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Workers at Target attacked by far-right The anti-LGBTQ+ bigots are anti-worker

NEWSFLASH

By Gregory E. Williams

The far right's agitation around corporate brands is not limited to boycotts and outlandish social media posts. They are harassing and threatening retail workers in person. When Target pulled back Pride merchandise in response to the far right's bullying tactics – likely emboldening these neo-fascists – it was in the aftermath of real disturbances that occurred in stores.

The Washington Post describes multiple incidents at one Target location in South Florida, where workers have been confronted by bigots calling them "groomers." At this same location, a manager wearing a safety vest over a Pride shirt was told by a customer, "Oh, is that so I could shoot you easier?"

Part of a broad trend

Retail workers are no strangers to customer attacks, which rose during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNI Global Union, an international service workers' union federation, released a 2022 report with data from 20 countries

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Solidarity and defiance at Trans Pride March. See page 3.

SLL photo: Melinda Butterfield

LGBTQ+ delegation meets with Federation of Cuban Women

ILWU to celebrate Juneteenth with a shutdown

By Lallan Schoenstein

Seattle port bosses fired the International Longshore and Warehouse union (ILWU) Local 52 workers on the June 2 night shift and again on the morning shift, says Gabriel Prawl, a longshore worker and a leading member of the Million Worker March Movement as well as the president of the Seattle A. Philip Randolph Institute.

The firings are the latest outrage taken by West Coast port terminal operators against over 22,000 longshore workers at 29 ports fighting to get a decent union contract. Prawl says, "It's time for the rank and file to speak up and make their voices heard."

In San Francisco, militant ILWU Local 10 rank and filers voluntarily stopped picking up jobs during dispatch on June 2, 3, and 4. CNBC reported that port shutdowns were expected to spread up and down the West Coast as workers protest over negotiations in contract talks with port management.

ILWU members have been working without a contract for a year. The Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) represents over 70 multinational ocean carriers and maritime companies with whom the ILWU negotiates a contract.

Many ILWU locals are following the call by Locals 10 and 52 to shut down all West Coast ports on June 19 — Juneteenth, the day in 1865 when news about the emancipation from slavery finally reached the last workers in Texas. Prawl added, "It is a day for workers to protest conditions rising out of slavery that are currently getting worse — homelessness, child labor, hunger. ... The ILWU needs to

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Juneteenth

EMANCIPATION DAY

GUEST SPEAKERS & MUSIC ON THE WATERFRONT
COME JOIN THE WEST COAST STOP-WORK ACTION TO COMMEMORATE JUNETEENTH

MARCH & RALLY

MONDAY JUNE 19 2023

ILWU LOCAL 19 HALL @ 10 AM TO TERMINAL 46 MAIN TRUCK ENTRANCE (ALASKAN WAY S. & ATLANTIC ST) 11AM -1PM

for more information go to APRISEATTLE.ORG **CLUBDEFY**

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celebrate Juneteenth with a shutdown to show the PMA that they are a strong and angry workforce."

Port bosses made historic profits

There is plenty to be angry about. According to a June 2 ILWU press release, "PMA member carriers and terminal operators made historic profits of \$510 billion during the pandemic. In some cases, profits jumped nearly 1000%. Even as shipping volumes return to normal in 2023, PMA members have continued to post revenues that far exceed pre-pandemic times by billions of dollars.

"ILWU workers risked and lost their lives during the pandemic to ensure grocery store shelves were stocked, PPE was made available, essential medical supplies were reaching our hospitals." Record volumes of goods were moved, enabling the shipping industries' astronomical revenues. "Despite this fact, from pre-pandemic levels through 2022, the percentage of ILWU wages and benefits continued to drop compared to PMA rising revenues."

According to ILWU International President Willie Adams, "West Coast

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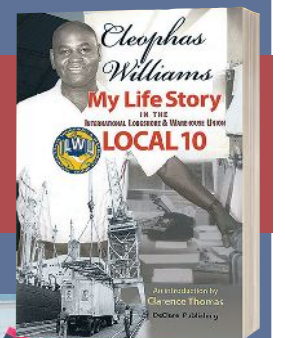


SLL photo: Melinda Butterfield

'Pride on the picket line'

BOOK REVIEW

► Cleophas Williams



In honor of Malcolm X

- Reparations must be paid!
- Nakba protest at 'Israel parade'
- War criminal Kissinger
- South Korean prisoners of conscience
- Ukraine dam weaponized

CLEOPHAS WILLIAMS: My Life Story in the ILWU Local 10

A BOOK REVIEW

By Gloria Verdieu

When I received this beautiful book from Delores Lemon-Thomas and Clarence Thomas, I could not wait to begin reading it.

I had the honor of meeting and talking with Sadie Williams, wife of Cleophas Williams, on two occasions. Once in Oakland at her home at the Cleophas Williams Rose Garden dedication shortly after the book “Mobilizing in Our Own Name: Million Worker March” was published and again about a year later at the ILWU Pacific Coast Pensioners Association convention in Long Beach, Calif.

Each time she was surrounded by ILWU Local 10 members engaging and embracing her presence with love and respect. I was surprised when I went to introduce myself in Long Beach, and she said, “I remember you,” and opened her arms for a hug.

In Long Beach, Delores let me glimpse some of the scanned pages of Cleophas Williams’ handwritten journal. I held it in my hand and immediately began to read it. Delores left the journal with me for a little while.

As I examined it, I was impressed with his handwriting or, more formally, his penmanship. There are a few samples of his handwriting in the book, one on page 52 at the beginning of Chapter 2, “A Longshore Worker’s Life Story.”

Delores told me about Clarence’s intention of editing and publishing Cleophas Williams’ story. The pages would have to be scanned, which required them to keep the original transcript for a while. It was hard for Mrs. Sadie Williams to part with it, even for a short time, but she could rest assured that it was in good hands. This journal is a treasure that will be valued for generations to come.

I read through the book quickly the first time and reread it, reflecting on my own life and making connections. I was also brought up in the South, and one of the many things that res-

onated with me was when Williams wrote about the Booker T. Washington High School that he and his sister attended. The school was “built by the Julius Rosenwald Fund, which builds schools for Black Students throughout the South where there were no Black schools.”

The segregated school my eight siblings and I attended, Carver School, named after George Washington Carver, was built in 1915 using the same fund. It was renamed Carver-Hill School in 1955 after Reverend Edward Hill, who fought for well-funded schools for Black students.

There is much to be learned from this biography; the history of how Cleophas Williams was elected by popular vote the first African American president of ILWU Local 10, the most militant, progressive union in the United States, if not the world.

