



PEACE ★ EQUALITY ★ SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY ★ ALL POWER TO THE WORKING PEOPLE!

# The Red Phoenix

REAL NEWS FOR WORKERS, BY WORKERS ★ NEWSPAPER OF THE AMERICAN PARTY OF LABOR

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Photo: Thousands of people marched through downtown Los Angeles demanding a ceasefire in Palestine, Oct. 21, 2023. (The Red Phoenix/Olivia F)

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## CUBA CHARGES IMPRESSMENT OF CUBAN CITIZENS IN RUSSIA



La Plaza de la Revolución, "Revolution Square," in Havana, Cuba. (Roberto Machado Noa/LightRocket/Getty Images)

**Camilo Lazo and Leonard Zorfass. September 9, 2023.**

Over the past two days, numerous international press agencies have reported that Cuba has arrested 17 individuals that were part of an alleged human trafficking ring that lured Cuban citizens, under the pretext of securing employment overseas, to serve in the Russian military in the ongoing Ukraine conflict. This is a clear illustration of the continual insidious tactics employed by imperialist forces around the globe against the people of Cuba.

Cuba, a nation that has steadfastly defended its socialist principles for decades, is now confronted with a menace that seeks to undermine its sovereignty – a menace that was once a close ally and friend. The Cuban authorities recently revealed their efforts to "neutralize and dismantle" this nefarious network, which operated both on Cuba's sovereign soil and in Russia. These efforts to combat exploitation demand

our continued support and solidarity with Cuba against imperialist aggression.

Reuters quoted Cesar Rodriguez of Cuba's Interior Ministry as stating, "As a result of investigations, 17 people have been arrested so far, among them the internal organizer of these activities." While Rodriguez refrained from naming those accused, it is crucial to recognize the courage of the Cuban authorities in confronting this imperialist scheme head-on. The alleged ringleader of this operation relied on two individuals residing in Cuba to recruit young Cubans to serve as mercenaries for Russia in Ukraine. This heinous act of luring vulnerable young individuals into a conflict zone exposes the callousness of imperialist forces and their disregard for human lives, and serves to chip away at the illusion that "Eastern Capital" can function and grow without evolving into imperialism as its western counterparts did centuries ago.

Additionally, Cuban prosecutor Jose Luis Reyes was cited as stating that, if found guilty, the conspirators could receive sentences ranging from 30 years to life imprisonment, or even the death penalty. Penalties would depend on the nature and severity of the alleged crimes, which could include human trafficking, serving as a mercenary, and taking hostile action against a foreign state.

Between the dependency created by Soviet social imperialism during the Cold War, and the brutal hardships brought on by the illegal embargo and blockade put in place by NATO forces, the Cuban people face certain vulnerabilities to predatory powers

who promise opportunity with one hand, while concealing a dagger in the other. This vulnerability is what the imperialist forces have exploited, taking advantage of the obstruction caused by imperialist policies to recruit desperate individuals for their own ends.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's decree allowing foreigners who join the Russian army to receive fast-tracked citizenship adds another layer to this disturbing situation. While this decree was issued by Russia, not Cuba, it has contributed to the manipulation of Cuban citizens for imperialist purposes.

Cuba has unequivocally stated that it plays no part in the war in Ukraine and rejects the use of its citizens as mercenaries. This assertion must be taken seriously, as Cuba has consistently been a beacon of anti-imperialist resistance and a proponent of peace and self-determination for all nations.

Let us stand in solidarity with Cuba, a nation that has historically resisted imperialist aggression against all odds. The allegations of human trafficking and exploitation must be seen within the context of Russian imperialism's attempts to exploit Cuba's vulnerabilities. We must support the efforts of the Cuban people to combat this latest production of imperialism. Together, we shall expose the true culprits and defend Cuba against the machinations of imperialist forces. West, East, North, and South, long live the struggle against imperialism!

## CARLOS ALVARADO SANTANA, PRESENTE!

**From the Secretariat of the American Party of Labor. October 25, 2023.**

Comrade Carlos Alvarado Santana has died. Comrade Carlos was a member of the Political Bureau of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador (PCMLE) and First Secretary of the PCMLE's Guayas Provincial Committee. Comrade Carlos is survived by his children and grandchildren. The American Party of Labor offers its deepest condolences to Comrade Carlos' family, comrades, and all the working and exploited peoples of Ecuador, South America, and the world. The toilers and Marxist-Leninists of the world have lost a champion, but Comrade Carlos' cause and struggle are immortal.

**Carlos Alvarado Santana – PRESENTE!**



# COMMUNITY CONTROL OF POLICE, A REVOLUTIONARY RESTRUCTURING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Sofia D., Minnesota. October 2, 2023.

In the years since the murder of George Floyd, there have been numerous discussions and campaigns concerning the role and structure of policing. What is their function? Who do they serve? What should progressives do about them? Three years later, there is little resolution. Working people have methods of resisting police temporarily, such as the recent establishment of a civilian commission in Chicago, but no permanent solutions. "Defunding the police," in order to fund other social services, was and is a radical demand. But, as was quickly found, politicians have ignored this demand, paid lip service to it, or simply "defunded" the police in a marginal, temporary way, without any subsequent funding of other social services and resources.

The American Party of Labor, like many other communist and progressive organizations such as NAARPR, has long campaigned for a solution for the people called Community Control of the Police even before the events of 2020. This article reaffirms this policy and explains what it means in the context of capitalism. It also reminds us of the racism, chauvinism, and brutality of the American police.

In a situation where the capitalist minority exploits the working masses, political tension arises naturally. This tension takes the form of violence of one class against the other. The police and the bourgeois state are the weapons with which the exploiting, capitalist class enforces its "property rights" and suppresses working-class resistance and revolutionary activity. This was the function of the Tsarist police, and of all the police of Europe. This was and is taken to an extreme in the various colonial countries, where the "property rights" protected by police took the form of a "right" to own humans. This was enforced with an extreme form of nationalist and racist degradation, exploitation, and violence. In the pre-Civil War era of the U.S., the police served in the North as traditional European-style defenders of capital, while in the South they served as colonial-type defenders of slavery. Both institutions of police collaborated together to return slaves escaping to the North back to Southern plantations. Such is the land where "all men are created equal."

