual impossibility of someone sitting at the defense table during a trial being able to see exactly what someone wrote on a note

pad at the prosecution table located at least five feet away from the defense table.

Judge Clemons - in her 'Intent' - rejected holding an evidentiary hearing where she could hear testimony to determine for herself the veracity of claims by the DA's Office, thus resolving factual disputes.

Clemons, for example, doesn't see a need to hear prosecutors explain their claim that the demand for "money" from their prime trial witness was not payment for his testimony. Prosecutors claim the demand for money in that withheld note related to wages that witness said he lost due to testifying at trial.

Clemons claimed the jury would have still convicted Abu-Jamal even if they knew about that demand for money. Clemons conveniently omits contextual facts like the jury never learned that witness thought the trial prosecutor would get his driver's license restored that was revoked due to a DUI conviction.

Because of rulings by the bigoted, pro-prosecution trial judge, the jury never knew that this witness was on probation for firebombing a school and was driving a cab without a valid driver's license when he claimed he saw Abu-Jamal shoot Faulkner. Driving on a revoked license could have led to the revocation of that driver's probation sending him to prison for that firebombing. Abu-Jamal's lawyers contend the driver tailored his testimony to save himself from possible imprisonment.

Another document contained in those six withheld boxes is a report filed by a police officer that exposed improprieties by police related to that cab driving witness. This police officer filed that report less than ninety minutes after Faulkner's murder. The report stated police commanders told that officer to "ride over to Homicide with a cab driver."

Since that cab driver said he witnessed Faulkner's murder after he parked his cab behind Faulkner's patrol car, police violated their crime scene investigation

protocols which forbid removing vehicles relevant to an investigation.

That cab is not shown in any of the official police crime scene photos. And, that cab is not shown in photos taken by a freelance news photographer who arrived at the crime scene ten minutes after Faulkner's fatal shooting and before police crime scene investigators.

No other prosecution witness testified to seeing a cab behind Faulkner's patrol car.

This failure of prosecution witnesses to place a cab behind the patrol car included the only other prosecution eyewitness who claimed that Abu-Jamal killed Faulkner. That witness, a prostitute, claimed she was standing a few feet from where the cab driver testified that he was parked.

If police allowed the cab driver to drive himself to the interview by Homicide detectives, as confirmed in that policeman's report, then police tampered with the crime scene. Tampering with a crime scene is another valid reason for granting Abu-Jamal a new trial.

That cab driver, years after the trial, told defense investigators and reporters that he did not park behind Faulkner's patrol car. This witness said he did not see who shot Faulkner. Those statements to investigators and reporters contradict the cab driver's trial testimony. Those statements constitute additional evidence of the need for a new trial that Judge Clemons and other jurists have dismissed.

Those six withheld boxes also contained alarming evidence of leniency prosecutors extended to their second eyewitness. That prostitute said she witnessed Faulkner's shooting while standing on a corner a few feet from the crime. This prostitute and the trial prosecutor each told the trial jury there were no deals for her testimony. Yet, days after the jury convicted Abu-Jamal, prosecutors dropped a series of criminal charges pending against that prostitute.

Judge Clemons asserts that the jury would have convicted Abu-Jamal even without the eyewitness testimony of the cab driver and the prostitute – the only two witnesses to testify that Abu-Jamal shot Faulkner. However, Abu-Jamal’s reply to Clemons’ ‘Intent’ disputes her assertion.

The “cumulative effect of a promise of money to one crucial witness and of leniency to another would have undermined the reliability of the investigation and discredited the government’s methods in assembling the case,” the reply states.

Abu-Jamal, imprisoned since his December 1981 arrest, has authored/co-authored over a dozen books, created over a thousand commentaries, learned to speak two foreign languages, plus earned college and graduate degrees. Further, Abu-Jamal’s claim of innocence has garnered support from several governmental bodies from Europe to Japan.

Amnesty International, in that 2000 study, stated “the interests of justice would be best served by” granting Abu-Jamal a new trial.”

Pennsylvania’s Code of Judicial Conduct states the judiciary “plays a fundamental role in ensuring the principles of justice and the rule of law.”

Judges who have constructed legal barriers to block Abu-Jamal’s appeals disregard a Conduct Code warning that “public confidence in the judiciary is eroded by improper conduct...”

Source: [This Can’t Be Happening](#)



The wage price spiral refuted

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Do 'excessive' wage rises lead to rising inflation and thus drive economies into a wage-price spiral? Back in 1865, at the International Working Men's Association, Marx debated with IWMA Council member Thomas Weston. Weston, a leader of the carpenter's union, argued that asking for increased wages was futile because all that would happen would be that employers would put up their prices to maintain their profits, and so inflation would quickly eat into purchasing power; real wages would stagnate, and workers would be back to square one because of a wage-price spiral.

Marx responded to Weston's argument firmly. His reply, which was eventually published as a pamphlet, [Value, Price and Profit](#), was basically as follows. First, "*wage rises generally happen in the track of previous price rises*" - it's a catch-up response, not due to 'excessive' and unrealistic demands for higher wages by workers. Second, it is not wage rises that cause rising inflation. Many other things affect price changes, Marx argued: namely, "*the amount of production* (growth rates - MR), *the productive powers of labor* (productivity growth - MR), *the value of money* (money supply growth - MR), *fluctuations of market*

prices (price setting – MR), and different phases of the industrial cycle” (boom or slump – MR).

Moreover, *“A general rise in the rate of wages will result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but not affect the prices of commodities.”* In other words, wage rises are much more likely to lower the share of income going to profits and thus eventually lower the profitability of capital. And that is the reason capitalists and their economist prize-fighters oppose wage rises. The claim that there is a wage-price spiral and that wage rises cause price rises is an ideological smokescreen to protect profitability.

