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# UNIONIZE!

## Amazon workers take big step

By Workers World New York City bureau

Oct. 25 — The Amazon Labor Union filed with the National Labor Relations Board today to win the right to represent workers at Amazon’s Staten Island warehouses. If the close to 2,000 union cards are accepted by the National Labor Relations Board, the vote will be scheduled for mid-November.

The ALU has successfully built a workers’ committee and signed up over 2,000 workers. Amazon whistleblower Chris Smalls said at an earlier news conference, as he announced the planned filing with the Region 29 Brooklyn NLRB office, “On Sunday, October 17, 2021, members of the committee democratically ratified our constitution and elected me as president of the ALU.”

Smalls continued, “Since the campaign has launched, Amazon didn’t waste any time to begin union busting. We have endured the same antics seen in Bessemer, Alabama, from signs in the bathrooms to the same firm that was hired: T.B.G. The Burke Group was hired

by Amazon to walk around the buildings creating doubt amongst the workers.”

Regardless of Amazon’s anti-union attempts, ALU has earned the trust of the workers, hosting a number of barbecues, as well as handing out food and cold water along with masks and T-shirts daily. Amazon refuses to acknowledge ALU as a current worker-led collective, instead sending out false messaging telling workers they will lose their voices and wages.

Members of the committee will be addressing their experiences and why they have decided to join ALU.

Smalls said, “We are proud to be joined by our comrades and several community organizations from the NYC metropolitan area to help support the efforts of the ALU. Workers are demanding Amazon stop their union-busting practices and allow workers to use their rights to organize toward collective bargaining without interference.”

The ALU president explained, “ALU has put together a list of demands which we have full intentions to fight for as a bonafide union. We intend to fight for



ALU members, here with supporters, file for union election in Brooklyn, N.Y., Oct. 25.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

higher wages, job security, safer working conditions, more paid time off, better medical leave options and longer breaks. We also want to fight to bring back monthly VCP [variable compensation pay] bonuses for attendance and productivity and for becoming shareholders again upon employment with the company on Day 1. Both ended in 2018.”

### Part of ongoing struggle for Amazon worker justice

Smalls emphasized, “This is truly a remarkable historical moment for all Amazon workers all over the country. ALU has already broken barriers and will continue to do so, but we’re not getting complacent. We now need the support of the communities more than ever as our fight is just getting started.”

This day was over a year in the making. The devastating impact of COVID on workers and the lack of basic safety on

the job at Amazon facilities and Amazon-owned Whole Foods stores led to walkouts and job actions at multiple locations in the spring of 2020. Chris Smalls was fired March 30, 2020, after leading a walkout at the Amazon JFK8 warehouse.

The unsafe COVID conditions, combined with the general brutal working conditions that leave workers exhausted and lead to frequent injuries, made it imperative to unionize the company. In April of this year, Smalls and other current and fired workers at JFK8 formed the Amazon Labor Union.

That same month the National Labor Relations Board announced the results of a union representation election at Amazon’s Bessemer, Ala., facility. The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union had lost the election by a wide margin. The union appealed to the NLRB, filing multiple Unfair Labor Practice

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# Mark Indigenous Peoples Day Support Workers World

Boston Mayor Kim Janey proclaimed Oct. 6 that the second Monday of October every year would be Indigenous Peoples Day. The document says this commemoration will be “in lieu of’ Columbus Day ... and renounces the racist and colonial history of Boston and its impact on Indigenous peoples.”

This was a victory for Native people, considering that the European invasion, theft of their land and culture, denial of all rights, torture and genocide, began in what is now the state of Massachusetts and continued there for years. Then on Oct. 8, President Joe Biden proclaimed a federal Indigenous Peoples Day and acknowledged the “wrong and atrocities that many European explorers inflicted on Tribal nations and Indigenous communities.”

These pronouncements came about due to the unified militant struggles by Indigenous peoples and their allies, which have intensified in the last five years.

The movement for recognition of Oct. 12 as Indigenous Peoples Day began in Berkeley, Calif., following a huge march in San Francisco, on Oct. 10, 1992, protesting the celebration of conquistador and genocidal murderer Christopher Columbus’ arrival 500 years earlier. Since then, at least 130 cities and towns and 11 states have dumped the holiday honoring the genocidal conqueror and now revere Indigenous people, their heritage and culture on that day.

**A rising tide**

Thousands of people from around the world traveled to join in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and other Native nations to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, starting in 2016.

Protests, including civil disobedience, led by Indigenous organizers have been joined by environmentalists and other allies against the rerouting and expansion of Enbridge Line 3, which brings tar sands oil from Alberta, Canada, to Superior, Wisc. In the U.S., this dirty fuel travels across the ancient wild rice beds in Anishinaabe lands in Minnesota, threatening many waterways.

Non-Native supporters have joined the movements to rename sports teams bearing racist, anti-Indigenous names.

Indigenous activists participated in the courageous Black Lives Matter protests in Minneapolis and elsewhere decrying



Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth



‘Treaties, not Tar Sands’ at Minnesota State Capitol, Aug. 25.

the police murder of George Floyd. BLM demonstrators have joined Native peoples’ struggles; the Chicago BLM had a delegation at Standing Rock. Unity and allyship have grown between these movements and strengthened their struggles against their common enemy: white supremacy.

Workers World has continually supported the righteous struggles of Native peoples on the streets and in our newspaper. WW joins Indigenous communities to demand: Drop ‘Columbus Day’ as a federal holiday! Commemorate Indigenous Peoples Day in every city, town and state! Down with white supremacy!

**Your help is needed!**

The WW Supporter Program was founded 44 years ago to help build this socialist newspaper. Since the early 1990s, it has supported workers.org, the website where new WW articles are posted daily, and each week’s full issue is displayed in a pdf document. The newspaper is printed and mailed out monthly.

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Write and mail monthly or annual checks to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. (Include your name and address.) Or donate at workers.org. □

## Join us in the fight for socialism!

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □



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# ACT UP Boston demands 'Housing & health care, not jails!'

By Steve Gillis  
Boston

On Oct. 19, Massachusetts Republican Governor Charlie Baker, Democrat Attorney General Maura Healy and Mayor Kim Janey declared a “public health emergency” in Boston. Why?