Police are, and have always been, a tool of violence against working people, contrary to the claims of the capitalist class and their lackeys in local and federal government. The police in a capitalist society serve the interests of the oppressors rather than their "community." As a smokescreen, in media and in the news, the bourgeois class presents the police as an institution above class allegiance. Supposedly



Thousands marched in downtown Chicago on July 11, 2016, protesting the police murders of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile and demanding community control of the police.

they protect "peace" and the "rule of law," and stop "dangerous criminals." In reality, however, it is clear to see that they are more concerned with enforcing laws which keep the working masses in bondage, and acting as an extreme white nationalist and racist battalion to oppress and murder the working class, as well as people of oppressed races and nationalities without regard to class background.

Initially, the call to defund the police makes sense. If the entire institution is a dangerous weapon of the bourgeoisie, why not abolish it entirely? Without the working class seizing state power, this goal cannot be met. Without control of its own enforcement agency – the state – to protect the interests of the working class, we will be vulnerable to the parasitic leeching of genuine criminals and traditional bourgeoisie alike. Therefore, while the capitalist police must be ultimately transformed, there must be something to take its place.

But why can that not be community policing? Community policing is a policy which employs law enforcement officers directly from the communities they control. This can lessen the overt chauvinistic violence of the police. But under capitalism, those "community members," at the end of the day, still enforce the property laws and capitalist interests which keep working people poor and oppressed. This reform may be preferable to the current state of affairs, but it does not change the fundamental relationship between the police and working people. It is a reformist measure but has some short term value for the working class.

Given this, we support a fuller Community Control

of the Police. We understand this as a way of introducing elements of workers' control and workers' power into bourgeois politics, especially if coupled with education on the differences between liberal reformist demands and revolutionary demands. Bourgeois republics wear a mask of democracy, claiming that they serve the interests of "the people" who under favorable circumstances can force the hand of the bourgeoisie. Demanding Community Control of the Police means demanding a revolutionary power which bourgeois "democracy" cannot stand.

True Community Control of the Police – what we are fighting and aiming for – is comprehensive in its structure: a directly elected, all-civilian council, with complete and final authority over police policy, budgeting, staffing (the power to hire and fire officers), discipline, investigation, and every last element that is currently handled by the cities, counties, and policing institutions. This authority must supersede the authority of the police chief or superintendent. No current or former officer can be allowed to serve on the council. Anything less than this is either a partial concession, or deceptive sleight of hand.

The moment they are pressured, the bourgeoisie will turn one of two ways. They will either take off the mask, and state explicitly that Community Control of the Police would be "bad for business and obstruct public safety," or they will try to undermine and absorb the campaign, limiting the power of Community Control to reign in the police's nationalist and chauvinistic violence. This is seen in

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the “advisory boards,” which will not have oversight of *all* discrepancies and abuses, and answer directly to their local government. As with community policing, even this limited outcome would be preferable to the current situation, but it is a short term gain that still preserves the same fundamental economic relation that produces poverty and misery.

When we call for Community Control of the Police, we are calling for a revolutionary restructuring of law enforcement. We are calling for the complete transfer of power of militarized violence from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. We know that the capitalist class will never allow this without a fight. But it is possible that we might gain a taste of

freedom by playing on their hypocrisy and desire to save face. We can use the capitalists’ need to “appease” the masses, in increasingly unbearable conditions of exploitation and oppression, in order to secure vital breathing room for the organization of a truly democratic and socialist movement. This tactic of “playing the bourgeoisie’s game,” at least in the meantime, has produced impressive first steps in Chicago. There, organizers have managed to squeeze out their very first taste of power. That includes the ability to substantively challenge the hiring and firing decisions of the Mayor’s office.

Community Control of the Police is *not* a defanged alternative to defunding the police, but rather its

more complete and powerful realization. Only in the context of near-total capitalist hegemony, where no radical demands will be met without being diluted or torn apart into mere slogans, Community Control of the Police is more likely to win us life-saving concessions while we continue to organize for proletarian state power. The greater our demands, the more likely we are to gain from our struggle against the bourgeoisie. At the same time, the denial of these basic, democratic reforms concretely exposes the lack of freedom and democracy possessed by the people and the proletariat in the United States and beyond.

## THE PANDEMIC ISN'T OVER! DEMAND PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES!



Black Friday shoppers wearing face masks wait in line to enter a store at the Citadel Outlets in Commerce, Calif., Nov. 26, 2021. (AP Photo/Ringo H.W. Chiu, File)

### Alan I., Ohio. October 14, 2023.

COVID-19 has not gone away, contrary to what the capitalist media and government would have you believe. In fact, it is rebounding with a vengeance. Since the pandemic was declared ‘over’ by President Biden when he ended the national emergency six months ago, measures to contain the virus have been discarded. Most mask mandates have been abandoned, any sort of pandemic-era financial aid is gone, and the only way the virus is even monitored now is through wastewater. Meanwhile, COVID-19 hospitalizations have risen through the summer, painting a grim forecast for this upcoming winter. With the pandemic spanning across two administrations, one from each of the two dominant parties, we have seen that the ruling class will not tolerate life-saving public health measures if it means reduced profits. Now the proletariat has been forced into a new ‘normal’ where we are poorer, hungrier, and sicker.

The COVID-19 response at the beginning of 2020, as half-hearted as it was, saw the boot lift ever so slightly from the neck of the workers. Student loan

payments were paused for three years. Most states passed eviction moratoriums. SNAP (“food stamps”) benefits were increased. Some grocery stores and pharmacies even offered exclusive shopping hours for elderly and high-risk consumers. Public and private properties offered an abundance of free hand sanitizer for visitors. When many workers lost their jobs in the ensuing financial turmoil, stimulus checks, as tiny as they were, helped people stay afloat in the immediate short term. The workers, especially those deemed “essential,” were lauded for continuing to work despite the risks – as if it were a voluntary sacrifice and not motivated by the complete lack of ability to survive without work. Some of these “essential” workers were incentivized with increased wages, or hazard pay. But even these stopgap measures to aid workers made the capitalists absolutely livid, who bellowed a rallying cry to “return to business as usual.” But business as usual, like “law and order,” is simply coded language for “put the poor people back in their place” (so the capitalists can collect their dividends).