Was Marx right? Well, modern mainstream economics has continued to claim that ‘excessive’ wage rises will cause rising inflation and create a wage-price spiral. Take these following views in the current inflation upsurge. First, there is the recent statement by Andrew Bailey, the Governor of the Bank of England. *“I’m not saying nobody gets a pay rise, don’t get me wrong. But what I am saying is, we do need to see restraint in pay bargaining, otherwise it will get out of control”.*

Or even more explicitly and following the argument of Thomas Weston over 150 years ago, Jason Furman, former economic adviser to U.S. President Obama, put it this way. *“When wages go up, that leads prices to go up. If airline fuel or food ingredients go up in price, then airlines or restaurants raise their prices. Similarly, if wages for flight attendants or servers go up, then they also raise prices. This follows from basic micro & common sense.”*

Well, it may follow from *“basic micro and commonsense”* in mainstream economics. But it is just plain wrong. And this week, [the IMF has compiled a comprehensive data analysis](#) of the movement of wage and price rises that refutes Bailey and Furman. The IMF *“address these questions by creating an empirical definition of a wage-price spiral and applying this on a cross-economy database of past episodes among advanced economies going back to the 1960s.”* So over 60 years and in many

countries.

What did the IMF find: ***“Wage-price spirals, at least defined as a sustained acceleration of prices and wages, are hard to find in the recent historical record. Of the 79 episodes identified with accelerating prices and wages going back to the 1960s, only a minority of them saw further acceleration after eight quarters. Moreover, sustained wage-price acceleration is even harder to find when looking at episodes similar to today, where real wages have significantly fallen. In those cases, nominal wages tended to catch-up to inflation to partially recover real wage losses, and growth rates tended to stabilize at a higher level than before the initial acceleration happened. Wage growth rates were eventually consistent with inflation and labor market tightness observed. This mechanism did not appear to lead to persistent acceleration dynamics that can be characterized as a wage-price spiral.”***

And there's more: *“We define a wage-price spiral as an episode where at least three out of four consecutive quarters saw accelerating consumer prices and rising nominal wages.”* And the IMF finds that ***“Perhaps surprisingly, only a small minority of such episodes were followed by sustained acceleration in wages and prices. Instead, inflation and nominal wage growth tended to stabilize, leaving real wage growth broadly unchanged. A decomposition of wage dynamics using a wage Phillips curve suggests that nominal wage growth normally stabilizes at levels that are consistent with observed inflation and labor market tightness. When focusing on episodes that mimic the recent pattern of falling real wages and tightening labor markets, declining inflation and nominal wage growth increases tended to follow - thus allowing real wages to catch up.”***

What does the IMF conclude? ***“We conclude that an acceleration of nominal wages should not necessarily be seen as a sign that a wage-price spiral is taking hold.”*** In inflationary episodes, wages just try to catch up with prices. But

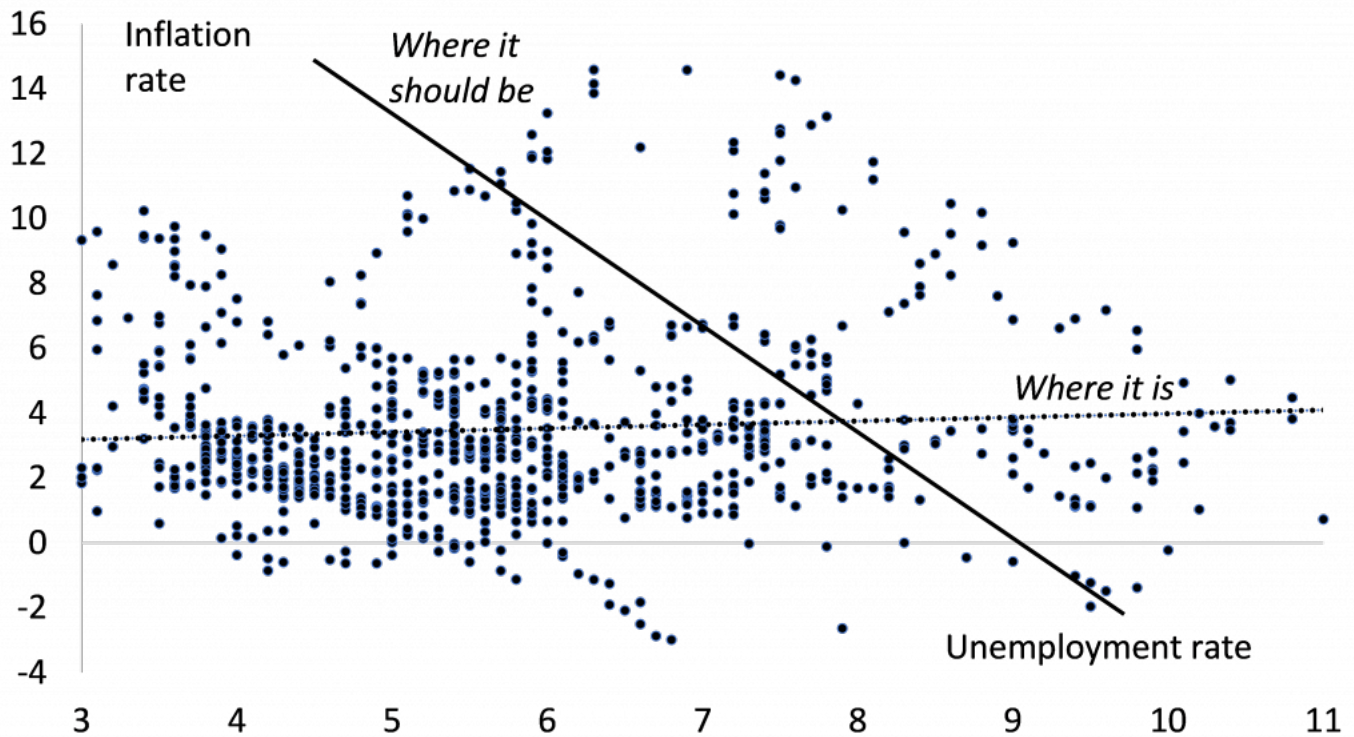
even then, wage rises do not cause wage price spirals – thus Marx’s view is confirmed.