In order to call out forces of the state to eradicate a tent city with hundreds of structures housing people experiencing homelessness. A day later, the nearest major city, Providence, R.I., announced similar draconian measures, outlawing sleeping in tents.

For months during the pandemic lockdown, a multinational city within the city has developed in Boston’s largest food warehouse district, also known as “Mass & Cass,” located in the Newmarket neighborhood. The tent city grew up in the shadow of the Boston Food Bank, an Amazon Fresh warehouse, meat packing plants, Boston Medical Center, Citizens Bank and the skyscraping Suffolk County House of Correction.

Encampment residents are mostly people who use drugs (PWUD), forced to the fringes by a stigmatizing society, as well as unhoused people forcibly evicted by landlords and people with debilitating health conditions.

The residents of Mass & Cass, many who have earned meager livings on the streets of greater Boston for years, have been pushed into the Newmarket neighborhood by rampant gentrification and their search for medical services as pandemic-era capitalist crises have effectively eliminated housing, health care, even unemployment and food benefits for these workers.

Æzra El, a harm reduction specialist and ACT UP activist who works in the neighborhood, told Workers World: “My people down here have constructed their own housing and sort out their own meals, watch out for each other, clean their own spaces. The Boston Food Bank will beef up

security, but you won’t see them setting up a tent to feed people. Local property holders and businesses will fight tooth and nail against supervised consumption sites and transitional housing for PWUD, but still complain about tents and public consumption by PWUD. Developers are building million-dollar condos across the city, but not for my people down here. They’re looking to run them out of town.”

Corporate media has followed the line put out by the Newmarket Business Association, which has an Amazon elephant in its boardroom. The business people charge all who reside in Mass & Cass with being criminals who need to be saved from themselves.

Headlines push “the sheriff’s plan” for mass arrests, “mobile courthouses,” “clean sweeps,” private armed security, surveillance systems and locking up people who have problematic relationships with drugs into “treatment” at the county jail.

In recent weeks, the state erected miles of fencing around the area as its public health response, while ordering police to harass, arrest or involuntarily commit to “treatment” anyone who refuses the city’s woefully inadequate shelter system as an

alternative to eviction from the street community.

## ACT UP Boston mobilizes

In emergency response to these attacks, the reinvigorated Boston chapter of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) has launched a mass media campaign of flyers, memes and a petition with the following demands:

- Hands off the tent city in Newmarket! Immediately provide sanitation and hygiene resources. No more sweeps!
- Homes, not shelters, not detentions! No exceptions.
- No new police force, no new security, no mass surveillance.
- Free science-backed treatment on demand for problematic relationships to any substances and/or behaviors, now!
- Culturally responsive and expanded access to HIV medication and PrEP, and expanded HIV prevention education, now!
- Supervised consumption spaces in Massachusetts, now!



WW PHOTO: STEVE GILLIS

**ACT UP Boston with the SIF MA NOW! Coalition at the Boston Science March, April 22, 2017. A SIF is a medically supervised injecting facility, a harm-reduction strategy for drug users.**

## Defend Apache peoples' Oak Flats

Apache Stronghold activists rallied in San Francisco Oct. 21, the day before the federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments by grassroots Apache activists, legal representatives and allies against the total destruction of the Apache peoples' most sacred site, about 60 miles east of Phoenix, Ariz. A 12-day spiritual caravan of Apache Stronghold activists and environmentalists journeyed from Arizona to San Francisco for the hearing, in the latest chapter of the 17-year battle to save Oak Flat, the historic Apache Stronghold, Ch'chil Bildagoteel. Oak Flat is threatened with destruction by Resolution Copper—owned by notorious mining barons Rio Tinto and BHP—and exploitation for copper mining and being turned into a 1,000-foot-deep, two-mile-long crater. (azcentral.com, Oct. 23)



behind the dam at Skunk Camp, Ariz., threaten the Gila River with billions of gallons of toxic sludge. The U.S. Forest Service has withdrawn its Jan. 15 environmental impact statement, which was filed under the previous administration. The 22-acre site is part of the Tonto National Forest.

— Report by Stephanie Hedgecoke, photo by Perry Matlock

## Support activist Joe Lombardo

By The Coalition for Civil Freedoms

The Coalition for Civil Freedoms, its Board, staff, member organizations, and concerned individuals stand in solidarity with activist and organizer Joe Lombardo after an incident of FBI harassment. Joe has been an organizer in the anti-war movement for decades and is presently a co-leader of the country’s largest and most active anti-war coalition, the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), a CCF member organization.

Recently, out of the blue, FBI agents contacted Joe’s former spouse in Albany, N.Y., for questioning. They first visited her house, saying they wanted to talk to her about Joe’s visits to Venezuela and Russia. She wasn’t home. They then called and pressed her to meet with them in person to discuss Joe’s past activities and travels, specifically his 2019 trip to Venezuela, which he took in connection with a U.S. Peace Delegation. Joe’s former spouse, sensibly, never spoke to the agents.

Joe has been doing a lot of work against U.S. sanctions in a coalition he helped found, called the Sanctions Kill Coalition. He and others from the group met with the Venezuelan delegation that was in New York for the U.N. General Assembly a couple of weeks ago. (Venezuela has initiated meetings with others of the 39 countries that have had U.S. unilateral sanctions placed against

them. These sanctions are illegal under the U.N. Charter.) These meetings have been very successful and have included Russia and China. Joe’s group just came out with a major report on the effect of sanctions [sanctionskill.org] that has also gotten some play. Maybe this is why they are interested in him now.

We must lend as much support as possible to those individuals whose work on behalf of oppressed people worldwide leads them to become targets of the FBI. We know all too well the consequences of speaking with the FBI and what such contact can lead to. We stand in solidarity with Joe Lombardo and other anti-war activists ready to take any action necessary to support them.

Sincerely,

The Aafia Foundation, Amith Gupta, Ashley Young, The Committee to Stop FBI Repression, DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving), Fahd Ahmed, Friends of Human Rights, ICNA Council for Social Justice (ICNA CSJ), International Action Center, Leena Al-Arian, Mauri Saalakhani, Mel Underbakke, Sara Flounders, Sonali Sadequee, Stephen F. Downs, Theodore Micceri, United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), Zahra Billoo.