Some may push back, saying that the virus has been in decline for some time now. They could say

that the new spike in hospitalizations is not that important. They may even defend the government’s cutting back of financial aid by saying that it is not needed any more. After all, we are constantly told that the stimulus checks caused inflation anyway. Those who would put forward these counterpoints must consider a few things. First of all, the virus continues to mutate and the newest strain, BA.2.86, is far more infectious than the previous Omicron variants. It shows signs of resistance to vaccines and medications as well. Without proper attention paid to this new strain, without vaccination drives, without free testing kits, who is to say how big this new wave of infections and hospitalizations will become? Now that most of the eviction moratoriums have ended, a surge of homelessness has swept the USA. American workers, wrung dry by the capitalists, need financial help! Finally, the myth that stimulus checks cause inflation is as insidious as it is false. The recent bouts of inflation in 2022 and 2023 have been largely driven by cost-push and demand-pull market interactions, which makes sense considering high rates of inflation were not seen in 2020 when the checks were written. Blaming inflation on working class gains is a lie, pure and simple.

Working people cannot and should not shoulder the burden of public health, especially not for the profits of capitalists. COVID-19 must be contained and eliminated for good, which is not possible by only practicing individual responsibility. The capitalists and their governments must take measures to prevent the spread of this new variant by reinstating contact tracing, distributing tests and vaccines for free, and taking responsibility for ignoring this new surge. Workers must continue to demand a work environment free from the risk of contracting the virus. We must take extra care now to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities while we continue to demand public health protocols from the ruling class. Wear a mask, minimize physical contact with others, wash your hands, and get vaccinated if you are eligible.

## ICMLPO STANDS BY THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE!



### Declaration of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations (ICMLPO). October 10, 2023.

The apartheid state of Israel has raised its attacks on the Palestinian people to a new level following the "operation" Al Aqsa Flood against Israel, launched on the morning of October 7 by Hamas and other Palestinian Liberation Organizations.

The "operation" that involved the firing of rockets from Gaza, several groups of guerrillas entering Israel from different points, capturing a border crossing and a police station, as well as taking some Israeli soldiers and civilians hostage, was responded to by the usual aggression of Israeli Zionism, including mass killings, and the attacks continue.

Israel, backed by the imperialists, has been constantly attacking the Palestinian people, occupying their land, and denying at gunpoint the Palestinian nation's right to self-determination.

The Israeli bourgeoisie and the Zionism it advocates hardly recognize the right to life, let alone equal national rights, for the Palestinians. The racist Israeli government, which is building a reckless lawlessness inside the country, continues its attacks on the Palestinian people without interruption. Israeli artillery and airplanes bombard the Gaza Strip, leaving no stone unturned, without any need for justification. From time to time, it enters Gaza with its tanks and never stops its cruelty.

In the West Bank, the tyranny against the Palestinian people is limitless. In Jenin, which it attacked in the recent past, it has killed many sons and daughters of the Palestinian people. Zionist Israel, which declared Jerusalem, the holy place where three religions are located, as its capital, did not just ignore the special

status of the city, but also targeted Al Aqsa and thus the faith of the Palestinians.

The Israeli reactionary bourgeoisie has expelled the Palestinian people from their land, shrinking their living space day by day, and has continuously expanded the occupied territories. It constantly opens space for new settlers and increases these settlements to the detriment of the Palestinian people. The number of Palestinians expelled from their country has long exceeded those who continue to live in Palestine. And the latter are struggling to exercise the most basic human rights, the right to life, let alone exercising the right to freely determining their destiny.

The question "who attacked first?" is meaningless under the conditions of Israel's continuous aggression and persecution of the Palestinian nation! The main thing is that the resistance of the Palestinian people for their national rights and the resistance against the occupier is justified and legitimate. The aggressor is not the resisting Palestinians, but the unjust Zionist state of Israel.

Resistance against Israeli apartheid and the aggression against Palestine and the Palestinian people can only be supported. Condemning Israel and its aggression and massacres, CIPOML supports the just resistance of the Palestinian people to the end.

By condemning Hamas, the US and the European imperialists and their imperialist unions openly supported Israel and its aggression. Supporting aggression against the people, disregarding the principle of equal rights, is the character of the imperialists who themselves attack the peoples. And already in the Middle East, Israel, as an "outpost" of imperialism and relying on the imperialists and getting strength from them and their support,

continues its occupation, denial of rights, and attacks against the Palestinian people. Those imperialists have military bases and troops in the region, support their collaborators and fight among themselves for the redivision of the region.

What seems to be different is the position of the reactionary regional countries, including Turkey and the Arab countries, which call for restraint on all sides. With this position, the reactionary countries of the region, which are in the process of improving their relations with Israel, with the exception of Iran, which has declared that it stands by the Palestinians' struggle for their rights, are patting the back of Israeli Zionism, which has increased the dose of its aggression since the morning of October 7.

No! Clarity is essential. Neutrality or a position of "mediation" cannot be developed in the face of Israeli Zionism's inhumanity. The Palestinian Resistance demanding national political equality of rights and the right to statehood is just and must be supported. Any "solution" that does not recognize the equality of rights of the Palestinians cannot be a solution and cannot put an end to national conflicts.

The idea that the imperialist confrontation is shifting to regions other than the Middle East and that conflicts in the region are subsiding is wrong. The imperialists and their collaborators are active in the region. In addition to the ongoing Israeli oppression and tyranny, Syria and the renewed Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, and Turkey is bombing the Kurdish habitats in Iraq and Syria. The Kurdish question, along with the Palestinian question, is an ancient problem of the region, and the fights of imperialists and the involvement of their collaborators for the redivision of the region and the lack of a solution to these two problems makes the region a bubbling "witches' cauldron."