And if you want immediate proof of this, take [this week’s wage settlement](#) between German manufacturing employers and IG Metall union, Germany’s biggest. Workers will get pay rises well below Germany’s inflation rate, currently at a 70-year high of 11.6%, receiving 5.2% next year and 3.3% in 2024, plus two €1,500 lump sum payments. Jörg Krämer, chief economist at Commerzbank, said unions and employers had “*found a compromise on how to deal with the income losses caused by the sharp rise in the costs of energy imports.*” He added: “*I would not yet call this a wage-price spiral.*” Indeed not, as even the best-organized workers in Germany will have to accept reductions in their purchasing power over the next two years.

The IMF analysis only confirms plenty of other empirical work previously done. Indeed, wages as a share of GDP in all the major economies have been falling since the 1980s. Instead, profit share has risen. And over the period until 2019, inflation rates remained no more than 2-3% a year.

Also, there appears to be no inverse correlation between changes in wages, prices, and unemployment – this classic Keynesian Phillips curve that claimed this relation has been shown to be false. Indeed, this was noted in the 1970s when unemployment and prices rose together. And the latest empirical estimates show the Phillips curve to be broadly flat – in other words, there is no correlation between wages, prices, and unemployment. No wage-price spiral.

Phillips curve: US unemployment rate and CPI inflation rate
(%)



Despite this evidence refuting the wage-price spiral, mainstream economics and the official authorities continue to claim that this is the key risk to sustained inflation. The reason for doing so is not really because the economic prize-fighters for capitalism believe that wage rises cause inflation. It is because they want 'wage restraint' in the face of spiraling inflation in order to protect and sustain profits. To this aim, they support central bank interest rate hikes that will accelerate economies into a slump – coming in the next year.

As Jay Powell, head of the U.S. Federal Reserve, put it: *"in principle ..., by moderating demand, we could ... get wages down and then get inflation down without having to slow the economy and have a recession and have unemployment rise materially. So there's a path to that."* Even more blatantly, Keynesian guru and

FT columnist Martin Wolf demanded: *“What [central bankers] have to do is prevent a wage-price spiral, which would destabilize inflation expectations. Monetary policy must be tight enough to achieve this. In other words, it must create/preserve some slack in the labor market.*

So the real aim of interest-rate hikes is not to stop a wage-price spiral but to raise unemployment and weaken the bargaining power of labor. I am reminded of the comment of Alan Budd, then chief economic adviser to British PM Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s: *“There may have been people making the actual policy decisions... who never believed for a moment that this was the correct way to bring down inflation. They did, however, see that [monetarism] would be a very, very good way to raise unemployment, and raising unemployment was an extremely desirable way of reducing the strength of the working classes.”*



Poisons in the World Cup: Qatar is

largest U.S. military base in Middle East

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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The FIFA 2022 World Cup in Qatar hides a tragic reality on which the political-media mainstream has dropped a veil of silence. Above all the fact that this Gulf emirate has been chosen by FIFA to organize the 2022 World Cup. FIFA, the International Football Federation, is deeply corrupt, to the point that its top administrators have been arrested for fraud, racketeering, and money laundering. No wonder FIFA, while choosing Qatar, kicked Russia out of the World Cup. The 2022 World Cup is the most expensive in history: Qatar spent \$220 billion (compared to the \$4 billion spent by Germany to organize the 2006 World Cup).

Qatar — an emirate of 3 million people, 95% of whose labor force is made up of 2 million immigrants — used immigrant workers recruited from Nepal, Bangladesh, and other Asian countries to build the stadiums and infrastructure for the World Cup. Lured by false promises, once in Qatar, they were subjected to slave-like exploitation. Their passports were sequestered to prevent them from leaving the country. They have been forced to work massively long hours, in dangerous

conditions, with temperatures of 40-50 degrees, for wages much lower than those promised. They have been forced to live in slums with disastrous hygiene conditions. There is evidence that about 15,000 of them died, their deaths being officially attributed to “natural causes.” The families were therefore denied any compensation.

All this is ignored by the “international community” because Qatar, a country that violates the most basic human rights, has been named by President Biden as “America’s greatest Non-NATO ally.” The Al Udeid airbase in Qatar is the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East. It is home to, among other things, strategic nuclear attack bombers. Italy, which has sent more than 600 military personnel to guard the stadiums where the World Cup is being held, has important military agreements with Qatar, to which it supplies helicopter gunships and other weapons.

Source: Italian TV channel [Byoblu](#)



SAVE THE DATE: People speak out to stop racism, poverty & World War III

written by Melinda Butterfield
December 2, 2022

PEOPLE SPEAK OUT to STOP RACISM, POVERTY & WORLD WAR III



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- John Parker, Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, Socialist Unity Party & CA U.S. Senate candidate who traveled to Donbass;
- Margaret Kimberly, Executive Editor Black Agenda Report;
- David Clennon, actor & activist;
- Melinda Butterfield, Struggle La Lucha, co-editor, author of U.S. Proxy War in Ukraine and Donbass;
- Berta Joubert, Women In Struggle;
- Ellie McCrow, Pratt Workers United organizing committee (partial list)

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on the people of Russia, Donbass, China, Cuba, Haiti, Zimbabwe, Palestine, Philippines, Venezuela, Iran, Puerto Rico

STOP FUNDING white supremacy from Ukraine to the U.S.