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# Medical release for Russell Maroon Shoatz

By Betsey Piette

Oct. 25 — Pennsylvania political prisoner Russell Maroon Shoatz’s petition for medical release was finally granted by Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas’ Judge Kai Scott following a hearing Oct. 25. With his petition accepted, Shoatz will be sent to a hospital for evaluation, then moved to hospice care with his family. According to medical testimony in court today, he has only a month to live.

A founding member of the Black Unity Council, veteran Black Panther and soldier in the Black Liberation Army, Shoatz was incarcerated in 1972. He was convicted of first-degree murder for the politically motivated attack on a Philadelphia police station in August 1970 that left one officer dead and another wounded.

Sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, Shoatz escaped from prison twice — once in 1977 and again in 1980 — earning him the nickname “Maroon,” in reference to escaped enslaved Africans in North and South America. He endured 30 years of inhumane solitary confinement.

### Cruel and unusual punishment

Shoatz became president of the Pennsylvania Association of Lifers and was lobbying lawmakers to repeal

sentences of life without parole in 1983, when he was placed in solitary for several years. In 1991, he was again placed in solitary for over 22 consecutive years until successfully completing a “step-down” program in 2014. In 2016, Shoatz won a \$99,000 settlement and a permanent reprieve from solitary in a case that challenged Pennsylvania’s use of this cruel and unusual punishment.



In 2019 Shoatz was diagnosed with colorectal cancer, survived 12 rounds of chemotherapy and was scheduled for surgery last fall to remove the primary cancerous mass. However, in October 2020

Shoatz was placed in lockdown at the State Correctional Institute Dallas (PA) where he contracted COVID-19. Guards had brought the virus into the prison.

When Shoatz was finally able to have his surgery after months of delays, the cancer had metastasized. By the spring of 2021, he had terminal stage 4 cancer.

Shoatz first petitioned for medical release in August 2021 but was denied by Judge Scott. In repetition today, Shoatz’s attorney Bret Grote, with the Abolitionist Law Center, outlined the emergency that has arisen since August.

During today’s hearing a number of witnesses, including the doctor who has provided his hospital care since 2019, testified that the Pennsylvania Department

of Corrections and SCI Dallas have proven incapable of giving Shoatz the normal standard of hospice care for a terminal patient. With the cancerous mass completely obstructing Shoatz’s intestines, doctors at the hospital started parenteral nutrition to infuse a specialized form of food intravenously, while draining any fluids that might enter his stomach.

When Shoatz was sent back to SCI Dallas, prison staff failed to follow the procedure; his condition deteriorated within days, and he was rushed back to the hospital. Essentially, withholding all nutrition and water from a person, once parenteral nutrition was started, is a death sentence. For the record, SCI Dallas stated that not only could they not provide this care, they would not.

During the hearing, Shoatz, from a wheelchair in his prison cell, made a statement on his own behalf. Acknowledging this was the first time she had actually seen Shoatz and how dire his situation appeared, Judge Scott expressed shock at the prison’s substandard care.

### DOC unable or unwilling

In August Scott ordered that Shoatz receive hospice care in prison. Since the DOC failed to do what they said they would, Judge Scott had no recourse but to send him to hospice outside. She noted that the DOC was either unable or unwilling to provide the necessary end-of-life care and that every person is



entitled to die with dignity.

Speaking at a gathering outside the court following Judge Scott’s decision, Russell Shoatz III stated that it was heart-moving to hear his father speak for himself. “The transcripts from this hearing contain the evidence that the prisons don’t have the ability, not just for healthy prisoners, but for the geriatric ones, to provide the health care they need. They have effectively killed my father.

“There is a lawsuit here, not just for my father but for prisoners in general who have historically suffered poor health care. The judge stated she can’t believe that the prison can’t afford health care. There is no way that their prison system can take care of any of them in any sustainably healthy way.”

Philadelphia police and prison abolitionist YahNé Indigo, speaking with Workers World, expressed hope that Judge Scott’s decision could have a positive impact for the passage of Pennsylvania SB135, which seeks to eliminate the sentence of life without parole. Another bill, SB835 would provide for parole for the sick and elderly.

“This hearing exposed the DOC’s failure to provide medical care,” said the abolitionist. “If the legislation is passed, it would benefit all of our older political prisoners in Pennsylvania and set a precedent that would help in other states as well.” □

# Black Trans Lives Matter! CeCe McDonald: the right to self-defense

By Leslie Feinberg

*This is part of an article published Dec. 7, 2012, in Workers World in the series of articles by Leslie Feinberg on the local, U.S. and international campaign to “Free CeCe!” Trans woman CeCe McDonald was charged with murder for defending herself and friends when attacked by a white-supremacist mob in 2011 in Minneapolis. In June 2012, Feinberg committed civil disobedience and was arrested for spray-painting “Free CeCe!” on the walls and pillars of the Hennepin County Courthouse, where McDonald was to be sentenced. Sent to prison, CeCe McDonald served much less time because of the powerful campaign for her freedom. She was finally freed Jan. 13, 2014.*

At certain moments in history, the struggle of individuals to survive and organize against fascist attacks, police and prison terror sharply reveals the societal relationship of forces — between oppressor and oppressed, exploiter and exploited. These battles inspire unity and

action that help shape and define political eras — like the demands to free the Scottsboro Brothers, Lolita Lebron, Leonard Peltier, George Jackson, Joann Little, Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The struggle to “Free CeCe!” is sparking a growing, broad united front against white supremacy and anti-trans violence. CeCe McDonald’s courage and consciousness and the tireless and tenacious solidarity work by supporters in Minneapolis and the region — led by those who are oppressed — has widened and deepened the demand to “Free CeCe!” in cities across the U.S. and around the world.

Hundreds of thousands of people in the U.S. and internationally now know more facts about the attack on CeCe McDonald than the judge and prosecutor allowed a jury to know during her trial.

CeCe McDonald and her friends were assaulted in Minneapolis on June 5, 2011, by a group that announced its ideology as racist and fascist in words and action. The attackers shouted white-supremacist Klan language, transmisogynist epithets and a slur against same-sex love.

CeCe replied that “her crew would not tolerate hate speech.”

One of the attackers then assaulted CeCe McDonald with a weapon — smashing her in the face with a bar glass that deeply punctured her cheek.

In the fight that ensued, one of the attackers died. He had a swastika tattoo.