In the book, Cleophas explains that he was discharged from the army due to a knee injury after serving three months and 19 days. He heard a fellow “telling a barber that he was a Longshoreman; pay was good, and it had peacetime possibilities.” So he applied, followed the steps needed, and was hired with no idea that, in his words, “I was about to embark on a journey that not only brought me employment, but a place in the sun that I would have never dreamed of.”

Williams knew nothing about the ILWU when he was hired, but he was a fast learner and followed all the rules. After the 6-month probationary period, he was promoted to full union membership. Williams worked as a rank-and-file worker for 15 years, working out of the hall, attending union meetings, enrolling in the California Labor School, and just continuing to learn before deciding to run for president of ILWU.

Williams acknowledged the shoulders of those ancestors who paved the way and those that gave him much-needed support; apologized to people he hurt along the way. He took

responsibility for his mistakes, not blaming his parents or the tragic experiences of growing up in the “Jim Crow” South.

Williams was a courageous working-class organizer, a fighter for social justice and the rights of workers nationally and internationally. He believed the struggle for social justice, equality, and dignity was a workers’ struggle.

I highly recommend employed, unemployed, organized, and unorganized workers read Cleophas Williams’ “My Life Story in the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10.”



Gloria Verdieu with Sadie Williams.

Photo: DeClare Publishing

ILWU to celebrate Juneteenth with a shutdown

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dockworkers kept the economy going during the pandemic and lost their lives doing so. We aren’t going to settle for an economic package that doesn’t recognize the heroic efforts and personal sacrifices of the ILWU workforce that lifted the shipping industry to record profits.”

ILWU Local 13 reported: “Despite the enormous profit and record-breaking cargo volumes that the labor force moved through Southern California ports, ocean carriers, and terminal operators have thumbed their noses at the workforce’s basic requests, intimidating that the health risks and loss of lives these working people endured during the pandemic did not matter to them and they were expendable in the name of profits.

Local 10 in front lines during pandemic

Clarence Thomas, a retired third-generation member of ILWU Local 10 in San Francisco, said he had been involved in lockouts and witnessed the port bosses’ ruthless disregard for the longshore workers.

Thomas said, “Local 10, with predominantly African American membership, was in the front lines fighting for safe working conditions and protective gear during the pandemic. The Princess cruise ship whose passengers were infected with COVID docked in the Port of Oakland and the crew was stranded on the ship. Local 10 took action not only to protect themselves and their families. They organized a response to protect all the communities in the Bay area.”

Thomas continued, “It is remarkable to see young workers far removed from the Civil Rights Movement and heroic battles on the waterfront led by longshore leaders like Harry Bridges and Henry Schmidt, those who led the 1934 General Strike in San Francisco, young workers who understand that legacy. Longshore workers’ power

rests in their job at the point of production. If they don’t unload the ships, the bosses can’t make a profit.

The commitment of the union to protect the workers’ families is evidenced by Thomas’ mother, Charlene Thomas, who is 94 years old, and Sadie Williams, 99 years old, the spouse of Cleophas Williams, the first Black president of Local 10. Both of them enjoy all of the benefits won by the ILWU.

Gabriel Prawl says, “Longshore workers on the whole coast have been working above and beyond the requirements of their jobs thereby violating their own safety rules to keep the supply chain moving.

“Now, with the cost of living rising sharply, the PMA is balking at contract negotiations. Prices for basic items like food and gas are cutting into the workers’ pay determined by the union contract. To make themselves heard, ILWU members are beginning to follow their safety protocols designated for dangerous jobs, ‘working by the book.’”

Working safely antagonizes the carriers and terminal operators. It’s safer, slower and lowers profits.

Commenting on the pro-boss June 1 Supreme Court ruling against the Teamsters in their fight with a Seattle concrete firm, Glacier Northwest v. Teamsters 174, Prawl quoted the single dissenting Justice, Ketanji Brown Jackson, who wrote: “Workers are not indentured servants, bound to continue laboring until any planned work stoppage would be as painless as possible for their master. They are employees whose collective and peaceful decision to withhold their labor is protected by the NLRA even if economic injury results.”

Prawl said, “It is the rank-and-file who needs to fight to defend their labor rights. Just imagine what would happen if workers around the world stopped work for just one day.”

First step:
Stop all work on Juneteenth! 📢

Cleophas Williams My Life Story in ILWU Local 10

The history of African Americans in the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) in San Francisco is indeed worthy of documentation. Such an individual is Cleophas Williams, whose distinguished career as a member of the Local 10 spanned 38 years.

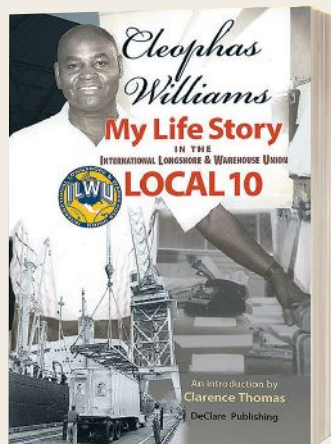
Cleophas Williams’ election as president of ILWU Local 10 in 1967 made him the highest elected African American to serve as an officer in the entire ILWU.

Born in rural Camden, Arkansas, and part of the Great Migration to the Bay Area, he arrived in Oakland, Calif., in 1942 – seeking to escape the horrors and multifaceted structures of systemic racism and white supremacy.

He was amongst the leaders who placed Local 10 into the vanguard of the labor movement by engaging in civil-rights unionism and other social movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

Here is Cleophas Williams’ historic journey – his rise in Local 10 within the greater context of the Black liberation movement.

Cleophas Williams’ story is introduced by Clarence Thomas, a leading African American radical labor and community activist. Williams’ book includes pictures, glossary and index.



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Solidarity and defiance at Trans Pride March

By Melinda Butterfield

Hundreds of transgender people, other members of the LGBTQ+ community, loved ones, and supporters took to the streets on June 3 for the annual Baltimore Trans Pride March. Despite the grave threats to trans people's lives and human rights across the U.S., the mood was both defiant and joyful.

Friends new and old embraced, families came together to support their trans members, and people proudly waved flags and banners. Neighbors and community members of this majority-Black city lined the sidewalks to cheer on the march.

People gathered at 33rd Street near the Baltimore Museum of Art and Johns Hopkins University campus, then marched down Charles Street to North Avenue, where a festival and street party were held. This neighborhood is home to Baltimore Safe Haven, a housing and wellness center for the city's trans community, which sponsors the annual event.