SHUT DOWN NATO, the Pentagon & the CIA

STOP racism, transphobia, union busting, and attacks on women's rights, LGBTQ people and immigrants

SAVE THE DATE: People Speak Out to Stop Racism, Poverty & World War III

Friday, January 13, 2023 - 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Location TBA, New York City

IN HONOR OF DR. KING'S LEGACY: We need jobs, housing, food and healthcare — not war!

NO WAR & SANCTIONS on the people of Russia, Donbass, China, Cuba, Haiti, Zimbabwe, Palestine, Philippines, Venezuela, Iran, Puerto Rico

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SPEAKERS (list in formation):

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For info or to sign on, email info@struggle-la-lucha.org or text 410-218-4836



As railroad workers fight for dignity and sick leave: Stop government strikebreaking!

written by Melinda Butterfield

December 2, 2022

Every worker has the right to withhold their labor. Concerted action and collective bargaining by workers are supposed to be protected by law.

That hasn't stopped President Biden from demanding on Nov. 28 that Congress stop over 100,000 railroad workers from striking.

The man in the White House said he was "reluctant to override the ratification procedures and the views of those who voted against the agreement." [Yet Biden insisted](#) that Congress enforce a tentative deal "without any modifications or delay."

The House of Representatives [promptly voted on Nov. 30](#) to impose an agreement by a vote of 290 to 137. The Senate agreed and Biden signed the bill forcing the contract on railroad workers without their consent on Dec. 2. So much for the democratic right of railroad workers to vote on their contracts.

This is the thanks the labor movement gets for helping to stop the expected Republican landslide in the midterm elections. Forgotten were the volunteers dispatched from Black churches and union halls.

Railroad workers have been under attack for decades. Employment has fallen from [1.5 million workers in 1947](#) to [just 147,000 today](#).

This 90% drop in employment was the reason that Warren Buffett told Bloomberg Businessweek that he had his Berkshire Hathaway conglomerate gobble up the BNSF railway.

BNSF has 32,000 miles of track in 28 states as well as British Columbia and Manitoba in Canada. Yet there are only 35,000 workers that make the system's trains operate from Chicago, Alabama and Texas to California and the Pacific Northwest.

It was the BNSF that imposed a harsh new attendance policy earlier this year. Workers will be punished for being absent no matter what the reason, including going to a doctor.

Railroad management imposed these rules during the COVID-19 pandemic that killed so many transportation workers. At least 156 [New York City area transit workers](#) died of the coronavirus.

As noted in a [statement from the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division-International Brotherhood of Teamsters](#), “the railroad is not a place to work while you’re sick. It’s dangerous. It requires full concentration, situational awareness, and decision-making.”

BNSF employees can be fired for taking off just five holidays during their entire decades-long career. People get sick on holidays, too.

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

Job cuts kill

Railroad tycoon Warren Buffett doesn’t have to worry about sick days. His fortune has [ballooned to \\$109.2 billion](#) while over a million people in the U.S. have died from the coronavirus.

As Willie Adams, International President of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), pointed out, “Warren Buffett can afford to pay wages for railroad workers who get sick and need to stay home or see a doctor.”

Under collective bargaining, BNSF’s drastic change in attendance policy was supposed to be subject to negotiation, not imposed by management.

A union grievance – which on railroads is called a time card – would describe it as being “arbitrary and capricious.” Yet the Trump-appointed [Federal Judge Mark Pittman ruled](#) that workers couldn’t strike over this issue.

It's the labor movement that fights for safety on the job. Back in 1909, one in nine train workers were injured, while one in 205 were killed annually on U.S. railroads.

The response of the old Interstate Commerce Commission - abolished in 1996 in the name of deregulation - was to stop collecting these embarrassing statistics. ("The Economic History of the United States" by Ernest Bogart)

For decades the Association of American Railroads attacked safety rules, claiming workers were being coddled. The AAR bosses called these absolutely necessary regulations "feather bedding."

Crew sizes were cut in both the U.S. and Canada. An inevitable result was 47 people killed in the 2013 train wreck in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. A lone engineer was the only crew member on a long train of oil tank cars.

Shooting strikers

What made these job cuts more heartbreaking was that Black and women workers were finally being hired in many railroad jobs.

This took decades of struggle. Charles Hamilton Houston, who mentored Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, repeatedly went to the U.S. Supreme Court to fight discrimination on the railroads.

Philip Randolph, the leader of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, helped organize the great 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech there.

One of the March on Washington's ten demands was a \$2 per hour minimum wage. [That's worth \\$19.41](#) per hour today.

Biden's attack on rail labor comes a century after railroaders employed in shops and

roundhouses revolted against a 12% wage cut. Nearly 400,000 workers walked off the job on July 1, 1922.

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

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

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

Railroad strikers, led by the future socialist leader Eugene V. Debs, were killed by General Nelson Miles in 1894. This war criminal had Geronimo captured and later seized Puerto Rico as a U.S. colony in 1898.

In 1991, George H.W. Bush was woken in the White House to sign a bill ordering railroad employees back to work.

Fighting for all workers

Today railroad workers are again fighting for justice. Their simple demand for more sick days is being denied. So is their right to spend more time with their families.

Billionaires and banksters are lined up against railroad workers. One of the most hypocritical claims of the wealthy and powerful is that a rail strike will endanger clean water by disrupting shipments of chemicals to purify it.

This is the same ruling class that poisoned the children of Flint, Michigan, with dirty

water. U.S. sanctions preventing the shipment of chlorine to treat water and sewage helped [kill 500,000 children in Iraq](#).

Just six railroad monopolies control 90% of railroad mileage in Canada and the United States. These criminals abandoned at least 50,000 miles of railroad.