- **Israel must stop all attacks immediately!**
- **The occupation must end and Israel must withdraw from all occupied territories!**
- **Israel must stop its policy of opening new settlements!**
- **Jerusalem's status as capital must end and the city must be restored to its former status!**
- **Full equality of national rights for the Palestinian nation: the right to self-determination, including the right to statehood!**

# ABORTION AND MARIJUANA AMENDMENTS WOULD INCREASE WORKER AUTONOMY IN FLORIDA

**Benjamin J. Rizzo, Florida. September 23, 2023. Last updated November 3, 2023.**

"As long as women or men live under the pressure of unemployment, as long as the level of wages is not sufficient for a family, as long as housing conditions are unfavorable, and as long as the state does not make motherhood easier for every woman in various ways and does not provide social services for mother and child, it is clear that the women must stand up for free abortions."

*Alexandra Kollontai*

Two proposed amendments to Florida's Constitution would, if approved by voters in 2024, increase worker autonomy in the Sunshine State by adding the right to abortion and the right to use marijuana recreationally to that document.

The abortion measure, entitled "Amendment to Limit Government Interference with Abortion" is sponsored by Floridians Protecting Freedom, a coalition of several groups, including the ACLU of Florida, Planned Parenthood, and 1199 SEIU (Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers East).

It reads: "No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider. This amendment does not change the Legislature's constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion." While this measure is worthy of support, the second provision is problematic. It seems that the drafters were unconcerned that some minors may have valid reasons for not informing their parents or guardian that they're pregnant. Although under Florida law, a pregnant minor who needs an abortion can request a hearing before a judge if the minor can't get or won't seek parental approval obtaining a lawyer and accessing this process can be difficult.

In August, Floridians Protecting Freedom announced that it had collected more than 600,000 of the signatures (892,000-8% of the votes cast for president in Florida's 2020 election) required to place the measure on the 2024 ballot. Axios Tampa Bay reported this month that almost 300,000 of those signatures had been verified-more than the 25% of signatures required to trigger a mandatory review of the measure's text by the Florida Supreme Court, which will look at whether the text covers only a single subject, the accuracy of its title and summary, and if it violates the U.S. Constitution. This review will determine whether the abortion and

marijuana amendments make it to the ballot. If they do, a supermajority-at least 60%-will be required for passage.

Five of the seven members of the Florida Supreme Court are conservatives appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis since 2019 so there's no guarantee that the court, no matter how well-drafted the amendments may be, will allow them on the ballot.

In other abortion-related news from Florida, the state's Supreme Court held a hearing on Sep. 8 to determine the constitutionality of a 2022 law that bans abortion after 15 weeks. The court "seemed open to arguments to uphold" the measure, noted the Guardian. If the court lets it go into effect, a ban on abortion after 6 weeks, passed in the spring of 2023, also would go into effect. This would impact the reproductive rights of Floridians and of people from Southeastern states with more restrictive abortion laws, who since last year's U.S. Supreme Court ruling that overturned *Roe v. Wade* have flocked to Florida by the thousands to obtain the procedure. (Pending the court's ruling, Florida's law allowing abortion up to 24 weeks is still in effect.)

"The people of Florida have said over and over that their right to control their own bodies and make their own health care decisions should remain a protected right in the Florida constitution," said Stephanie Fraim, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Southeast and Central Florida.

"Moreover, the Florida Supreme Court must respect the decades of precedent that make this law clearly unconstitutional," she said, referring to past decisions by the Florida Supreme Court that upheld the right to abortion based on their interpretation of a privacy amendment to the Florida Constitution that was approved by voters in 1980.

"Floridians understand that this ban is a gross overreach into their lives, and they will not stand for it," said Fraim.

In another example of how Florida's government is determined to stamp out reproductive rights, the Agency for Health Care Administration, which regulates women's clinics in the state, recently fined the Women's Center of Orlando \$193,000-\$1,000 per alleged violation of a state law requiring a 24-hour waiting period and two appointments before a termination can be performed. The clinic countered that the state had failed to inform it of when the law went into effect.

Fortunately, SWAN Orlando, which helps defend women trying to access reproductive health services



*Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody is pictured at a 2021 press conference with Gov. Ron DeSantis. (Ricardo Ramirez Buxeda / Getty Images)*

from the bands of religious fanatics who often throng outside of women's clinics stepped in and quickly raised the \$193,000, thus saving the clinic from closing.

The marijuana measure, entitled "Adult Personal Use of Marijuana" is sponsored by Smart & Safe Florida and would allow recreational use by those 21 and up and possession of up to three ounces for personal use. If it passes, Florida would join the 23 other states and the District of Columbia in legalizing recreational weed, and would also be the first state in the South to do so. (In 2016, Floridians approved medical marijuana by a margin of 71% to 29%.)

In July, Safe & Smart Florida announced that it had collected more than 1 million signatures, enough to get it on the ballot.

So far the largest financial supporter of Safe & Smart Florida has been Trulieve, a corporation which operates 126 medical marijuana dispensaries in the Sunshine State. Clearly sensing an opportunity to rake in huge revenues from turning its dispensaries into recreational marijuana stores, the company had already lavished a whopping \$39 million (through June 30 of this year) on Safe & Smart Florida.

Michael Minardi, an attorney in Tampa and chair of Regulate Florida, expects "in excess of, you know, one to two billion dollars [in recreational sales] the first couple of years of adult use here in the state of Florida." In addition, it is estimated that legal cannabis could generate between \$195-431 million in annual tax revenues for local and state government.

A recent survey by the University of South Florida and Florida Atlantic University found that 60% of those surveyed would vote "Yes" on the amendment.

So far, opposition to legalizing recreational cannabis in the Sunshine State has come from right-wing  
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forces, including Gov. Ron DeSantis, Attorney General Ashley Moody, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, and anti-drug groups.

The Florida Supreme Court has scheduled oral arguments on the current marijuana amendment for Wed., Nov. 8.

In a brief recently filed with the court opposing the 2024 amendment, Moody argued that the measure is “misleading, in part because she says voters would not be able to understand from the summary that marijuana would remain federally illegal even if Florida moved to legalize.” This point seems designed to give the court an excuse to once again stymie democracy and the will of the people. The overwhelming majority of arrests for simple possession are made by local, not federal, law enforcement. Indeed, Biden’s pardon last year of those arrested for simple possession on federal property, such as national parks, only covered several thousand people while millions have been arrested by state and local law enforcement over the last several decades.