CeCe McDonald was the only person arrested by the police that night. McDonald has been punished ever since as the “aggressor” for defending her life and the lives of her friends — and surviving. Police, sheriffs, jailers, prosecutor, judge and prison administration have arrested her, locked her up and held her in solitary confinement for long periods.

Stop the war on trans women of color! □



WW PHOTO: LESLIE FEINBERG

**CeCe McDonald and Leslie Feinberg, Hennepin County jail, Minneapolis, May 1, 2012.**

# Abuse at Philadelphia County Jails must stop now!

Dozens of relatives and friends of incarcerated people, recently released former prisoners and community activists held a protest outside a Northeast Philadelphia complex of jail buildings on Oct. 21.

For over a year, incarcerated people at Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility and four other prison institutions inside the State Road compound have complained of inhumane conditions such as infrequent showers, dirty linen, bad food, being held in cells for 23 hours per day or longer, hostile guards who refuse to wear masks to protect against COVID transmission and other dangerous conditions.

At least 14 people have died in city jails this year, the majority of them by



homicide, suicide or drug overdose. This rate for Philly is far above the national average.

Over 4,600 people, most of whom are

people of color being held in cells while awaiting trials, suffer from horrible prison conditions made worse by staffing levels that are 520 positions below legal requirements. City administrators have completely failed to adequately address the crisis.

In August, a federal judge filed an order requiring the prisons to ramp up hiring, ease pandemic lockdowns, institute staff

COVID-19 testing, and move to resume normal operations. In September, the district attorney’s office began a grand jury investigation.

Yet, the medieval-like jail conditions remain abysmal.

Organized by the Human Rights Coalition, Straight Ahead and the Abolitionist Law Center, organizers emphasized these incarcerated people are our family members, friends and neighbors, and they deserve to be treated like human beings. They pledged to continue protesting and ended the demonstration with chants of “We’ll be back!”

— Photo and article by Joe Piette

# Global class struggle drives supply chain logjam

By Betsey Piette

The global supply logjam continues to receive attention from the corporate media, the most influential CEOs and politicians. They claim to be concerned that shortages of goods could lead to higher prices, drive inflation and negatively impact workers, who are already economically challenged by historically low wages.

On Oct. 14, President Joe Biden called for two key California ports — Los Angeles and Long Beach — to be opened 24/7 to unload containers from the growing number of cargo ships waiting to dock. The ink wasn't dry on Biden's press release before critics raised that unloaded goods are already waiting for trucks — due to a shortage of available drivers.

Truck drivers say they can only carry the contents of one massive cargo container per vehicle, and the warehouses they bring them to are already full. In the warehouses, the bosses are driving workers to work faster and faster, making the work dangerous and exhausting. These warehouse workers, including about a million at Amazon's giant complexes, are organizing against oppressive working conditions.

If the bottleneck at the port is resolved, this just pushes the bottleneck further down the supply chain and in the process exposes the contradictory relations between bosses and workers at the crux of the problem.

The global supply chain involves a massive complex of companies and the over 3 billion workers they exploit. And the COVID-19 pandemic has left millions of workers no longer willing to risk their health and safety in jobs where corporate owners refuse to provide living wages and benefits to address health and safety.

## High tech and globalization

The big capitalists took advantage of the high-tech revolution in the early 1980s and the political changes in the 1990s: counterrevolution in the Soviet Union; and China opening its workforce for employment in and exploitation by internationally based industry. (See "High Tech, Low Pay," by Sam Marcy and "Low Wage Capitalism," by Fred Goldstein.)

In their drive to maximize profits, multinational corporations began to export apparatuses of production, moving entire factories from country to country to find where they could pay workers the lowest wages. These same corporations forced parts manufacturers to compete against each other to offer the lowest bids.

Retail industries employed "just-in-time" inventories to reduce overhead costs. This strategy allowed the corporations to minimize storing goods — their inventory — in warehouses or parking lots, but required a smooth-flowing delivery of manufactured goods. Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic and impacted by major weather events due to the climate crisis, some pro-capitalist analysts now say increasing inventories to "just-in-case" levels might be more practical.

All these cost-cutting measures were employed against a background of recurring global overproduction crises, each time leaving fewer workers employed, while the income gap between corporate bosses and workers grew exponentially. Long before COVID-19 was first reported in early 2020, the capitalist system was in crisis. The pandemic has exposed these inequities by creating the first bottleneck in delivering inventory, at the ports.

## Dock workers challenge bosses' narrative

The capitalists claim they can't find enough people to take available jobs in industries that transport goods. But in an Oct. 14 interview with Work Week's Steve Zeltzer, Trent Willis, president of Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) representing California Bay Area port workers, stated: "This is a struggle for the working class right now. We first have to challenge the narrative of employers who say they can't find enough people to take jobs, implying that workers are lazy."

"We all know profits for the wealthy class have gone up dramatically over the years, while wages for workers have not kept up. The minimum wage has been the same for multiple years. People can't afford to live in this country without making decent wages and benefits. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed this, along with other conditions that impact working people."

Willis challenged claims that cargo ships were unable to unload on the West Coast, noting that there is no backlog of carrier ships in the Port of Oakland (which already has a 24/7 policy). He asked why ocean carriers are refusing to use the ninth largest port — San Francisco/Oakland — in the U.S. to unload, while 70 to 80 ships back up in the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Willis said: "The supply chain backup on the West Coast is inaccurately reported on major news networks. There is no backup in the Bay Area, which includes ports in San Francisco and Oakland. But for some reason, the ocean carriers have decided to back up ships in the Los Angeles area, which handles 40% of West Coast docks."

Bay Area gentrification, including the effort to privatize the Howard Terminal section of the Port of Oakland to build a new stadium for the Oakland A's baseball team adds to the problem. Willis noted: "Longshore workers cannot afford to live in San Francisco and Oakland. Many have to drive hundreds of miles [cumulatively] from Sacramento to go to work, while million-dollar condos are being built in Oakland and San Francisco."

Ramon Ponce de Leon, president of ILWU Local 13, representing 5,000 longshore workers, noted in a Labor Day interview with Margaret Prescod, KPFF, that over 700 members had contracted COVID 19, and at least 13 died. In addition to early problems securing enough PPEs to protect union members, he cited the increase in e-commerce as a major challenge. "People have doubled their buying power by e-commerce. But nobody was ready for the congestion it created."