Using the speed-up system called “Precision Scheduled Railroading,” [another 61,000 railroad jobs](#) have been eliminated since January 2015.

Meanwhile, these rail outfits [paid \\$196 billion in dividends](#) and stock buy-backs over the last 10 years. That’s far more than the \$136 billion that railroads spent on new equipment and maintaining the right-of-way.

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

Such a struggle will inspire millions like the Black Lives Matter movement did.

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



National Day of Mourning 2022: From Landback to bodily autonomy, Indigenous leadership is key

written by Melinda Butterfield

December 2, 2022

Opening remarks at the 2022 National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on Nov. 24. Since 1970, Indigenous people and their allies have gathered at noon on Cole's Hill to commemorate a National Day of Mourning on the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday. This year more than 2,000 people attended - the largest group ever.

Greetings to everyone here with us today and to everyone listening via our livestream. This crowd is amazing! There are people from lots of different Indigenous Nations, and it gives us strength to be together today. Haitian and Palestinian community, Taino, Black, Asian, South Asian, Latino and white — I love looking out every year and seeing everyone together in solidarity with Indigenous struggles.

People yearn to be in relation with each other and with the earth, and that is what we need in order to address the destructive systems that are hurting so many of us. At the United American Indians of New England (UAIINE), we have long believed that our liberation is intertwined with the liberation of others.

Welcome Deaf community. Thanks to our ASL interpreters and Sunny Singh from hate5six for live streaming. We also send hearts to our kitchen crew, our sound crew and all the artists who worked on restoring some of our banners. Shout-out too to the Starbucks and other workers here who have been fighting hard to unionize their workplaces.

Reminder: COVID, flu and RSV are all around, and we don't want anyone here to get sick. Masks up! Mayflowers down!

We have a lot of positive things happening in our communities, but this "thankstaking day" is a day of mourning. We start out by acknowledging that a lot of people listening today are feeling pain from the violence that their communities are experiencing. In particular, we embrace and are part of the LGBTQ2S and trans communities that are so under attack and are grieving the loss of family at Club Q in Colorado.

Frontlines of climate crisis

Some of our speakers today are Indigenous people whose nations are on the frontlines of the climate crisis, as are Indigenous peoples on multiple continents, suffering from floods, extreme heat, melting, the impact on fish and animals and plants. Land bases are disappearing and traditional cultural practices are being devastated by this.

Despite this happening, climate conferences such as COP27 continue to have way too much useless talk without the necessary commitment and immediate action

required to properly address what is happening, and they continue to largely exclude Indigenous people and voices.

Everywhere, Indigenous peoples are resisting megadams, lithium mines, copper mines, coal mines, gold mines, oil and gas pipelines, fracking and so many other destructive projects. Many Native communities do not have safe drinking water, often due to industrial and military pollution.

So we say today: Hands off our land and water! Stop destroying our planet!

Attacks on ICWA

Right now, many of us Native people in this country – really all of us – are closely watching the attacks on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which is intended to protect Indigenous children from being removed from their communities.

The ICWA appeal in the Supreme Court is backed by energy companies and evangelicals. They are viciously attacking Indigenous sovereignty, our nations and our families in an effort to steal more Indigenous land and return to the days when about a third of Indigenous children were taken away from their homes and tribal communities to be adopted into non-Native families.

Along with concerns about ICWA is the blunt fact that Native children are at least 4 times more likely to be in foster care in the U.S., with those numbers even higher in some areas.

We continue to join with those demanding the identification and return of the remains of thousands of Indigenous children who died at the residential schools and boarding schools sponsored by Canada and the U.S. in order to “kill the Indian” in the child and destroy Indigenous communities. Bring our children home!

So we say today: Hands off our children!

Bodily autonomy and MMIWG2S (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit)

We acknowledge that the current widespread attacks on reproductive rights affect all potential child-bearers. We also point out that a reproductive rights crisis has existed for decades for Indigenous women, long before the overturn of Roe v. Wade.

That crisis includes a lack of support to be able to bear and bring up children with decent food and housing and without having them stolen by settler agencies, the need for free and safe abortions, and we cannot forget the former government practice of sterilizing Indigenous women and girls without consent, something that is still known to happen in Canada.

We point out that violence against Indigenous women, girls and two spirits is rampant, the very highest rates. Our relatives continue to be stolen from us and killed, including right here in Massachusetts.

So we say today: Hands and laws off our bodies!

Museums and other institutions around the country, from Harvard to Berkeley, continue to hold onto our ancestors, by which I mean skeletal remains, skulls, hair, funerary items and more. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act needs to be strengthened, and all of our ancestors returned now. We cannot rest until that happens.

So we say today: Hands off our ancestors!

Solidarity with migrants

Year after year, we stand on this hill and demand an end to the colonial borders, that ICE be abolished, and that Customs and Border Patrol stop detaining undocumented migrants. We think not only of the tribal nations whose homelands have been divided

by the arbitrary settler-colonial border, but also of the many thousands of Indigenous people impacted by the U.S. policies that have led them to flee their home countries, and the Haitian and other relatives who are denied entry or deported by border control.

So we say today: Hands off our relatives!

There are many important struggles happening right now that we don't have time to touch upon. So I ask that you spend some time after today following UAINÉ and other Indigenous-led organizations on social media, and also start reading Indigenous media, to learn more about Indigenous movements here and internationally and what you can do to support them.

Landback

Everywhere, there are calls for Landback and reparations.

Our ancestors always taught us to demand the return of our lands – it is not a new idea. The land and water are in our blood and bones, part of our bodies, and we have never forgotten that.

Ensuring that Indigenous peoples around the world can manage land and water is documented to be much better for the earth. As part of urgently needed FIRST steps to achieve justice and address climate change, let's ensure that no projects can go through any Indigenous nation's land without free, prior and authentic informed consent. It's time to cancel the leases, the pipelines, the mining and the corporate contracts and start over.