In 2021, the Florida Supreme Court nixed a marijuana legalization amendment, claiming that it was “misleading” based on its use of the word “permit.”

One benefit of the measure is that it will mean that people will no longer be arrested for simple possession of marijuana (almost 90% of those arrested between 2001-2010 for marijuana offenses). These people, many of them young and from minority groups, will no longer be burdened with life-long criminal records for possessing a few grams of dried plant matter.

As the ACLU noted in a 2020 report: “On average, a Black person is 3.64 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than a white person, even though Black and white people use marijuana at similar rates. In 10 states, Blacks were more than five times more likely to be arrested.”

A report from the New York state ACLU also outlined the many negative impacts of a simple possession arrest on “eligibility for public housing and student

financial aid, job opportunities, child custody and even immigration status.”

“Marijuana arrests are also financially burdensome,” noted the report, “often coming with mandatory court fees, fines, costly legal services and court appearances that require time away from work and school or interfere with paying for child care.” (New York state legalized recreational weed since that report was released.)

Florida is one of only 18 states that allow citizen-initiated amendments to their constitutions. These measures are an example of direct democracy, and can be a more effective way for the working class to enact its wishes into law than voting for bourgeois politicians and parties, which represent the interests of the capitalist class, and hoping, mostly in vain, that they will be responsive to the desires of the people. These amendments will benefit workers in Florida by making their lives easier, and deserve their support and votes.

## UNION WORKER: “WE’RE ALL FIGHTING FOR THE SAME THING”

**Isabelle B., Oregon. September 9, 2023.**

New Seasons Market is a local grocery store chain whose workers have unionized in several stores over the last two years, forming the New Seasons Labor Union (NSLU). The Red Phoenix interviewed a bargaining member of the union while supporting the Powell’s Books workers on strike.

RP: Could you introduce yourself and your involvement in the union?

Alex: Okay, I’m Alex G. and I’m a store rep at the Arbor Lodge location of New Seasons and a bargaining member on the team.

RP: How long ago did you first get involved at New Seasons?

Alex: I’ve been organizing for about a year now. We had our election in January, so we’ve been officially in the union since then.

RP: Awesome! And how long has bargaining been going now?

Alex: Since January as well, yeah.

RP: How about the walk out we saw on Saturday? What spurred that into happening?

Alex: Well, the bargaining session that we had had before that did not go very well. And we’ve been

trying to get them to sign this Memorandum of Understanding to let us have the same attendance policy as the non-union stores, and non-union people at our stores. And they just keep kicking the can down the road, saying, “Oh, we’re working on it, we’re working on it.” But then they gave us their proposal that they wanted outside of the contract, and it was garbage. It was punitive, and it was worse than the one we already have. So we said, no, we’re done.

RP: What is the main message you would want to send to management right now?

Alex: Take us seriously, this is real. We will shut it down!

RP: And what are the main demands you want to see ratified in a new contract?

Alex: Well, the attendance policy has been the biggest driver for most rank-and-file members. And, just, generally we don’t want to see policy changes that get worse and worse over the years.

RP: So, today’s Labor Day, and we’re out here with the Powell’s workers on strike, and this weekend we had the Trans Day of Solidarity with the Coalition of Independent Unions. What brings NSLU out in solidarity with other unions to these events?

Alex: We’re all fighting for the same thing. We’re all here together. We couldn’t do it without them, and

we want to show our support.

RP: What’s the biggest thing you want to see from the community to support NSLU?

Alex: Just keep coming to the store. Tell us hi! Tell the managers that you support union activity, and tell them to come to the table!

RP: We’re seeing a sort of wave of unionization across the US. What would you see to people who are starting to organize their workplace? Any words of advice?

Alex: Keep trucking. It’s a lot of work, and it’s worth it. Reach out for help. Be annoying! Keep going.

RP: What do you expect you’ll see in the next year in the labor movement?

Alex: I think it’s just gonna be more and more of these smaller business coming in, more and more independent unions, and just greater strength in general!



## CONDOLENCES TO THE MOROCCAN PEOPLE AND ALL VICTIMS OF THE EARTHQUAKE



A woman reacts standing in front of her earthquake-damaged house in the old city in Marrakesh on September 9, 2023. (Photo by FADEL SENNA / AFP)



**Statement of the Moroccan Association for Human Rights; executive message from Rabat, September 9, 2023. Published by Democratic Way, Morocco. Translated by Sofia D. for the Red Phoenix, September 19, 2023.**

"Let us turn the tragedy of the earthquake into a moment of universal solidarity."

"Stand against greedy maneuverers and profiteers."

"We offer our condolences to all victims and to the Moroccan people."

"We give our condolences to the men and women injured."

On the night of Friday, September 8, 2023, Morocco learned of a painful tragedy, when the earthquake violently and repeatedly struck the cities and streets of Morocco, leaving behind a living human cost, with thousands dead and wounded, whose final number has not been counted, and the remains of houses, apartments, and collapsed buildings which became rubble in a matter of moments.

The Moroccan Association for Human Rights stands silently in tribute before the souls of the victims, and raises the warmest condolences and grief to their relatives and to all the women and men of our country.

We know the pain which follows the wounded and those who fled the earthquakes, only to be left out in the open, lacking shelter or refuge.

It praises the solidarity and support to the victims shown by the Moroccan people.

It notes the effort made by the public authorities, and calls on them to increase its pace, and generalize it to all locations affected, alleviating the impact of the painful event which befell us, in all corners of the country.