Baltimore

A delegation from Women in Struggle-Mujeres en Lucha, the Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly, and Socialist Unity Party carried banners and distributed hundreds of leaflets for the



SLL photos: Melinda Butterfield (left), Sharon Back (above)

Oct. 7 National March to Protect Trans Youth in Orlando, Florida. Organizers said there was an enthusiastic response to the call to bring the fight for trans rights to the doorstep of ultra-right Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

Melanie, a local trans activist, told Struggle-La Lucha: "Saturday's Trans Pride March was a wonderful experi-

ence. I was surrounded by hundreds of people overflowing with love for each other. I could feel their energy.

"I've gotten used to seeing so many awful, awful political developments and news stories about us lately. Being a part of all this energy and love and acceptance helped reaffirm my vision of a bright future," she said.

'Pride on the picket line' for Writers Guild strike

By Melinda Butterfield

"New York is a union town, the queers are here to shut you down!"

The chant rang out loud and strong through Manhattan's Union Square neighborhood on June 1, the first day of LGBTQ+ Pride Month, as striking members of the Writers Guild of America (WGA) and supporters picketed the New York office of streaming giant Netflix.

Hundreds of workers joined "Pride on the Picket Line," many waving or wearing Trans Pride and Progress Pride rainbow flags as they carried picket signs. The turnout was so big, in fact, that pickets had to be set up on both sides of 19th Street.

Writers Guild members were joined by many members of sister union, the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), who may strike on July

1 if their own contract demands aren't met by the media bosses. There were also contingents from UNITE HERE, the United Auto Workers, and other unions.

"Netflix screws writers and trans people," one picketer told Struggle-La Lucha, referring to the company's history of championing anti-trans "comedians" and canceling queer-friendly shows. "It's time to pay up!"

Netflix and other streaming services have profited greatly by refusing to update labor provisions left over from the days when network and cable television predominated. This has meant an enormous loss of wages and job security for industry writers.

The actions of queer strikers and the LGBTQ+ community have been crucial to the Writers Guild strike, now in its second month – with actions like this one and the Trans Take-over in Los Angeles.

Fittingly for a union of professional writers, WGA picket signs were decorated with individualized slogans by the strikers: "Striking is gay in the best way;" "We've got BEEF with Netflix;" "We are not content;" "You'll miss 100% of the shows we won't write;" "I'm on strike for dykes who write;" "You're a literal Disney villain – the villain is Disney;" and "Your AI's got nothing on my childhood trauma."

One striker's sign summarized the feeling on the picket line: "Spoiler alert: We will win!"



SLL photo: Melinda Butterfield

CUBA's queer rights revolution

A PRIDE MONTH WEBINAR THURSDAY JUNE 15

- Just 90 miles from Ron DeSantis's Florida, socialist Cuba is making huge advances in LGBTQ+ rights with its new Families Code.
- ? How did Cuba achieve the 'most advanced policy in the world'? Why isn't the U.S. media reporting it? Why does Biden maintain Trump's punishing blockade measures and keep Cuba on the state sponsors of terrorism list?
- Hear from LGBTQ+ activists from across the U.S. who went to Cuba to see for themselves.
- Learn how queer rights are being prioritized from the grassroots to the National Assembly. Why U.S. queers should work to end the U.S. blockade of Cuba, and how you can join next year's delegation.



WOMEN IN STRUGGLE ★ MUJERES EN LUCHA
An affiliate of the Women's International Democratic Federation

NATIONAL MARCH To Protect Trans Youth & Speakout for Trans Rights

ORLANDO ▶ FLORIDA

SAT | OCT 7 2023

- ▶ Reverse DeSantis's bans on trans healthcare, restroom access, Black & Queer history
- ▶ End attacks on marginalized communities African Americans, immigrants, Chinese, LGBTQ+ people
- ▶ Stop censorship & attacks on civil liberties of teachers, students, books and people's history
- ▶ Demand federal gov't enforce civil rights in Florida, Texas, Montana, Tennessee & everywhere

HANDS OFF PRIDE!

- ▶ Free, legal, accessible abortions
- ▶ Expand Medicaid and SNAP
- ▶ Stop voter disenfranchisement
- ▶ Drop charges on the Tampa 5



Add your organization/name **Get involved!**

ENDORSEES: (list in formation *for ID only)

- Women in Struggle – Mujeres en Lucha · Queer Youth Assemble · Real Name Campaign, New Orleans
- The Queer Notion, Tampa · Transpired Media · Red Berets for Queers · Jordan David, Lavender Guard*, LA
- Andre Powell, retired delegate, Baltimore Md. Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO* · Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly
- Harriet Tubman Ctr. for Social Justice, LA

Sign up at: ProtectTransKidsMarch.org | WomenInStruggle.org

*for ID only

They stole us, they sold us, they owe us: Reparations must be paid!

By Stephen Millies

The wealthy and powerful in New York are trying to sideline a state reparations bill. To protest and stop this sabotage, a powerful news conference was held in front of the African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan on June 5.

Roger Wareham, a December 12th Movement's International Secretariat member, chaired it. Wareham reminded listeners that the late Sonny Abubadika Carson helped save the sacred ground – where 20,000 Black people are buried – from being destroyed.

Activists, including Rev. Herbert Daughtry, Sr., put their bodies on the line against government bulldozers.

"We built this country," declared New York City Councilperson Charles Barron. Up to the Civil War, the vast majority of U.S. exports were produced by enslaved Africans.

Barron pointed out that New York City was only second to Charleston, South Carolina, in its dependence on enslaved Africans. Wall Street had a slave market.

The very name "Wall Street" was born of slavery, with enslaved Africans building the wall in 1653. In 1711, Wall Street was declared the city's first official slave market for selling and renting enslaved Africans and Indigenous Peoples. Wall Street was the primary New York slave market for the next hundred years.

It was the struggle of Black people that forced New York State to abolish slavery in 1827, said Barron. As a New York State Assembly member, he sponsored a reparations bill that passed with over 100 votes.

The legislation would set up a commission with members of community organizations that have advocated reparations for decades. These groups included the December 12th Movement; N'COBRA (The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America); and the Institute of Black World.

The bill was, however, held up in the State Senate.

Justice thwarted by 'petty politics'

Roger Wareham then read from the press statement:

"The current legislative session in Albany ends in three days. An issue of monumental importance – reparations for New York State's citizens of African Descent – hangs in the balance, reputedly a prisoner to hurt feelings and petty career ambitions.

"One State Senate version, S2416, sponsored by Sen. Brisport, replicates the bill introduced by then-Assemblyman Charles Barron, which was passed by the Assembly in two separate sessions. What makes this version of the Reparations legislation unique from those anywhere else in the United States is the provision for a Commission which has a majority



African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan, June 5.