Take all of the land that is currently being mismanaged by settler governments, such as the National Parks, and hand it over to Indigenous Nations to caretake that land. That would mean the restoration of millions of acres. It would also mean the end of the desecration of sacred sites such as the Black Hills. Landback needs to happen

internationally.



Leonard Peltier: ‘The world now faces the challenges our people foretold’

written by Melinda Butterfield

December 2, 2022

Statement by Indigenous political prisoner Leonard Peltier for the 2022 National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on Nov. 24.

Greetings my relatives, friends, loved ones and supporters.

First, I want to say how deeply grateful I am that you would want to hear what I have to say.

It is an honor to be with you in spirit, though I am far away. Being my age and having spent these many years in prison plays on your heart to the nth degree. I am

here because I wanted to make a difference for our people, and I want to encourage others to do the same.

My heart has not changed, and my intentions have not changed. The love and faith I have in our future generation has not changed.

All the world now faces the same challenges that our people foretold regarding climate damage being caused by people who take more than they need, dismissing the teachings of our fathers, and the knowledge of countless generations living upon the earth in harmony.

I may sound a bit dramatic and sensitive, but after all these years and the 78 journeys around the sun, I often feel and think that I should speak my mind and heart to whomever I can whenever I can, because at my age, you never know if you are going to live another 20 years or 20 minutes.

Our people have been through a lot; generations have been imprisoned, beaten, murdered, dispossessed of our lands, and they fought so we might live.

We are proud of our ancestors. I have tried to make the best of my time upon the earth, in my given circumstances. To say the least, this has not been an enjoyable life journey, but I am proud to have been given a chance to stand for our people. I encourage you to do the same.

I am not a speaker, but I have spoken; I am not a leader, but I have led. Having said this, knowing what I know now, feeling what I've felt, seeing what I've seen and hearing what I have heard, I would do it all over again. For as our ancestors loved a future for us, I love all people who have walked upon this earth. I recognize her as the greatest manifestation of the Creator, and she should be recognized as such.

On this day of mourning, I encourage you, with a hopeful heart, to continue to gather and have a ceremony in remembrance of all our people, especially those who

have given their lives so that we might live.

Each of you has within you the potential to make a difference in the world. Each one of you has the opportunity and ability to do one act of kindness to someone in need and one act to make the earth a better place for all life.

I, with the help of others, have started a Food Forest Movement. We encourage all people throughout the earth to plant at least one fruit bearing tree, so that the animals and all creatures of the earth will have healthier food, better air and cleaner water.

Forgive me if I have said too much or too little. Time in this place is often irrelevant to the task at hand. May the Creator bless you, your families and all our peoples of like mind.

Peace, love and blessings,

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,

Doksha,

Leonard Peltier

Mitakuye Oyasin (We are all related)

For more information on Leonard Peltier's case, and to sign a petition demanding clemency from President Joe Biden, visit [WhoIsLeonardPeltier.info](https://www.whoisleonardpeltier.info).



Indigenous people persevere, resist myth of Thanksgiving

written by Melinda Butterfield

December 2, 2022

Remarks given at the 2022 National Day of Mourning on Nov. 24 in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Since 1970, Indigenous people and their allies have gathered at noon on Cole's Hill to commemorate a National Day of Mourning on the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday. This year more than 2,000 people attended – the largest group ever.

Good afternoon sisters, brothers, and siblings!

Once again on so-called “Thanksgiving Day,” United American Indians of New England and our supporters are gathered on this hill to observe a National Day of Mourning for the Indigenous people murdered by settler colonialism and imperialism worldwide. Today marks the 53rd time we have gathered here to mourn our ancestors, tear down settler mythologies, and speak truth to power.

Today I want to tell you a story – the story of National Day of Mourning. Fifty-two Thanksgivings ago, my grandfather, an Aquinnah Wampanoag man named Wamsutta Frank James, was invited by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to speak at a banquet celebrating the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrims.

The organizers of the banquet no doubt imagined that Wamsutta would sing the praises of the American settler-colonial project and thank the Pilgrims for bringing “civilization” to these shores. However, the speech that Wamsutta wrote, which was based on historical fact, rather than the sham version of history perpetuated in the Thanksgiving myth, was a far cry from complimentary.

In his speech, Wamsutta not only named atrocities committed by the Pilgrims, but also reflected upon the fate of the Wampanoag at the hands of the settler invaders. The speech contained a powerful message of Native American pride.

“Our spirit refuses to die,” wrote Wamsutta. “Yesterday we walked the woodland paths and sandy trails. Today we must walk the macadam highways and roads. We are uniting ... We stand tall and proud; and before too many moons pass, we’ll right the wrongs we have allowed to happen to us.”

When state officials saw an advance copy of Wamsutta’s speech, they refused to allow him to deliver it, saying that the speech was too “inflammatory.” They told him he could speak only if he were willing to offer false praise of the Pilgrims. The organizers even offered to write a speech for him, one which would better fit with their settler-colonialist narrative.

But Wamsutta refused to have words put into his mouth. His suppressed speech was printed in newspapers across the country, and he and other local Native activists began to plan a protest. The flier for this protest, which was circulated nationwide, read, “What do we have to be thankful for? The United American Indians of New England have declared Thanksgiving Day to be a National Day of Mourning for

Native Americans.”

The first NDOM

On so-called Thanksgiving Day, 1970, Wamsutta and members of at least 25 tribes, as well as a sprinkling of non-Native allies, gathered here on this hill, and observed the first National Day of Mourning. That first year, my grandfather never got a chance to deliver his suppressed speech – although some who don’t actually know our history say he did.