It should be noted that when Biden responded to the backlog by making an agreement with the Port of Los Angeles to become a 24/7 operation, he overstepped already existing contracts between ILWU locals and the port bosses.

**Myth of national truck driver shortage**

Moving cargo containers from the ports to retail warehouses relies on the labor of nearly 2 million truck drivers in the U.S. Chris Spear, president and CEO of the American Trucking Associations, told CNN that the industry faces a record high labor shortage of 80,000 drivers. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry claimed to face a shortage of 61,500 drivers. Spear said the industry will need to train a million new drivers over the next 10 years. (CNN, Oct. 19)

What big-boss Spears failed to address is why more workers are not seeking employment in the industry, which faces a driver shortage for the fourth year in a row. But is there truly a shortage of skilled drivers; and if so, why?

Prior to 1980, the average unionized truck driver earned over \$96,000 in today's dollars, and they produced more than that in value that the owners took as profits. In 1974, membership in the Teamsters union representing truck drivers was over 2 million. Today there are fewer than 75,000 unionized drivers. The median salary for drivers is around \$45,260, with 40% lacking health insurance coverage.

What changed?

In 1980, under pressure from banks and corporations, Democratic President Jimmy Carter signed the Motor



Trucks waiting to enter the Port of Long Beach to pick up loads, October 2021.

*In growing numbers, workers are demanding better working conditions and higher wages — and refusing to work until they get them. The global supply chain crisis is showing the power that the international working class has to bring the capitalist system to a halt, by stopping all production and thus all profits.*

Carrier Act, which began the process of deregulating the trucking industry, opening it up to cutthroat competition. The Act also changed regulations implemented in 1935 that had set the price to move a product from one city to another. The MCA allowed anyone to haul any goods, to any place, for any price. (tinyurl.com/ttveeys)

Today, the trucking industry subjects drivers to unsafe and less-than-desirable working conditions, including 70-hour work weeks, and pays them increasingly reduced wages. This situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many drivers are leaving the industry in search of better options. This is a reality, whether a worker is driving a commercial truck or a school bus — another sector facing severe shortages.

**'Gross national shortage is in livable wages'**

Boston School Bus Drivers in the 1,000-strong Steelworkers Local 8751 are demanding justice for drivers and challenging the myth of a "national shortage of workers who would like to drive good-paying, safe, school bus jobs." Union leader Steve Gillis told Workers World: "There is a gross national shortage of livable wages, benefits, health and safety, and respect for school transportation workers, caused by greedy corporations and their governments!"

"Workers are striking for their rights across the country in unprecedented numbers! We must demonstrate our unity and solidarity, speaking in one voice, letting the company and city know that if we don't get our justice at the negotiating table, we will get it on the picket line."

In growing numbers, workers are demanding better working conditions and higher wages — and refusing to work until they get them. The global supply chain crisis is showing the power that the international working class has to bring the capitalist system to a halt, by stopping all production and thus all profits.

The bosses and bankers frame the current crisis as a "labor shortage," while they continue to engage in casino capitalism — manipulating stock prices and futures to maximize their profits. And they take every effort to prevent unionization that would improve workers' wages and job conditions. But without cargo ship workers, dock workers, truck drivers, school bus drivers and warehouse workers, nothing moves — that's the working class's bottom line. □



### High Tech, Low Pay

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of *Low Wage Capitalism*.

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### Low-Wage Capitalism

Describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class in the United States of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx's law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval.



### Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, **Fred Goldstein**, go to [LowWageCapitalism.com](https://LowWageCapitalism.com)

# South Korea general strike organizes answer to ‘Squid Game’

By G. Dunkel

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, which has 1.1 million members, called a one-day general strike on Oct. 20. Over a half a million workers stayed home, and tens of thousands demonstrated. About 1,000 delivery workers turned off their apps and joined the strike.

South Korean workers took a real risk to come out by the thousands on the streets of 13 cities to say that they, like the workers in the hugely popular and grim Netflix series “Squid Game,” are struggling to make a living and pay their crushing debts. The series was inspired by the 2009 SsangYong auto worker strike, which was ended after 77 days by a deadly police attack, followed by crushing state reprisals against the workers. (tinyurl.com/4yh3w64c)

The KCTU said in a statement that during the strike, “About 80 youth union members dressed up in costumes that parody the ‘Squid Game,’ which bitterly satirizes the bare face of our society.” A group of militant KCTU youth led the march, beating drums, some with slogans painted on their vests reading “Inequality Out” and “Safe Youth Employment, Quality Youth Employment,” according to videos posted on the KCTU’s Facebook page.

The storyline of the “Squid Game,” seen in 142 million households worldwide since it first aired in September, emphasizes

the desperate life of Korean workers under capitalism in the southern half of the peninsula and dramatizes their individual attempts to win survival through competition to the death in different games.

The KCTU strike demonstrated instead that real-life survival for workers under capitalism depends on their organized and unbending solidarity.

### Workers defy state repression

According to laws restricting social gatherings in the capital of Seoul and surrounding areas, only one person at a time can demonstrate. At the Oct. 20 strike, the KCTU brought out more than 20,000 militants, who observed social distancing, wore masks and were randomly checked for fever.

President Moon Jae-in brought in more than 12,000 extra cops to Seoul and set up bus barricades to prevent people from gathering at Gwanghwamun Plaza, where most rallies take place.

The KCTU militants took alternative routes to reach Seodaemun Station instead.

Even before the demonstration, KCTU President Yang Kyung-soo and at least 30 other union organizers were arrested. Yang is the 13th consecutive KTCU president to be jailed since the federation was unbanned by the state in 1997.



Seoul, Oct. 20.

be implemented “based on strong voices of workers,” with guaranteed employment during times of crisis.

Strike demands included calls for “stronger public services and bigger responsibility of state for jobs and care” both for children and elders.

The conditions of workers so brutally depicted in the Netflix series have resonated with workers throughout the world. What South Korean workers face today comes after more than 70 years of capitalist development under U.S. military and financial hegemony.

The threats and damages created by U.S. imperialist machinations in the world economy produced this fictional series so pain-filled, brutal and disturbing that many viewers report it is almost impossible to watch.