SLL photo: Stephen Millies

community-selected membership. Three community organizations, of which we are one, will select 6 of the 11 Commission members. The legislature will have the final determination and execution on the Commission's findings and recommendations.

"Apparently, progress on the Senate bill and even the assignment of a number to the Assembly bill, sponsored by Assemblymember Solages, is being held up for reasons so petty that they won't survive public discussion.

"Our three organizations each have more than 30 years of demonstrated commitment to the demand for reparations. Our participation on the Commission gives us no material benefit, only an opportunity to bring our experience to help develop a comprehensive program that will improve

the quality of life for the state's Black residents.

"This is a time for real leadership from Assembly leader Carl Heastie and Senate leader Stewart Cousins. They need to cut through the smoke and shepherd the Brisport and Solages bill into passage before the session ends.

"We ask those who support the bill to call the offices of Assemblyman Hastie (518-455-3791; 718-654-6539; speaker@nyassembly.gov), Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (518-455-2585; 914-423-4031; scousins@ny-senate.gov), as well as their local state representatives."

Never forget the Buffalo massacre

Kennis Henry, a National Co-Chair of N'COBRA, recalled the murder of 10 people in Buffalo on May 14, 2022, by a white supremacist. "Here are your reparations" was written on his rifle.

"Prove him wrong!" she declared, adding, "I'm so proud to be with you."

December 12th Movement Chairwoman Viola Plummer declared we are "ready to go to war – not in Ukraine, but here in New York State. We've got to let them know that we're mad as hell!"

The banks control the political system that's derailing the reparations bill. Plummer denounced JPMorgan Chase CEO Jammie Dimon as a blood-sucker.

The press conference ended with the participants chanting: "They stole us! They sold us! They owe us!"

Reparations now! 🗨️

December 12th Movement shuts down Harlem's 125th Street in honor of Malcolm X



By Struggle-La Lucha
New York bureau

A sea of red, black, and green Liberation flags flew on Harlem's 125th Street on May 19 as hundreds marched to honor Malcolm X on his 98th birth anniversary. Behind a giant photo of Malcolm X, the marchers enforced a 3-hour "commercial moment

Photo: Labor Against Racist Terror

of silence" in honor of the martyred Pan-Africanist leader. Whole Foods, PC Richards, Old Navy, Krispy Kreme, and other corporate-owned stores that profit off the Harlem community closed their doors from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The annual tribute, a 34-year-old tradition, is organized and led by the December 12th Movement and the Malcolm X New Millennium Committee. 🗨️

NYC's biggest hate march protested

By Stephen Millies

The largest white supremacist event in New York City is the annual "Israel" parade. Held this year on June 4, it celebrated the 75th anniversary of the apartheid state created by expelling over 700,000 Palestinians from their homeland.

Called the Nakba – Arabic for catastrophe – the forced removal of Indigenous people included killing 15,000 Palestinians. Massacres were conducted at Deir Yassin and other villages.

A protest against this parade was called by Al-Awda NY: the Palestine Right to Return Coalition; American Muslims for Palestine; and NY4Palestine.

This courageous grouping confronted the "Israel" parade bigots. They carried Palestinian flags, signs,

and banners denouncing the racist Zionist state and the support it gets from the U.S.

Among them were rabbis and other members of Neturei Karta, Orthodox Jews who oppose Zionism and support Palestinians' right to return to their homeland. Other groups present included the ANSWER Coalition, Socialist Action, and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper.

The "Israel" parade is not a celebration of Jewish contributions to world culture. It's a racist mobilization of the most reactionary elements, with cops on horses and other police detachments in the lead.

Particularly repulsive was the float celebrating the Zionist settlers in Al-Khalil (Hebron) who constantly attack Palestinians. One of the settlers, Brooklyn-born Baruch Goldstein, murdered 25 worshipers in a mosque



Palestine supporters rally in New York, June 4.

Photo: Ziad Al-Najjar

on Feb. 25, 1994, before survivors killed him.

There were also many contingents of students from Yeshivas, which function like the "seg academies" do in the South and elsewhere. These schools keep Jewish youth from con-

tact with Black and Latinx students. Many of the older Yeshiva students were furious at the Palestinian supporters.

As disgusting as this annual parade is, it was important that there was opposition to it. Palestine will win! 🗨️

LGBTQ+ delegation meets with Federation of Cuban Women

By Lizz Toledo

Havana — The LGBTQ+ delegation included multicultural, multi-generational, gay men, lesbians, bisexual, trans, and gender-nonconforming representatives from all over the U.S. We visited so many organizations, but among the most inspiring for this writer was the visit to the Federation of Cuban Women.

It was inspiring because it provided a beacon of hope as to what is possible for women and gender-nonconforming people in a socialist society. The FCW has been the seat of power for Cuban women and their families for over 60 years.

The structure begins from the base in each neighborhood, municipality, and province. Most members are volunteers, but there are some paid positions, particularly in the municipalities. The FCW is the organization that takes care of all concerns women in Cuba may have.

There is a national mandate for the advancement of women, and the FCW carries this program into action.

The FCW was founded by Vilma Espín, who is honored as the eternal president. But also in the national leadership are the First and Second General Secretaries. The Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women meets every five years and will be

held next year in 2024.

Health is a priority

The health of Cuban women and their families is a priority for the FCW and the Cuban government. Health activities are handled by the Hygiene Brigade, which works with the local doctors and nurses living in the communities they serve.

“We must erect a monument to the women in the Hygiene Brigade during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said the First Secretary of the FCW.

Regarding domestic violence, each ministry has created a program to address the victim and the aggressor. After the COVID-19 pandemic, a national leadership was organized to begin addressing and ending gender-based violence, another priority for FCW.

The national leadership develops penal codes and new laws related to gender-based violence.

Violence against women and other oppressed genders is harshly punished. Someone who kills their current or former female partner receives life in prison automatically. Depending on other extenuating circumstances, they may also receive mental health



U.S. delegation visits Women's Federation in Havana, May 11.

SLL photo

or substance use services while incarcerated. But some rights afforded to other prisoners may not be granted, i.e., overnight stays in the community.

The principal violence against Cuban women and other gender-oppressed people continues to be the U.S. blockade. This has been made worse by including Cuba on the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

The gall of the worst state sponsor of terrorism in the history of the

world, the United States of Amerikkka, calling this small island a terrorist because they want to live in peace, without interference from any imperialist state. They want to care for their people, educate their children, provide health care from birth to old age, provide housing for all, and share with the rest of the world.