Up to 200 Native people and allies gathered on that day. They spoke out about the Pilgrim invasion and conditions in Indian Country, marched around Plymouth, boarded the Mayflower II, and even buried Plymouth Rock!

One leader of the American Indian Movement would later say of the first National Day of Mourning that it “is a day American Indians won’t forget. We went to Plymouth for a purpose: to mourn since the landing of the Pilgrims the repression of the American Indian; and to indict the hypocrisy of a system which glorifies that repression.”

The founders of National Day of Mourning could not have foreseen that generations would continue to gather here, year after year, carrying on this tradition. Nearly all of the elders who stood on this hill and organized that first National Day of Mourning are no longer with us, but we feel their spirits guiding us today. We are also thinking today of so many, especially those we have lost during the ongoing pandemic, and we mourn their loss.

Over the years we repeatedly disrupted the Pilgrim Progress parade, a tradition we continued until 1996. The following year, in 1997, we were blocked on Leyden Street, brutalized by police, and arrested without warning for simply trying to march peacefully. The resulting court case and settlement led to the National Day of

Mourning plaque you see here on Cole's Hill, and the Metacomet plaque we will visit when we march.

Consistently, our organization has never collaborated with the Pilgrims or their institutions, whether the Mayflower Society, the Plymouth 400 international colonizer celebrations, or Thanksgiving parades.

Exposing Thanksgiving myth

So - why do so many Native people object to the Thanksgiving myth?

According to this myth, the Pilgrims, seeking religious freedom, landed on Plymouth Rock. The Indians welcomed them with open arms, and then conveniently faded into the background and everyone lived happily ever after. The end.

Here is the truth:

First, the pilgrims are glorified and mythologized because the circumstances of the first permanent English colony in North America - Jamestown - were too ugly to hold up as an effective national myth. Pilgrims and Indians are a much more marketable story than settler cannibalism.

Second, the Pilgrims came here as part of a commercial venture. They didn't need religious freedom - they already had that back in the Netherlands. The Mayflower Compact was merely a group of white men who wanted to ensure they would get a return on their investment.

Third, when the Pilgrims arrived - on outer Cape Cod, by the way, not on that pebble down the hill - one of the first things they did was to rob Wampanoag graves at Corn Hill and steal as much of their winter provisions of corn and beans as they were able to carry.

Fourth, some Wampanoag ancestors did welcome the Pilgrims and save them from starvation. And what did we, the Indigenous people of this continent, get in return for this kindness? Genocide, the theft of our lands, the destruction of our traditional ways of life, slavery, starvation, and never-ending oppression.

Fifth, the first official Thanksgiving did not take place in 1621 when the Pilgrims had a harvest-time meal provided largely by the Wampanoag. Instead, the first Thanksgiving was declared in 1637 by Governor Winthrop of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to celebrate the massacre of over 700 Pequot men, women and children on the banks of the Mystic River in Connecticut.

William Bradford of the Plymouth colony wrote of this event: “Those that escaped the fire were slain with the sword; some hewed to pieces ... they thus destroyed about 400 at this time. It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire ... horrible was the stink and scent thereof, but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the prayers thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them.”

Subsequent slaughters of Indigenous people would be celebrated by a day of Thanksgiving. And yet we are labeled as “savages” in the history books.

So why does any of this matter? It is simple: When people perpetuate the myth of Thanksgiving, they are not only erasing our genocide, but also celebrating it.

The struggle continues!

We did not simply fade into the background as the Thanksgiving myth says. We have survived and flourished. We have persevered. The very fact that you are here is proof that we did not vanish. Our very presence frees this land from the lies of the history books and the mythmakers.

We will remember and honor all of our ancestors in the struggle who went before us.

We will speak truth to power as we have been doing since the first Day of Mourning in 1970.

That first Day of Mourning in 1970 was a powerful demonstration of Native unity and it has continued for all these years as a powerful demonstration of Indigenous unity and of the unity of all people who speak truth to power.

Many of the conditions that prevailed in Indian Country in 1970 still prevail today. In 1970, our average life expectancy was just 44 years. Today, we continue to have the lowest life expectancy of any group in the U.S., and the death rate for Native women has increased 20% over the past 15 years. In 1970, our suicide and infant mortality rates were the highest in the country. This has not changed.

We all know that racism is alive and well. All of us are struggling under the oppression of a capitalist system which forces people to make a bitter choice between heating and eating. And we will continue to gather on this hill until we are free from this oppressive system. Until corporations and the U.S. military stop polluting the earth. Until we dismantle the brutal apparatus of mass incarceration.

We will not stop until the oppression of our LGBTQ siblings is a thing of the past. Until unhoused people have homes. Until human beings are no longer locked in cages at the U.S. border, despite the fact that no one is illegal on stolen land. Until Palestine is free. Until no person goes hungry or is left to die because they have little or no access to quality health care. Until insulin is free. Until union busting is a thing of the past. Until then, the struggle will continue!

We are not conquered

In 1970, we demanded an end to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It is still a demand today. Native nations do not need federal oversight to govern ourselves or take care of our own lands.

As we did in 1970, we mourn the loss of millions of our ancestors and the devastation of the land, water and air. We condemn all acts of violence and terrorism perpetrated by all governments and against innocent people worldwide. This includes the myriad crimes of the United States government.

Since the invasion of Columbus, Indigenous people have been terrorized by settler governments. From the colonial period to the 21st century, this has entailed torture, massacres, systematic military occupations, and the forced removals of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral homelands.

Let us not forget that this country was founded on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft. Let us not forget that under the pipelines, skyscrapers, mines and the oil rigs, lie the interred bones, sacred objects and villages of our Native ancestors.

Today, on liberated territory, we will correct the history of a country that continues to glorify murderers such as Christopher Columbus, that makes slave-owning presidents such as Washington and Jefferson into god-like figures, and even carves their faces into the sacred Black Hills of the Lakota.