But worker organizing can break through the very real horrors of capitalist life.

Given the responsibility of the U.S. in creating the long and violent history of suppression of workers in South Korea, solidarity from workers in the U.S. with the KCTU and future actions are especially crucial in changing the narrative of history.

That so many other oppressed areas of the world have felt the lash of U.S. domination increases the need for U.S. workers to organize for international working-class solidarity. □

The KTCU remains intransigent in the face of state repression. The union is aiming at an all-people’s mobilization in January 2022 that would reach out to South Korea’s urban poor and farmers.

### Demands of the general strike

One demand of the strike highlighted by the KCTU on its Facebook page was the “expansion of labor law for all workers and the abolition of precarious work.” While contingent workers, categorized as “irregular, part-time, or temporary,” make up 36.1% of the labor force in the country as of August, they have few benefits.

The KCTU demanded that in times of economic crisis, when the economy is going through transitions, changes to working conditions should

## U.S. political prisoner Free Dr. Aafia Siddiqui!

By Sara Flounders

The case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui is another great miscarriage of justice in the long history of the U.S. legal-carceral system, which reinforces xenophobia, anti-Muslim prejudice and white supremacy.

Arrested and brought to the United States for a “crime” she supposedly committed while not on U.S. soil, Dr. Siddiqui has been imprisoned at the Federal Medical Center Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas, for the last 18 years. She is known as the “Daughter of the Nation” in Pakistan for supporting her own country.

For almost two decades, Dr. Siddiqui has been subjected to the brutally harsh conditions of the U.S. prison system. This July 30 she was violently attacked by a fellow inmate, suffered burns and severe bruising, and was placed in solitary

confinement. This is not the first time Dr. Siddiqui has been attacked.

The Aafia Foundation is spearheading mobilizations in five cities to mark Dr. Siddiqui’s 18 years of unjust imprisonment. The purpose of these mobilizations is:

- To raise awareness regarding the terrible miscarriage of justice done to this political prisoner and to make people fully aware of her innocence and plight.
- To protest the recent attack on Dr. Siddiqui at FMC Carswell, and to demonstrate concern and solidarity with her, especially given the nature of the recent assault.
- To demand accountability for the failure of the prison facility to protect Dr. Siddiqui, and to inform her lawyer promptly about the assault.

- To demand the repatriation of Dr. Siddiqui back to her home country, Pakistan.
- To demand humane treatment of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui until repatriation occurs.
- To fulfill our moral and communal responsibility to stand against injustice and be the voice for the voiceless!
- To send a message to the powers that be that Dr. Aafia Siddiqui has NOT been forgotten!

For more on the Five City Mobilization, contact info@aafia.org. For more on Dr. Siddiqui’s case, go to www.aafia.org. □



WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

New York City protest, Oct. 20.

## Oakland rally demands: ‘Free Julian Assange!’

By Judy Greenspan  
Oakland, Calif.

Oct. 23 — A broad coalition of antiwar and anti-imperialist groups converged here at the Grand Lake Theater, known for its historically strong support for free speech, to demand the U.S. government drop all charges against Julian Assange and stop all extradition plans.

Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, is currently being held in prison in Britain awaiting extradition to the U.S. Today’s rally was part of an international effort to protest a hearing scheduled for Oct. 27, when the U.S. will argue for his immediate extradition to this country.

Assange is charged with conspiracy to publish secret U.S. military documents leaked by Chelsea Manning, former Army intelligence analyst, that exposed U.S. war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. The campaign to force Assange’s extradition to the U.S. has been a bipartisan effort by both U.S. political parties and is being led now by President Joe Biden.

The marquee of the Grand Lake Theater boldly proclaimed “Free Julian Assange” over the rally, organized by Free Julian Assange-SF Bay Area. The gathering was a speak-out with taped messages by renowned activists and writers, including such as Mumia Abu-Jamal, Alice Walker and Daniel Ellsberg. Solidarity

statements were read by representatives from many organizations including the Haiti Action Committee, United National Antiwar Coalition, Task Force on the Americas, Code Pink, Answer and the International Action Center.

Hundreds of people passed by during the rally, stopping on their way to and from a nearby popular farmers’ market, and listened to the many statements demanding freedom for Assange and all political prisoners. Speakers also demanded freedom for foreign diplomat Alex Saab, recently renditioned and illegally kidnapped from Cape Verde and imprisoned in the U.S. for his support of the Bolivarian Venezuelan government.

Over 40 international human rights groups, including the International Federation of Journalists, Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders, have called for freedom for Assange. Demonstrations are planned around the U.S. and the world leading up to the Oct. 27 court hearing in London. □



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Protesters outside the Grand Lake Theater in Oakland, Calif., Oct. 23.

# Film set killing spotlights unsafe conditions

## Strikers show no signs of retreat

By Martha Grevatt

Every day workers continue to deal with COVID and the so-called “labor shortage.”

The struggle for safety on the job is the backdrop to the Oct. 21 shooting of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins. Her death on the “Rust” film set is another reminder of what every injured worker knows: that “accidental” workplace deaths and injuries are the result of overwork, cost cutting and deliberate neglect of basic safety by management. In this case management includes the star and producer of “Rust,” Alec Baldwin, who fired the fatal shot that also injured director Joel Souza. The role of assistant director David Halls who handed Baldwin the loaded prop gun is under investigation as well.

Hutchins’ death occurred during the struggle of film production workers for sufficient hours between shifts and for needed meal breaks, during recent months of 60-hour weeks on film sets. Workers on “Rust” were promised housing in Santa Fe, N.M., but the movie company broke that promise, and most of them were forced to drive 50 miles each way from Albuquerque to work 12-hour days.

Earlier on the morning of the fatal shooting, six camera crew members — represented by International Association of Stagehands and Theater Employees Local 480 — quit over a list of bad conditions, including a lack of gun safety, issues with housing and payment. (koat.com, Oct. 25) According to other “Rust” set workers, Baldwin called police to evict them as they were preparing to

leave. Halls had been the subject of previous worker complaints over weapons and pyrotechnics safety, other safety matters and sexual harassment.

Baldwin had called in a nonunion crew to replace the IATSE members at the time of the shooting. Hutchins, a member of International Cinematographers Guild Local 600, had supported the workers. Local 480 and Local 600 held a candlelight vigil for her Oct. 24, attended by over 400 union members at the Albuquerque Civic Plaza.