“We don't give our leftovers, we give what we have,” said the First Secretary of the FCW. 📌

Target workers attacked by far-right The anti-LGBTQ+ movement is anti-worker

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showing a dramatic increase in abuse and physical violence against workers, including workers in the U.S. being shot to death for asking customers to wear masks. For example, in Decatur, Georgia, cashier Laquitta Willis was murdered by an irate customer over masking.

The recent anti-LGBTQ+ incidents in stores can be considered in relation to that trend. And the political link is not incidental. The same far-right promoted conspiracies during the pandemic and opposed basic public health measures, ratcheting up tensions at a time when social solidarity was quite literally a matter of survival.

Anti-LGBTQ+ panic is anti-worker

With some 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills being rammed through state legislatures, the fascist shock troops on the ground — the ones causing trouble in stores, libraries, and other public places — are attempting to scare LGBTQ+ people back into the closet. We will not let them succeed, but their intentions should be clear.

It is coming from the top. The same politicians implementing austerity are promoting queer and trans panic. They are enemies of the working class, and their attacks on LGBTQ+ people are meant to divide workers.

All retail workers are endangered by this onslaught, regardless of gender and sexual orientation. Any worker can get harassed by a bigot. If a shooter decides to open fire in a store, it will not be only queer and trans people who die. All policy goals and outcomes

aside, this fact alone should demonstrate the anti-worker nature of this astroturfed movement.

The problem of pinkwashing

Target and other corporations are no friends of workers or LGBTQ+ people.

Target has used union-busting tactics as workers organized in recent years. The bosses have fought against the national rank-and-file effort, Target Workers Unite!, which seeks to unionize stores. Despite those efforts, last year, Target workers in Christiansburg, Virginia, got as far as filing for a union election with the National Labor Relations Board — a major achievement, especially considered in relation to the big organizing wave, including Amazon and Starbucks unions.

Early in the pandemic, Target workers forced the company to implement safety measures. Management tried to prevent employees from wearing masks. On May Day 2020, some 200 Target workers across the U.S. staged a sick-out, which likely helped force the company's hand to implement \$2-an-hour hazard pay and improved protections. Target Workers Unite! was instrumental in organizing the sick-out.

In addition, radical LGBTQ+ activists have long sounded the alarm about handing Pride over to corporations, banks, police, municipalities, and the military. We have seen the dangers of this play out recently when Pride events were canceled in Tampa and other Florida cities after Ron DeSantis signed an anti-drag bill into law.

Revolutionary, anti-imperialist LGBTQ+ people have also called out

the cynicism of imperialist governments and complicit NGOs when they use LGBTQ+ people, women, and other oppressed groups as props to justify war and sanctions.

Danger of right opportunists in progressive movement

Today, a section of people formerly on the left are now re-aligning with the neo-fascist right. Largely informal networks, these groupings have gone by various names, such as “patriotic socialists” and even “MAGA communists.” Despite the titles they give themselves, these people are anti-communist, and share many characteristics with historical fascists, such as making vague diatribes against “elites.” All the while, they tail behind the likes of Trump and DeSantis, whose policies are emphatically anti-worker.

These people obfuscate matters by asserting that because corporations have attempted to attract LGBTQ+ consumers with PR and merchandising, then the LGBTQ+ movement must itself be bourgeois.

The reality is that Pride started as a riot, led by working-class Black and Brown trans people. The struggle for basic rights, including for humane treatment during the AIDS epidemic, was hard and heroic. As with Civil Rights, womens' Rights, and other struggles, it resulted in real gains, however limited by the continued existence of capitalism and co-option by the Democratic Party.

The capitalists adapted to changing situations. They learned to take advan-

tage of the new social landscape, of the terrain transformed by struggle. This is why some corporations sponsor official Pride events and try to seem progressive in general. These facts should neither surprise nor confuse us.

Nevertheless, with the current neo-fascist trend — intensifying as bourgeois democracy declines — it has become increasingly clear that the capitalists are just as ready to cast off all those trappings of “tolerance.”

The dictator Augusto Pinochet certainly did not pander to progressive forces in Chile after the U.S.-backed coup murdered the democratically elected socialist president, Salvador Allende, inaugurating the global “neoliberal” period. (Some erroneously conflate the austerity economics of neoliberalism with “social liberalism” or progressive politics in general.)

Politicians like Ron DeSantis represent a section of the ruling class pushing for that direction. They are ready to destroy every single gain made by workers and oppressed people to extract the last bits of value as the planet burns.

When the formerly left, now right opportunists join in the chorus against “wokeness,” echoing Tucker Carlson and others, we should have no problem recognizing them for what they are: a renegade section of the movement aligning themselves with thoroughly anti-worker neo-fascism.

Today's revolutionary movement should not give an inch to any of these forces. We need a united working-class movement prepared to confront all attacks with unshakable solidarity. 📌

War criminal Kissinger doesn't deserve to be 100 years old

By Stephen Millies

Abridged. Read full article at tinyurl.com/2aqlpam

It's obscene that Henry Kissinger could celebrate his 100th birthday on May 27. Patrice Lumumba, Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, Che Guevara, and Dr. King were all murdered before they reached 40.

Each of these heroes would be younger today than this war criminal if they had not been assassinated and were able to have long lives.

Kissinger deserves Nuremberg justice for mass murder on three continents. On his watch, millions of people were killed in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Bangladesh, Chile, East Timor, Angola, South Africa, and Palestine.

Using his credentials as an "elder statesman," Nixon's former accomplice is a cheerleader for the proxy war against the Russian Federation in Ukraine. In a lengthy interview with "The Economist" — a mouthpiece of the British and U.S. financial aristocracy—Kissinger demanded that Ukraine be admitted to NATO.

That would turn the present conflict into a world war involving four nuclear powers: the United States, Britain, France, and Russia.

Kissinger also believes that Japan will develop nuclear weapons within five years. This is part of the war drive against the socialist People's Republic of China.

It was by advocating so-called tactical nuclear weapons that Kissinger rose to prominence in the U.S. foreign policy establishment. His 1957 book, "Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy," claimed that wars could still be fought with nukes yet prevented from turning into World War 3.

Kissinger hit the big time as a protégé of New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, a member of the world's first billionaire family that founded Big Oil. When Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited the United Nations in 1961, Rockefeller harangued him.

"He talked to me about nothing but bomb shelters," said Nehru. "Why does he think I am interested in bomb shelters? He gave me a pamphlet on how to build my own shelter."

Like Reagan's "Star Wars" program, the campaign to build fallout shelters was an attempt to convince people they could survive a U.S. nuclear war on the socialist countries.

