

‘Occupation is a crime’: Hundreds in New Orleans march against Trump-Landry threats

written by Gregory E. Williams
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New Orleans, Sept. 9 – people hit the streets to say no to Trump and Landry’s

military occupation. SLL photo: Gregory E. Williams

On Sept. 9, hundreds marched in downtown New Orleans. They were protesting both Trump's threat to occupy the majority-Black city with federal troops and Gov. Jeff Landry's ongoing deployment of state police in our streets, despite declining crime rates.

These two rich crooks are in on it together. Landry - who the Louisiana Board of Ethics recently charged with using \$13,540 in government funds for free travel - knows no bounds in how low he will go to suck up to Trump. So, of course, he welcomes Trump's plans for New Orleans. (The crowd who usually talk about "state's rights" and "federal overreach" have been pretty quiet on all this.)

The New Orleans Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression initiated Tuesday's action, which began with a rally outside the Federal Building on Poydras Street. Other participating groups included the Palestinian Youth Movement, the Louisiana Workers Councils, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, and the immigrant worker organization Unión Migrante.

'From New Orleans to Palestine, occupation is a crime!'

Speakers emphasized the need for solidarity with the people of Los Angeles, D.C., Chicago, and other cities being attacked by Trump and ICE, as well as the connection between the repression inside U.S. borders and what this government and its Israeli proxies are doing in Palestine.

And we know that none of that repression does anything to address the real crisis of the working class with food costs, access to housing and medical care - quite the opposite. Every dollar spent brutalizing people is a dollar that could put food on a child's plate or help to keep a rural hospital open.

Racist roots go deep

At the rally, Adam with the Alliance Against Racist and Police Repression talked about the deep historic roots of the racist repression we are seeing here. From slavery to Jim Crow, to the mass incarceration of Black people, to immigrant crackdowns, it is all connected.

In recent years, Louisiana has become a hub for immigrant detention, and now Trump and Landry are opening up a new immigrant detention facility at Angola (Louisiana State Penitentiary) – the biggest maximum-security prison in the country.

The land where Angola now stands was used for slave plantations, and the prison today is still a working farm. Around 76% of the inmates are Black. Chain gangs still labor in the fields with overseers on horseback.

Legal proceedings against Angola are ongoing because of the deplorable conditions on the farm line. Last year, a judge issued an emergency injunction to stop work on the hottest days of summer. The plaintiffs are incarcerated workers on Angola's farm line, teamed up with the advocacy group Voice of the Experienced (VOTE). Judges have since found that the prison authorities are not fully complying, and the injunction was renewed on Sept. 10, 2025.

A speaker with Critical Mass New Orleans, which conducts monthly bicycle rides to promote cyclists' rights, quoted Malcolm X's 1964 line, "You can't have capitalism without racism." And today we are seeing them turn to old racist tricks (which never went away) to prop up a rotten capitalist system.

'Labor stands with you!'

Working-class unity is the only response that can stop the attacks on all of us, as speaker Mike Robichaux explained. He spoke on behalf of National Nurses United, the union leading the struggle against the LCMC Health System bosses who

understaff and underpay their nurses. He said:

“We need solidarity with our trans siblings, with our Black and Brown brothers and sisters! With our immigrant brothers and sisters who are being disappeared, taken away from their families and children! It is unconscionable, it is wrong, and the only thing that is gonna stop it is us out here on the streets demanding more.

“Every time someone honks, I want you to say, ‘get out of your car and get on the street!’ We need more people on the streets all the time, pounding the drums for justice, for a society that lifts people up instead of smacking them down.

“We are here as labor to stand in solidarity with all of you. There have been moments in our history when we have been here before, and a unified labor movement has been the thing that has helped pull us through. We have got work to do to get there. But I believe in my heart of hearts that if we get unified, our movements – labor, immigrant rights, Black and Brown justice, trans organizations – we have to unify – that’s the only way we’re gonna get out of this fix that we’re in.

“I stand with you. The nurses stand with you. Labor stands with you!”