One of the IATSE members at the vigil told Workers World in regards to overall exhaustion and the lack of lunch breaks: “They give us meal penalties. If we don’t break after six hours, they give us more money the longer we don’t break. It’s good money, but we are exhausted. We



PHOTO: WORKING AMERICA

**Piedmont flight attendants are ready to strike in Philadelphia, Oct. 21.**

don’t want the extra money anymore.”

What happened in Santa Fe is not an isolated incident. “Safety on Set” is the primary issue for the 60,000 IATSE members across the country who voted in favor of a strike earlier in October. A strike was

averted when the union reached a tentative agreement with movie and television industry executives, but the contract could be rejected if members don’t think it goes far enough in addressing their issues. That could lead to a strike.

As the contract vote gets underway, the tragedy in Santa Fe reminds workers of what is at stake. A countrywide IATSE strike would not be an isolated skirmish but would be another front in the current resurgence of labor militancy.

**Will Striketober become Strikevember?**

As the month referred to as “Striketober” comes to a close, there are more signs of worker resistance. According to Cornell University’s Labor Action Tracker, there are at least 40 U.S. strikes in progress currently — 26 of which began this month. New strikes may be on the way.

After three years of trying to negotiate a decent contract, 350 Piedmont airlines flight attendants voted Oct. 21 to authorize a strike. After the vote dozens in Philadelphia picketed the company, a subsidiary of American Airlines. The slight wage increase management offered would be more than offset by an increase in the workers’ share of health care costs.

The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA plans to employ its CHAOS — Create Havoc Around Our System — strategy if a strike is deemed necessary. CHAOS involves intermittently striking at one or multiple locations without notifying the company or passengers. “We’ve seen in the last few months how delicate the aviation system is and how much it depends on every worker,” AFA-CWA



WW PHOTO: STEPHANIE HEDGE COKE

**Some 400 members of International Association of Stagehands and Theater Employees Local 480 and International Cinematographers Guild Local 600 held a candlelight vigil for Halyna Hutchins in Albuquerque, N.M., Oct. 24.**

International President Sara Nelson explained. (Philly Voice, Oct. 22)

In Hawaii, 1,500 health care workers represented by United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals are voting on whether to authorize a strike at Kaiser Permanente. This follows previous votes in favor of striking Kaiser by 21,000 UNAC/UHCP members in California and 3,400 members of Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals. There have been at least 30 health care worker strikes this year, including the continuing eight-month strike of nurses in Worcester, Mass., and the Buffalo Mercy Hospital strike now in its fourth week.

After unsafe COVID conditions led to three worker deaths, stagehands at the North Shore Music Theatre in Beverly, Mass., unionized through IATSE Local 11. After a one-day strike earlier this month, they won a pay increase. Graduate student workers at Harvard University are poised to strike if they don’t get an acceptable contract by the end of October. Alabama coal mine workers are about to enter their eighth month on strike.

Strikes at Kellogg’s and John Deere continue, both with widespread union and community support. The rank-and-file caucus inside the United Auto Workers, Unite All Workers for Democracy, posted a fundraising appeal for the UAW members striking Deere. The post went viral, raising many times over its initial goal of \$10,000.

Both companies are trying to break the strikes, hiring strikebreakers and having inexperienced supervisors do union members’ jobs. Kellogg’s actually published an ad seeking workers “to cross the picket line.” Deere has secured a court injunction limiting the number of pickets.

The battle lines have been drawn. The working class isn’t waiting for salvation via the “Build Back Better” bill that Congress is stalling on. They are wielding their own power at the point of production.

Next month could be “Strikevember.”

*Stephanie Hedgecoke contributed to this article.*

## Rally demands end to gender violence

By Monica Moorehead

In response to the transphobic, homophobic and misogynist show, The Closer, starring popular comedian Dave Chappelle, an in-person rally took place Oct. 20 at the Los Angeles office of global streaming conglomerate Netflix, which produced and is airing the show. The rally was a show of solidarity for the employee resource group, Trans\* at Netflix, that organized a virtual walkout the same day against Netflix co-CEO and chief content officer Ted Sarandos.

Ashlee Marie Preston, a rally organizer, stated, “It’s violent to make members of the transgender community, who work for your company, participate in the oppression of their own community, and we’re here to disrupt that and stand in solidarity with the employees.”

Joey Soloway, creator of the pro-transgender, award-winning Netflix series

Transparent, remarked about The Closer: “This is gender violence. Sharing his outrage as comedic humiliation in front of thousands of people, and then broadcasting it to hundreds of millions of people, is infinitely amplified gender violence. I want trans representation on the Netflix board. A trans person on the f---ing Netflix board this f---ing week.”

B. Pagels-Minor, a former member of Trans\* at Netflix, who was fired for allegedly leaking confidential information on The Closer, said at the rally, “As most of you know, I’m 33 weeks pregnant. And when I thought about why I was participating, it’s that my son does not grow up with content that hates me. I want my child to grow up in a world where they see that their parent, a Black trans person — because I exist, contrary to what the special says, contrary to what many people say — that I am valued, and I am an important person as well.”

(hollywoodreporter.com, Oct. 20)

A letter to Sarandos read at the rally had a list of demands, including: “Netflix create a fund for nonbinary and trans talent, revise internal processes for reviewing potentially harmful content, add disclaimers on shows with transphobic content, and acknowledge the harm Netflix has caused to the trans community — particularly the Black trans community.”



Oct. 20 protest, Los Angeles

## Amazon workers take big step

*Continued from page 1*

charges over the company’s outlandish union-busting tactics. For weeks workers testified at a hearing by the NLRB, describing threats, intimidation and ever-present anti-union propaganda.

The NLRB ruled in the RWDSU’s favor. Another union election at the Bessemer facility is possible.

Although they lost the election, the courage of the mostly-Black Alabama workers has sparked interest among multiple unions to unionize Amazon — and not just one warehouse at a time. At their convention in June, the Teamsters union passed a resolution to “Build Worker Power at Amazon.” As Randy

Korgan, Teamsters National Director for Amazon said, “Amazon presents a massive threat to working-class communities and good jobs in the logistics industry.”

In other countries, where Amazon workers do have unions, there have been militant strikes.