Kissinger's nuclear bullying

For decades the U.S. State Department was a Rockefeller property. John Foster Dulles—Eisenhower's first Secretary of State—was managing

partner of Sullivan & Cromwell, the family's law firm.

Dean Rusk—Secretary of State under Kennedy and Johnson—had been president of the Rockefeller Foundation. Even Trump's first Secretary of State—Rex Tillerson—was former CEO of ExxonMobil, the descendant of Rockefeller's crown jewel, Standard Oil of New Jersey.

Henry Kissinger was another Rockefeller employee. Upon becoming Nixon's National Security Adviser, the New York governor thoughtfully gave Kissinger \$50,000, worth \$426,000 today. No one was prosecuted for this bribe.

Less than two months after Nixon was inaugurated president in 1969, he and Kissinger launched Operation Menu, the massive bombing of Cambodia. The killing of thousands of people in a sovereign country was a war crime and a violation of international law.

Nixon and Kissinger could have made the same peace agreement in 1969 with Vietnam that they finally did in 1973. Millions of lives would have been saved in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, as well as 20,000 fewer dead GIs.

Despite Kissinger's barely disguised threats at the Paris peace talks to use nuclear weapons, Vietnam refused to surrender. At the Dec. 4, 1972 meeting, Vietnamese negotiator Lê Đức Thọ told Kissinger off:

"We ... sometimes think that you would also use atomic weapons because, during the resistance against the French, Vice President Nixon proposed the use of atomic weapons. ...

"If we do not achieve ... [our] goal in our lifetime our children will continue the struggle ... We have been subjected to tens of millions of bombs and shells. The equal of ... 600 atomic bombs. ...

"The simple truth is that we will not submit and reconcile ourselves to being slaves. So your threats and broken promises, we say, that is not a really serious way to carry on negotiations."

It was because of these nuclear threats and the U.S. killing of millions that Lê Đức Thọ refused the Nobel Peace Prize that was awarded to himself and Kissinger.

Chile's 9-11 and Operation Condor

Vietnam wasn't the only place where Kissinger's bloody imprint was felt. U.S. copper companies and the ITT conglomerate couldn't tolerate the election of the socialist Salvador Allende as Chile's president in 1970.

Even before Allende was elected, Kissinger was plotting to overthrow him. "I don't see why we need to stand

by and watch a country go communist because of the irresponsibility of its own people," said Kissinger. So much for democracy and self-determination.

More people were killed when General Pinochet and the CIA overthrew Chile's government on 9-11-73 than were killed on 9-11-01 in Manhattan. President Allende was among the victims.



Chile's dictator Augusto Pinochet meeting U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in Santiago, June 8, 1976.

Santiago's football stadium was filled with prisoners awaiting execution, including the folk singer Victor Jara who was tortured to death.

Secretary of State Kissinger approved of these atrocities. "We are sympathetic with what you are trying to do here," Kissinger told Pinochet when they met in Chile on June 8, 1976. "You did a great service to the West in overthrowing Allende."

Three months later, former Chilean foreign minister Orlando Letelier and an aide, Ronni Moffitt, were murdered in a Washington, D.C., car bombing on Sept. 21, 1976. Their assassination by Pinochet's secret police agents was part of Operation Condor, a joint effort by six South American dictatorships to exterminate leftists.

Operation Condor's lynchpin was Argentina dictator Jorge Videla. Kissinger told Videla's foreign minister, César Guzzetti, on June 10, 1976, that he "hoped the Argentine government could get the terrorist problem under control as quickly as possible."

By "terrorists," Kissinger meant any opponents of the bloody military regime that murdered as many as 30,000 political prisoners. Hundreds were thrown out of helicopters into the Atlantic Ocean.

Kissinger vs. African liberation

Kissinger's Eurocentric arrogance and contempt toward all oppressed countries was evident in his exchange with Chilean Foreign Minister Gabriel Valdés in June 1969. (Valdés was a member of the Christian Democratic government that preceded Allende's.)

Kissinger told Valdés, "You come here speaking of Latin America, but this is not important. Nothing important can come from the South. History has never been produced in the South."

In 1972, Kissinger described Bangladesh as a "basket case," a terrible, bigoted term for a country looted by British colonialism for 190 years. Pakistan's military, using the codename "Operation Searchlight," carried out massacres against Bengali people with Nixon's and Kissinger's consent.

When Nixon and Kissinger arrived in Washington in 1969, Nelson Mandela had been in jail for over six years. U.S. imperialism was determined to keep him there. The CIA helped the apartheid secret police arrest the African National Congress leader in 1962.

The fascist government in Portu-

gal—a founding member of NATO—was dropping U.S.-supplied napalm bombs on African liberation fighters in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique.

Ian Smith declared "Rhodesia" (occupied Zimbabwe) independent and said that he didn't "believe in Black majority rule ever in Rhodesia — not in a thousand years."

White settlers occupied Namibia, a former German colony, where they celebrated Hitler's birthday.

Change was coming, however. The armed struggle of Africans led to the overthrow of the fascist regime in Lisbon on April 25, 1974.

Fighting for their liberation, Africans also brought some freedom to Portuguese working people. The Portuguese Communist Party played a key role in the Portuguese Revolution while extending aid to their comrades in Africa.

Africa called, Cuba answered, Kissinger threatened

After tremendous sacrifice, all of Portugal's African colonies won their freedom. The People's Republic of Angola was born on Nov. 11, 1975.

Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, along with his employees, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and White House occupant Gerald Ford, sought to kill it. They had the Nazi armies of then-apartheid South Africa invade the African country.

Africa needed help. Over 2,000 Cuban soldiers died fighting alongside their African comrades in defeating the apartheid forces.

As Elombe Brath—the late Pan-African educator and organizer who was a founder of the December 12th Movement—declared, "When Africa called, Cuba answered!"

The White House and the entire U.S. ruling class were furious. Kissinger wanted to invade Cuba.

"I think we are going to have to smash Castro," Kissinger told President Ford on March 24, 1976. Ford said, "I agree."

Kissinger told a meeting that included Gen. George Brown of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, "If we decide to use military power, it must succeed. There should be no halfway measures."

A Black shield stopped Kissinger. Because of the "economic draft," poor



Henry Kissinger (right) with the prime minister of apartheid South Africa, John Vorster, in West Germany in June 1976.

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War criminal Kissinger

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people are driven to enlist in the military. At the time, one out-of-four GIs were Black.

Even the generals had to take this into account. For the same reason, Trump was stopped from declaring martial law on June 1, 2020, against the Black Lives Matter movement.

It was the courage of the Cuban people led by Comrade Fidel Castro, the Black community in the United States, and the existence of the Soviet Union that prevented an attack on Cuba.