It notes the alarming extent and effect of the earthquake, so it addresses all officials, and demands:

1. That they deal with public opinion with the utmost transparency, by exposing the full extent of malpractice in the remnants of the earthquake, whether, on the one hand, the victims are really victims of the earthquake, or whether it comes down to the character of the dwellings and crumbling buildings; therefore it is necessary to reveal all the technical data which was behind the speed of the collapse, it is necessary to know if there was a flaw in its engineering, or in the method of its construction, or even a lack of oversight in the construction work or the materials used.
2. That they hasten to create an urgent plan to allocate sufficient financial resources to fulfill all the needs of the victims. With these, it must guarantee to restore the homes of the widows, children, guardians of the deceased, and all those who lost their homes. It must provide these with full dignity, and meet their social needs, such as psychological examination and follow-up therapy, schooling, transportation, and access to all basic services.
3. That they establish an official legal framework under the supervision of the Prime Minister to repair infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, canals, etc... in order to relieve the suffering of the citizens and quickly give them peace of mind.
4. That they compensate all of the victims and their relatives for all of the damages and losses, with full equality and without discrimination, nepotism, or exploitation.
5. That they repel any exploitation of this human tragedy, and resist any activity aiming to capitalize off this catastrophe on the backs of its victims.
6. That they take care of the children and offspring of the victims, and make sure they are completely protected from neglect, homelessness, and the dangers which might face them.

So on the occasion of this disaster and its repercussions, we call on all human rights, civilian, trade union, political, women's, youth, and professional groups, to volunteer by the side of the victims, and contribute to supporting them, to provide what is necessary to give them dignity, and to understand their situation and alleviate their pain.



## OPINION: LABOR STRIKE NEWS COVERAGE SUPPRESSED BY OMISSION



Members of SAG-AFTRA, an American actors union, protest and strike on July 17, 2023.

Alan I., Ohio. September 15, 2023.

The strikes of SAG-AFTRA and WGA continue to rage, but you likely would not know that if you consumed only capitalist news sources. The strikes began in July over unfair labor practices and are taking place primarily in Los Angeles and New York. A common misconception about actors is that they're all rich and famous, but the vast majority of actors are simple gig-workers and stunt doubles who rely on production companies to furnish roles for them. Furthermore, a well-known tactic of the bourgeois mass media is ignoring a topic that the capitalist class wants to go away. Michael Parenti said, "The most common form of media manipulation is suppression by omission." Mainstream news sources do not censor themselves by blacking out lines in any given article on any given subject, they do it by deciding what is considered 'newsworthy' by omitting or gesturing to whole subjects and events. Individual reporters or writers may have sympathies for a topic that goes against the interests of the bourgeoisie, but ultimately their work must pass through their editor. To an editor in this capitalist aristocracy, most strikes are not 'newsworthy.'

One may push back, claiming that there is just not enough time or newspaper space to cover every single story in the day. They could also go further and point out that the Hollywood strikes got coverage early on and probably only get passed up now because other stories get better ratings. Yet, one must also consider that labor issues appeal to a very large swathe of the populace. Articles about this topic would draw a lot of eyes to the contents and also to ads. There is money to be made by covering these stories. What do the capitalists fear more than losing money? They fear losing their social position. It is much safer for the capitalists to put another celebrity gossip piece, a piece decrying or defending another Donald Trump scandal, or some other sensational story on the front page that can draw just as many eyes without sowing discontent among the workers.

In the paltry coverage that strikes do get, often pushed far from the front page, the capitalists spin the strikes as un-American and led by zealots who will not make reasonable deals. Every article seems to end with figures about how much money the company will lose with no mention of how much the workers could gain. An article in CNN seems to paint a growing labor movement as pointless and leading nowhere. One article in Fortune magazine even bemoaned the Hollywood strikes, saying that they are "bulldozing the economy" but

neglecting to mention anything about the workers. In the end, the only reason these articles are even written is to make the capitalist news look like it is 'hearing out both sides' and being fair to workers. In reality, they are written to trick workers into trusting biased news.

Make no mistake, the labor movement is growing and securing important new victories. Just recently, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) set new rules concerning collective bargaining. These new rules grant more power to unions by cutting avenues companies can use to avoid bargaining with a newly created union. The determination of Starbucks and Amazon workers was unprecedented in the last 60 years of American history and the capitalists were ill-prepared to contain it. Gen Z is the most pro-union generation alive, with over two-thirds approving of unions. These victories for the working class make it all the more certain that capitalist news sources will continue to suppress news of continued strikes as it would only serve to generate more support for them.

It is incredibly important to track down news that is important to the working class, otherwise workers may find themselves acting against their own class interests, or the latest assault on those interests by the bosses and owners. Workers must be constantly seeking out stories that the capitalists do not want us to see. They must understand the implications and the reason the capitalists do not want them to see it. Proletarians must tune themselves into relevant local issues and ask comrades in other areas about issues in their region. Workers cannot allow themselves to be duped by the capitalist media any longer! Just as the Democrats and Republicans will always fail and mislead the workers, so too will MSNBC, CNN, Fox, and all other dens of deception we are forced to call the "press." The workers must not only have their own independent political party, but their own media as well! Few other tools are as important for the raising of the masses from this manufactured ignorance and confusion to a prepared, organized and rightfully-outraged army of labor.



## UAW: FIGHTING TO WIN BACK CONCESSIONS GIVEN IN 2009

Sofia D., Minnesota. September 26, 2023.

Since Sep. 15, thousands of United Auto Workers (UAW) nationwide have been on strike against General Motors, Ford, and Stellantis, demanding higher wages and benefits. On Sep. 23, a Red Phoenix correspondent joined UAW on the picket line at Stellantis' Mopar Parts Distribution Center in Plymouth, Minnesota, and interviewed one of the workers.

Red Phoenix: Would you mind identifying yourself?

Alex: I'm Alex Tivis, I'm a local UAW union Local 125 worker.

RP: What motivated this strike?

A: I think that what's really going on here is that back in 2008 and 2009, when we went through the recession, the upper tier of our union gave a lot of concessions to the Big Three to allow them to stay afloat. I think a really big part of this fight, is that they're asking for a lot of those things back, not only for themselves but also for all the lower tiered UAW employees.

RP: What are some of those concessions?

A: So, the big three things that got frozen or taken away in 2009 are: (1) the cost of living adjustment (COLA); (2) tiered wage scales – what that means is that you will have people in the same facility doing the same work and there will be different scales of pay for them depending on their seniority; and (3) pension increase for retirement or retired UAW workers.