In 1970 very few people would have given any thought to the fact that the Indigenous people of this hemisphere do not look upon the arrival of the European invaders as a reason to give thanks. Today, many thousands stand with us in spirit as we commemorate the 2022 National Day of Mourning.

As my grandfather said back in 1970, “We are now being heard; we are now being listened to. The important point is that ... we still have the spirit, we still have the unique culture, we still have the will and, most important of all, the determination to remain as Indians. We are determined, and our presence here ... is living testimony that this is only the beginning of the American Indian, particularly the Wampanoag, to regain the position in this country that is rightfully ours.”

In the spirit of Crazy Horse, in the spirit of Metacom, in the spirit of Geronimo.
Above all, to all people who fight and struggle for real justice.

We are not vanishing. We are not conquered. We are as strong as ever.



Crocodile tears for Ukraine as millions of U.S. families suffer utility shutoffs

written by Melinda Butterfield

December 2, 2022

“Kyiv Readies for Brutal, Cold, Dark Winter” is a typical headline in the capitalist media these days. The Nov. 21 Associated Press article—[reprinted by Voice of America](#), the official U.S. propaganda outlet—tells of electrical outages caused by Russian missile strikes.

Other headlines include “A Capital Draped in Darkness” in the [New York Times](#) and “Missile Strikes Leave Kyiv in the Dark” in the [Atlantic Magazine](#).

What about the millions of U.S. families facing electric and gas shutoffs by the profit-mad utility monopolies? [Twenty million households](#) are behind on their electric bills.

Just in 2020 and 2021, households had their power shut off 3.6 million times. Each of these shutoffs caused misery for millions of children and their parents.

The actual figure of utility shutoffs is higher. Only 33 states and the District of Columbia [require utilities to report disconnections](#).

Many seniors and disabled people have to juggle to pay their rent, food and prescription medicines. Morgan Magda, who lives in Girard, Ohio, had her gas cut off.

Her sole source of income is Social Security disability benefits. Millions of workers become disabled because capitalists speed up work to make more profits. Carpal tunnel syndrome can strike workers at both computer keyboards and assembly lines.

"I'm disabled and have had to live without hot water, a stove to cook on, and now heat. It's been so hard," [said Magda](#).

Utility shutoffs can also become a death sentence. A May 15, 1982, fire in Baltimore killed 10 people, including seven children. The fire was caused by a candle the family was forced to use after their electricity was shut off.

The family owed just \$808 on their electric bill to Baltimore Gas and Electric, now part of the Exelon Corporation. That works out to \$80.80 for every person killed.

[A dozen years later](#), two adults and seven children died in another Baltimore fire on Feb. 26, 1994. Once again, an overturned candle started the inferno after their electricity was shut off.

Stop the shutoffs!

Last year it was estimated that U.S. households owed [\\$32 billion in unpaid utility bills](#). President Biden is doing practically nothing to help the millions of families facing life-threatening utility shutoffs.

Yet Biden and Congress have spent \$68 billion so far on the war in Ukraine. The White House has just asked Congress for [another \\$37.7 billion](#).

This \$105.7 billion total is three times what could pay all the unpaid utility bills.

Capitalists aren't spending this money—all of it stolen from poor and working people—because they want to help Ukrainians.

Human life is cheap to the wealthy and powerful. For the executives at Baltimore Gas and Electric, each child killed in that May 15, 1982, fire was worth just \$80.80.

Black grandmother Eleanor Bumpers was killed on Oct. 29, 1984, by a New York City cop because she owed \$394 in back rent.

To save a mere \$5 million a year, Flint, Michigan, [stopped pumping clean water](#) from Lake Huron and instead used water from the Flint River, a virtual sewer. Flint's children were poisoned while thousands face water shutoffs in Detroit and other cities.

Stop NATO's war!

Wall Street and European banks are turning Ukraine into their colony. Foreign capitalists are taking over the country's fertile farmland. [A 2021 law](#) is making this theft easier.

The Russian Federation is now targeting Ukraine's electrical infrastructure in an attempt to disrupt the massive deliveries of weapons from the U.S. and NATO. The

[stock price of Lockheed Martin](#), one of the biggest U.S. war contractors, has gone up \$100 per share since the conflict started.

Russian forces are not carpet-bombing cities like the U.S. did to Baghdad. They're not dropping napalm to burn children alive like the Pentagon did in Korea, Laos and Vietnam.

The capitalist media sheds phony tears for Ukrainians but it says nothing about the over 14,000 people that were killed by the Kyiv regime's war on Donbass since 2014.

Why can't the White House loosen the economic blockade of Cuba while the socialist country is rebuilding the parts of its electrical grid that were wrecked by Hurricane Ian?

The Russian Federation is fighting the NATO alliance of big imperialist states. NATO uses a puppet Ukrainian regime that rests upon fascist militias like the Right Sector and Azov Battalion, as well as thousands of foreign mercenaries.

For the brass hats in the Pentagon, the conflict in Ukraine is just the first step of a war to take over the 6.4 million square miles of the Russian Federation.

The working class and all oppressed people need NATO and the U.S. to get out of Ukraine. We need to take over the greedy utilities to guarantee electricity, gas and water for all.



Moscow: United Communist Party activists attend opening of monument to Fidel Castro

written by Melinda Butterfield
December 2, 2022

In Moscow, on Nov. 22, 2022, on Fidel Castro Square, the grand opening of the monument to the great commander and leader of the Cuban Revolution took place.

Following Cuban President and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba Miguel Diaz-Canel, the communists of the OKP together with representatives of allied left organizations laid flowers at the open monument.



Translated by Melinda Butterfield

[Source: United Communist Party](#)