The dramatic throwing back of the apartheid forces at the gates of Luanda, Angola's capital, sent shock waves through Africa. Less than a year later, Black youth in Soweto rebelled on June 16, 1976.

At least 700 Africans were murdered by apartheid forces, often armed with Israeli-made weapons. The Israeli newspaper Haaretz acknowledges that "South Africa under apartheid was the Israeli defense industry's biggest customer."

David Rockefeller—the real "Dr. Evil" who was Nelson's brother—came to apartheid's rescue. As CEO of the Chase Manhattan bank, now JPMorgan Chase, with \$3.7 trillion in assets, David loaned hundreds of millions to the apartheid regime.

Despite these banksters propping up apartheid, the "Soweto generation" of African youth led the way to overthrow it.

Petrodollars and welcoming the overthrown Shah

The Portuguese colony of East Timor in Southeast Asia also declared its freedom in 1975. However, Indonesian dictator Suharto—who rose to power a decade before by killing a million communists, workers, and peasants—couldn't tolerate a neighboring free state.

President Gerald Ford and Kissinger gave the green light to Suharto to crush East Timor when they visited him in early December 1975. Suharto respectfully delayed his invasion of East Timor until Dec. 7, 1975, one day after Ford and Kissinger had departed.

At least 200,000 people in East Timor, one-third of its population, were slaughtered.

Even after Kissinger left office, he was a power player for Big Oil. It was David Rockefeller and Henry Kissinger that demanded the bloody Shah be admitted to the U.S. after the Iranian people overthrew him.

When Kissinger croaks, he will be remembered as a nightmare. 📖

The Social Evolution of Humanity

Marx and Engels were right!

by Bob McCubbin

This study of the evolution of humanity focuses on human social/sexual relations and, in particular, the changing social status of women. It offers a selection of scientific evidence that updates and augments the viewpoint expressed in Frederick Engels' masterful work, 'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.'

McCubbin is the author of 'Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View.' Published in 1976, during the first wave of the modern LGBTQ2S movement, McCubbin's unparalleled achievement was to offer a historical analysis of how LGBTQ2S oppression developed.

Paperback or Kindle: <https://tinyurl.com/vwarcv7>

South Korean prisoners of conscience: 'They are still warriors'

By Scott Scheffer

Beginning in 1905, the Empire of Japan occupied Korea. Korean resistance fighters throughout the nation were highly organized. By the time World War II was concluding, the guerrilla army led by Kim Il Sung had driven the Japanese out of the northern half of the peninsula.

Resistance was also powerful in the south, and the occupiers killed and jailed thousands as they tried to hold on to power. When Japan was defeated, the United States moved into what is now South Korea. They continued the brutal occupation that Koreans had suffered since 1905.

The heroic resistance in the south delayed the U.S. attack on North Korea for five years as the U.S. and quisling Koreans who had collaborated with Japan barely held onto power. In the process, they murdered thousands of peasants, students, communist fighters, and unionists. They jailed tens of thousands.

Just before the 1950-53 Korean War, the U.S. oversaw mass executions of political prisoners carried out by their comprador South Korean puppets. Many who were spared execution spent the rest of their days in prison, refusing to renounce their desire for socialism, liberation, and reunification with the north.

Korea's National Security Law remains in place today. Arrests have continued. Those refusing to renounce their desire for reunification and socialism serve some of the world's longest sentences for political prisoners.

Struggle-La Lucha spoke with Peter Kim, a Los Angeles activist with the Support Committee for Korean Prisoners of Conscience.

Struggle-La Lucha: You visited with some of the Prisoners of Conscience in South Korean prisons. Can you explain briefly what a prisoner of conscience is?

Peter Kim: A Prisoner of Conscience is a person imprisoned for holding political or religious views that are not tolerated by their own government. In Korea, prisoners of conscience are unconverted long-term prisoners. Who are unconverted prisoners? They are POWs from the Korean War. They were in the People's Army to be returned under the cease-fire treaty but were sent to prison instead. This is a violation of the cease-fire treaty and the Geneva Convention. It's a war crime.



Peter Kim (center) visiting with South Korean prisoners of conscience.

SLL: What did it mean to be converted or unconverted?

Peter Kim: People living in the south who opposed the U.S. invasion supported the People's Army. After the Korean War, they were victims of the KCIA's fabricated spy allegations. What is conversion? When the Japanese occupied Korea, they tried to eliminate the national liberation movement. Koreans who fought for liberation were jailed, tortured, and eventually executed if they refused to pledge their loyalty to the Japanese. To prove loyalty, the prisoners had to write about their regretful behavior and sign their loyalty to the Japanese. People who did this received lighter sentences, and were pardoned and freed. Even the Nazis did not have a conversion program for dissenters. Japanese imperialism still has not apologized for its sexual slavery, forced labor, and occupation of neighboring countries.

SLL: What was the treatment of people, particularly the unconverted prisoners, after the U.S. moved in?

Peter Kim: After liberation from Japan, Americans used the same National Security Law that the Japanese used in the colonial era to put down their political enemies, those who resisted the government and were socialists. It's shameful to say that unconverted long-term prisoners are going through a conversion course much worse than what the Japanese did to the Koreans. Many of them were killed in the conversion process. How can you change someone's ideology or thought? Being able to think and speak freely is a basic human right!

SLL: That same National Security Law is still in place, and speaking out for reunification or visiting North Korea still gets people arrested in South Korea. Are there still long prison sentences?

Peter Kim: Yes. Nelson Mandela was a long-term prisoner. He was in prison for 27 years. Korean unconverted long-term prisoners' average prison time is 33 years; the longest is 43 years and ten months. As a result of the North-South Korea summit in 2000, some 63 unconverted long-term prisoners, excluding those who wanted to remain in the south, returned to their motherland in September 2000.

They got a warm welcome and were treated as national heroes. Back then, the distinction between conversion and non-conversion mattered. So the few converted long-term prisoners didn't go back. After the first repatriation, 46 people waited for the second repatriation. We are constantly asking the authorities for a second repatriation for those who were left out. After 23 years, most of them passed away without being able to return to their motherland and family. Only nine remain.

On my visit to Korea, I met 4 of the remaining 9. Two of them just underwent surgery, even though they are in their 90s. It is not easy to decide on surgery, and they may die during the operation. However, their tenacity to return to their motherland and report to the Workers Party of Korea seems to have led them to such determination. They recovered faster than expected and worked hard for rehabilitation. They are still warriors! 📖

U.S. proxy war: Kakhovka dam and the weaponization of water

By Nahia Sanzo

Abridged. Read full article at tinyurl.com/2bwwlqyf

June 7 — Tuesday morning, just a few hours after the first serious Ukrainian attacks against Russian positions began in various areas of the Donbass and Zaporozhye fronts, a prelude to the major offensive that Ukraine has been announcing for

months, the bursting of the Kakhovka dam immediately diverted the focus of attention from the alleged Ukrainian advances to the part of the southern territories furthest from the battle.