RP: To be clear these were all things the union was fighting for, correct?

A: Yes, correct. Those were all given up as concessions in 2009 to allow the companies to continue to be profitable and continue to function.

RP: I heard from you earlier up at that picket line that the disparities in the pay increases between CEOs and workers have been wildly disproportionate over the past few years.

A: Absolutely. In the public's eye and in mainstream media, it looks like we're asking for this huge 40% wage increase, but what that 40% wage increase really incorporates is the lack of increase over the past four contract negotiations. If you break it down into increments, that would basically be right around 12% or 13% per contract. So they're asking for all of those things back. This is the wage disparity you are seeing at a ground level here. You have people that are working full-time in these assembly plants, and they actually can't afford to purchase the vehicles that they're assembling.

RP: I know up at the picket we were talking about solidarity and how this strike relates to other strikes that have happened recently. Would you like to speak a little to the place of this particular strike in relation to the broader wave of strikes?

A: You know, especially with the showing that we've had here, and the amount of other people that are in unions who I've been speaking with, I think that the issues are identical across the board. I think that [these issues are] unreasonable working conditions or hours.

RP: How long are your hours right now?



UAW workers and their supporters on the picket line in Plymouth, MN. (Red Phoenix)

A: So currently here in the Mopar division, they can give us mandatory overtime of one extra hour a day, and then they have the opportunity to give us another eight mandatory hours over the weekend. But depending on necessity, especially in the winter here, because we distribute parts to all of the dealerships, any auto body or collision facilities... If there are any winter storms, it's basically an emergency for us. So my longest week ever here was around 96 hours.

With that being said, I have some friends that are nurses, and I also think about their stories of being mandated to work an insane amount of hours, having short turnarounds to coming back to work. I think that the thing we are fighting for here, as much as equality of wage, is equality of treatment. When you are someone who lives in a very fast paced environment like that, you definitely need time to decompress. What I'm seeing here is that there's been this big push by the corporate side of America to make people into machinery, even though they're not. But when it comes time to compensate those people that were essential to you, making your profits, or when it comes time to pay them more because of the extra work they are putting in, they seem to come up empty-handed.

Yesterday, we had a gentleman from Amazon at the picket line, and again, that is a very similar situation to what we deal with here as far as picking standards, hours of operation, mandatory over time.

I think that this is really a fight for the working class person. I know that that's something that has really been emphasized by the national side of the UAW, but I think that it really resonates with everyone.

RP: When you start showing that this is a common struggle.

A: Yes. When you start showing up to the grocery store and \$60 to \$100 buys you a bag or two of groceries? I think that's a pinch that everybody is feeling.

RP: Absolutely.

A: So it's definitely a working class issue. All these people that were considered essential when they were shutting things down, who were coming out here, and putting their lives on the line to continue to allow things to function. But now, when it comes time to pay those people for that work, they seem to forget about us.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

RP: Were you guys hit by the pandemic in any notable way?

A: We had the option to not work. But the reality, especially for us, is that, in our facility here especially, there's a lot of generational employees here. I'm a second generation UAW worker – my dad works here. This is a really close-knit group of people. So, especially when you're considered essential, we do feel an obligation to continue to work.

RP: And there's enough trust. I think that also creates a lot of solidarity when it comes to union work.

A: I think that you are seeing that. We're not a lot here, but I do believe that we're mighty in our own right.

RP: Absolutely.

A: And I think that the effect that that had on us here is that you really started to realize how crucial you were to the overall movement in this company. And I think that a lot of the people, Starbucks workers, Amazon workers, and nurses – we relied on them more than anybody – they felt that pitch, in order to either

get these bonuses or temporary increases. But I know some companies actually took them away after the emergency part of the pandemic was over. I think that's just absolutely insulting to the people that you rely on.

RP: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A: I would like to say this: there's a lot of heritage that goes into the unions, not just the UAW. This is a fight that people a long time before us took up and a lot of things that we get to take advantage of today are things that those people fought for.

This is not an easy battle, but it is a good battle to be part of and even if you don't want to agree in the here and now, I do believe that everyone should want to leave things better than they found them, that's really what this is about.

## ILLINOIS LANDLORD KILLS 6-YEAR-OLD PALESTINIAN-AMERICAN CHILD, ISLAMOPHOBIA ON THE RISE



Family members of Wade Al Fayoume bring out his casket from Mosque Foundation to the hearse in Bridgeview, Ill., Monday, Oct. 16, 2023. (AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh)

### V. Valentino, California. October 23, 2023.

A landlord in Illinois, Joseph Czuba, 71, killed a 6-year old Palestinian-American child, Wade Al-Fayoume, in what is being charged as a hate crime. Just as in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, there is now a similar surge in racially motivated and Islamophobic violence since the onset of the current Israeli-Hamas conflict which began on October 7.

The victim's mother, Hanaan Shahin, 32, was stabbed 12 times by the assailant according to authorities, who stated that she is currently in the hospital and is expected to recover. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) executive director, Ahmed Rehab, recounted details contained in text messages sent from Shahin to her child's father which demonstrated that Czuba was blatantly anti-Islamic. Czuba knocked on his tenant's door and immediately after she opened it he allegedly began choking her, shouting, "you Muslims must die," according to Rehab. "It all happened in seconds," Shahin explained in one of the messages. Czuba had previously had cordial relations with his tenants. The landlord even built a treehouse for the boy, allowed him to swim in a makeshift pool, and brought over toys for him. It wasn't until he started watching news coverage about the October 7 attack that something suddenly changed, according to Rehab.

The increase of hate crimes committed against persons of perceived Middle Eastern descent since the attacks of September 11 has proven all too clearly that Islamophobia is at the forefront of racially motivated hate crimes in American society. From 2000 to 2001, racially motivated attacks specifically towards the Muslim community saw a baffling increase of 1,617%. Framing the attacks on the Twin Towers as being perpetrated by Al Qaeda terrorists seemingly justified the subsequent discrimination against Muslims that has become all too familiar thanks to mainstream media outlets over the past 22 years. According to the Center for the Study on Hate and Extremism (ACSHE), up until 2015 incidents of anti-Arab violence were combined into the FBI's category of bias against "other ethnicity/nationality, non hispanic." In 2001, hate crimes reported against this catch-all group were more than triple the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes. Furthermore, the ACSHE reported that from 2011 to 2015 attacks against the Islamic community rose another 324%.