The partial collapse of the dam yesterday has led to the flooding of a whole series of towns and cities in the area. In the morning, the mayor of Novaya Kakhovka reported that the rise in the water level exceeded 12

centimeters per hour. The water affected the city of Kherson, the most populated town in the area, although in a clearly less serious way than other cities. In Novaya Kakhovka, a few hours after the dam breached, water rose up the pedestal of the Lenin statue, and swans glided through the empty center of the flooded city in a

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Defienden educación pública

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Estos días, la indignación que el magisterio boricua ha sentido constantemente por varios años de atropellos a la educación pública, aumentó de manera dramática y les indujo a formar una Coalición Multisectorial para salir a las calles masivamente en defensa de la educación pública y gratuita.

Y es que los buitres, mayormente gringos, que se benefician de la ley 22 que convierte a PR en un paraíso fiscal para millonarios extranjeros corruptos, ahora han puesto la mira en la educación boricua. Pero no para aportar ayudas, sino para destruir lo poco que queda de las escuelas públicas y convertirlas en escuelas chárter de tipo privado, que aquí le llaman eufemísticamente Escuelas Alianza que no tienen un currículo común, sino que obedecen a la ideología que sus propietarios quieren avanzar.

Para eso, están comprando o construyendo edificios cerca de las escuelas públicas existentes, para robarse a esos estudiantes y beneficiarse del erario público. Un ejemplo visto en un video que se ha hecho viral últimamente, es el de la gringa Kira Golden que recibe un mantengo de la Ley 22 y ha comprado ya varios edificios en la zona de Río Piedras. Es asqueroso su visión sobre PR comprobado en el video donde expresa que es "maravilloso" lo que ha pasado en PR luego del Huracán María, porque bajó el valor inmobiliario y pudo comprar muchas propiedades.

Pero esos gringos millonarios tendrán que tragarse la lengua porque el movimiento magisterial junto al pueblo y a legisladores progresistas ya han montado una campaña para exigir una moratoria en las Escuelas Alianza y eventualmente, derogar la ley 85 que las crea, y sustituirla por una verdadera Reforma Educativa. [📧]



NO causa para detenidos por el Gobierno de Puerto Rico

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

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Hace par de semanas comenté en este espacio sobre casos de represión por el estado de tres líderes ocurridos el 1ro de mayo, y las decenas de acusaciones sin fundamento contra una legisladora por ese mismo estado fallido.

Pues esta semana se vieron ambos casos y en el mismo día en el Centro Judicial de San Juan.

En el caso del 1ro de Mayo contra Eva Ayala, ex-presidenta del sindicato magisterial EDUCAMOS; Jocelyn Velázquez, líder de la militante organización Jornada se Acabaron las Promesas, y el presidente de la Unión de Trabajadores de la Industria Eléctrica y Riego, Josué Mitjá, el Tribunal concluyó que no había causa para arrestos por haber saltado una valla en medio de una calle. Precisamente, lo que estos líderes habían afirmado una y otra vez:

Que las calles son del pueblo. Esta determinación es un precedente muy importante porque se espera un verano intenso de protestas ante la crisis tan aguda que vive el país.

El caso de la legisladora Mariana Nogales es un poco más complicado, porque implica una agencia estatal que ha estado marcada por malos manejos desde su inicio, la Oficina del Fiscal Especial Independiente, que supuestamente investiga actos de corrupción en el gobierno. Sin embargo, y como ilustró el caso de Mariana, es un ente usado por corruptos dentro del gobierno estadista para actuar en contra de sus opositores. A Mariana no solamente la acusaron, sino que incluyeron a su madre quien no trabaja en el gobierno. A ambas le imputaron un total de 51 acusaciones de



evasión contributiva que resultaron ser falsas.

Pero la verdadera culpabilidad debe recaer en la misma oficina del FEI, que ha malgastado por un año, más de un millón de dólares del dinero del pueblo que tanto se necesita aquí. [📧]

U.S. proxy war: Kakhovka dam and the weaponization of water

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post-apocalyptic scene about the effects of war in the post-Soviet world.

The accusations were not long in coming and both Russia and Ukraine alleged sabotage on the other side. Ukraine put in place the mechanisms both to react to what happened and evacuate the population from the affected towns, and to achieve the maximum possible political and informational benefit. Without having to wait for a minimal study on whether the dam had collapsed due to deliberate demolition or the effects of previous bombings, the Western press and political class en masse took Russia's guilt for granted. In the same way as with what happened after the Nord Stream explosions, the media and politicians of all countries and ideologies began to look for why it was in Russia's interest to blow up the dam.

Thus, the argument of last autumn was revived, when the possibility of the humanitarian and environmental catastrophe that occurred yesterday was first raised publicly. At the time, Russia accused Ukraine of planning the dam's destruction, an argument that was denounced by Ukraine and

its partners as a nonsensical conspiracy theory. The aim, according to Russia, would have been to flood the lands on the left bank of the Dnieper under Russian control and force Russian troops back or drown in their positions.

Ursula von der Leyen stated that "Russia will have to pay for the crimes committed in Ukraine. The destruction of the dam, an intolerable attack on civilian infrastructure, puts thousands of people in the Kherson region at risk," she wrote, later pledging help through available civil protection mechanisms.

"It is not yet clear what caused the dam to collapse," the BBC admitted yesterday. However, politicians and journalists from all over the European continent have already passed sentence.

Washington Post reported Ukraine test strike

It's been convenient to forget something that, despite having gone unnoticed at the time of its publication, became relevant yesterday. In December 2022, the Washington Post published a re-

port in which the commander of the Ukrainian forces in the Kherson region confirmed that Ukraine had considered blowing up the Kakhovka dam. "Kovalchuk considered the possibility of flooding the river." The Ukrainians, he claimed, even conducted a test strike with a HIMARS launcher against the gates of the Nova Kakhovka dam, punching three holes in the metal to see if the Dnieper water could rise high enough to destroy the Russian crossings without flooding the nearby towns.

The Washington Post not only confirmed that the Russian accusations were not a conspiracy theory, but that the Ukrainian attacks, which have continued ever since, could have caused the damage necessary for the collapse without the need for sabotage. [📧]

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