As of October 20, The Council on American-Islamic Relations canceled plans to hold its 29th annual banquet on Saturday at the Marriott Crystal Gateway in Arlington, Virginia, due to the hotel receiving anonymous phone calls referencing bomb threats. A similar event scheduled in Maryland for October 28 was also canceled. The two events will be merged together at an undisclosed location where heightened security measures will be taken. These threats were echoed in several emails currently being investigated by the FBI seemingly due to the fact that the CAIR shifted the focus of its programming to addressing human rights issues for Palestinians. The group has also initiated an online campaign urging Congress to support a ceasefire in Gaza.

The murder of Wade Al-Fayoume and the bomb threats made against the CAIR within a time frame of less than two weeks demonstrate that Islamophobia still continues to manifest throughout American society more than two decades after the Bush Administration decided to use 9/11 as an ostensible reason to make Muslims the enemy. We can only speculate as to what other acts of bigotry will be carried out in the name of such small minded xenophobia. It goes without saying that the violation of the basic rights of fellow human beings should be condemned to the highest degree possible regardless of what banner they stand beneath.

## About the Red Phoenix

*The Red Phoenix* is the mass voice of the American Party of Labor, published and printed bimonthly. It is a newspaper dedicated to providing a creative and original insight on what is happening in the United States of America and around the world. Along with analysis of important news, events, reviews, and commentary, the paper also includes interviews and letters from workers across the country. The goal of *The Red Phoenix* is to provide a platform for working people of all kinds, without the biases and mitigation of corporate media.

*The Red Phoenix* is aimed at revolutionary and progressive-minded people, activists, workers, and others who are fighting in firm opposition to the war against the poor and the oppressed. Our political stands are taken from a revolutionary perspective and our writing serves as a medium of expressing that sentiment.

*The Red Phoenix* was founded in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash, as a way to give a platform and voice for working class people left outside popular media narratives. During the Trump presidential campaign and the George Floyd Movement, *The Red Phoenix* grew to have correspondents across the country seeking to interview workers, analyze the resurgent labor movement, and agitate for a true workers' democracy. In our era of misinformation and rising fascism and union-busting, the need for true working class stories, under the "blue and red" mythology, has never been greater.

To help us with our work by subscribing, donating, or submitting your own articles for publication, please visit us online at [RedPhoenixNews.com](http://RedPhoenixNews.com)



Kollontai, c. 1900

**Only the fresh revolutionary storms were strong enough to sweep away hoary prejudices against woman and only the productive-working people is able to effect the complete equalization and liberation of woman by building a new society.**

**Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952)**

**The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman**

**The Red Phoenix is published bimonthly by The American Party of Labor.**

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**PEACE,  
EQUALITY,  
SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY**

## About the American Party of Labor

**The APL is a revolutionary working class organization.** Our aim is to abolish the capitalist system and replace it with a socialist, working democracy, a system based on the principle laid out by Marx, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." There can be no true freedom or democracy when billionaires have more wealth than the bottom 90% of Americans.

★ **An Anti-Revisionist, Internationalist Party:** The American Party of Labor is a dedicated anti-revisionist party, opposed to concessions to capitalists, and critical of all imperialist actions by the US, Russia, and China. The APL is an observer member in the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations (ICMLPO), and participates in the international anti-revisionist struggle.

★ **A Party of Working Class People:** The American Party of Labor is made up of workers fighting for workers' rights. Many of our members are in active union and unionization struggles, and we all do our political work after clocking out.

★ **A Party of Equals:** The APL is active in the fight for the rights of women, oppressed nations, the LGBTQIA+ community, and immigrants, and for the community control of police departments. In 2019, the APL was a founding member in the National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression.

★ **Forever Anti-Fascist:** We uphold the anti-fascist legacy of the Marxist-Leninist movement. Members of the American Party of Labor are active in movements against the Far-Right on college campuses, and the barbaric treatment of immigrants at the border.

### Who can join? How do I get involved?

Every working person who is open to our plan for change, agrees with our Program and Platform, and is over the age of 18 is welcome to apply.

To look at our joining procedure, activity, membership FAQ, and more, please visit:

[AmericanPartyofLabor.com](http://AmericanPartyofLabor.com)

You can find everything that you should know about us here, and you can contact us and connect to members in your area.

If we don't have a presence in your city, we'll get to know you and help you establish one.

### Why are we Marxist-Leninists in the USA in the 21st century?

There is an important fundamental difference between Marxism and other so-called anti-capitalist or "third way" theories. Marx, unlike many thinkers of his day, did not see a problem with capitalism that could just be mitigated. Instead, he and his compatriots analyzed capitalism itself to understand how the system worked. Marx's ideas for revolution are based on that analysis, and the experiences of the struggles in Europe of 1848. Solutions to the problems of capitalism can only be reached by understanding and observing the system itself, textured with the political reality of the country and historical struggles. This is why we think revolutionary history is worth talking about, and making part of our platform.

Regarding the regulation of capitalism and emergent social democratic reform movements, it is not uncommon that capitalist states restrict the private sector for various reasons. The problem is that political power is still stacked in favor of the ruling class; they have every avenue and all the resources necessary undo reforms and regulations. What truly led to the collapse of the socialist bloc was not that these countries pursued communism, which was ultimately too radical, but rather that these nations pursued market style reforms until they had more or less become capitalist countries. As we have seen in the US, liberal victories are short-lived.

Today, social democratic movements would have us do much the same, if not less – regulate capitalism, nationalize some industry, and try to maintain a welfare state – without expropriating the ruling class, without giving the nation a clear direction for the future, and worst of all, without putting the working class in power. We cannot face climate change, resurgent fascism, police brutality, the exploitation of oppressed nations, and the threat of American imperialism around the world without a revolutionary, centrally organized movement.

**Powered by Labor and made possible by contributions from workers like you.**