The ALU members in Staten Island have taken a big step forward for worker justice at Amazon.

*Parts of this article are taken from a news release issued by Workers Assembly Against Racism. For more information, see amazonlaborunion.org, Twitter: @Shut\_downAmazon*



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

**Solidarity with ALU filing for election Oct. 25, Brooklyn, N.Y.**

# International tribunal judges U.S. human rights abuses

*The following are excerpts from a press release issued by the tribunal, which was held Oct. 22-25:*

**In the Spirit of Mandela**, an unprecedented U.S. alliance of attorneys, academics, and organizers from the movements for Black lives, civil rights, Puerto Rican decolonization, immigrant rights, and Indigenous sovereignty/Earth protection, will put the U.S., state and local governments on trial for crimes against people of color. From Oct. 22 to 25, the **International Tribunal on U.S. Human Rights Abuses Against Black, Brown and Indigenous Peoples** will convene, both in person at a Manhattan historic landmark and virtually via livestream. “This proceeding will establish overwhelming evidence that this country and its settler colonial predecessors have committed genocide, as defined by the United Nations, against Black, Brown, and Indigenous Peoples for over 400 years,” said Jihad Mabdulumit, spokesperson for the coordinating committee of the **In the Spirit of Mandela** Coalition. “As we’ve seen most recently with the George Floyd street uprisings, only a strong grassroots movement from below can expose these crimes and do the work that can end them.”

Presiding will be an independent nine-member Panel of Jurists, some with international stature. The majority are women and are Global South-rooted from India, Eritrea, Haiti, France, the U.S. and elsewhere. These jurists will oversee two days of testimonies from impacted victims, expert witnesses, and attorneys with firsthand knowledge of specific incidents raised in the charges/indictment. They will then deliver their verdict to the U.N.

The Tribunal will consider charges of human and civil rights violations for racist police killings of Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples; hyper/mass incarcerations of Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples; and political incarceration of Civil Rights/National Liberation-era revolutionaries and activists, as well as present-day activists. It will also take up environmental racism and

its impact on Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples, and public health racism and its traumatic impacts on Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples.

Based on all the above, the overarching charge will be argued that the U.S. has committed genocide against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples, in violation of 18 USC 1091 and the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention of Genocide. Legal aspects of the Tribunal will be led by attorney Nkechi Taifa, along with a powerful team of seasoned attorneys from all the above fields.

The **In the Spirit of Mandela** Coalition, created in 2018, is a growing group of organizers, academics, clergy, attorneys, and organizations committed to working together against the systemic, historic, and ongoing human rights violations and abuses committed by the U.S. against Black, Brown, and Indigenous Peoples. The coalition recognizes and affirms the rich history of diverse global activists, including Nelson Mandela, Winnie Mandela, Graça Machel Mandela, Ella Baker, Dennis Banks, Cesar Chavez, Fannie Lou Hamer, Fred Korematsu, Lolita Lebron, Rosa Parks, Ingrid Washinawatok, and many more in the resistance traditions of Black, Brown and Indigenous Peoples.

The year 2021 marks the 70th anniversary of the campaign in which African-American human rights leaders Paul Robeson and William Patterson, with the support of eminent sociologist Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, presented the “We Charge Genocide” petition to the burgeoning U.N. headquarters in 1951. Then in 1964, Minister Malcolm X (El Hajj Malik el-Shabazz) formed the Organization of Afro-American Unity, in part to bring the case of U.S. human rights abuses to the attention of the U.N.

### 2021 International Tribunal — follow-up efforts

The 2021 International Tribunal has a unique set of outcomes and an opportunity to organize on a mass level across many social justice arenas. Upon the verdict, the results of the Tribunal will codify and publish the content



and results of the Tribunal to be offered in high school and university curricula; and provide organized, accurate information for reparation initiatives and community and human rights work.

It will present a stronger case, building upon previous and respected human rights initiatives, on the international stage, and establish a healthy and viable massive national network of community organizations, activists, clergy, academics, and lawyers concerned with challenging human rights abuses on all levels and enhancing the quality of life for all people.

Goals are to strengthen the demand to free all political prisoners and establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission mechanism to lead to their freedom; establish the foundation to build a “Peoples’ Senate” representative of all 50 states, Indigenous Tribes, and major religions; and provide the foundation for civil action in federal and state courts across the United States. For more information contact: Dr. A’isha Mohammad, aishamohammed72@gmail.com, 510-776-6078.

**For more information:**  
spiritofmandela.org/;  
www.tribunal2021.com/;  
facebook.com/Spirit-Of-Mandela-105492791756066/

**VIDEOS:** All educational webinars and additional videos can be found at [vimeo.com/spiritofmandela](https://vimeo.com/spiritofmandela) and [tinyurl.com/4pzevc5y](https://tinyurl.com/4pzevc5y) Videos of the Tribunal will be available at these links shortly after its conclusion.

# U.S. protesters demand release and repatriation of Aafia Siddiqui

*Excerpts from an article in Al Jazeera*

Dozens of protesters and human rights activists are calling on the Pakistani government to work to end the continued imprisonment of Pakistani neuroscientist Aafia Siddiqui in the United States.

Carrying pictures and banners, the protesters gathered outside the Pakistan Consulate in New York on Wednesday to decry Siddiqui’s situation and urge the Pakistani government to actively seek her immediate release and repatriate her.

“Free, Free Aafia,” the protesters shouted in unison.

The rally was part of a series of protests organized by a coalition of more than 20 local and national human rights and religious groups, including the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

Similar protests have been planned in Boston and Washington, D.C., in the coming weeks.

### Who is Aafia Siddiqui?

Siddiqui, a U.S.-educated Pakistani national, was charged with attempting to kill U.S. soldiers and FBI agents during interrogation, after her arrest in 2008 in Afghanistan’s Ghazni province.

She was flown to the U.S. and sentenced to 86 years in prison, after a New York court found the 49-year-old mother of three guilty of attempted murder and assault in 2010.

Siddiqui earned her undergraduate degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1995 and a doctorate in neurosciences from Brandeis University in Boston before moving back



Protest in Carswell, Texas, Sept. 18 supports Aafia Siddiqui.

to Pakistan in 2003.

According to her family, Siddiqui and her three children were abducted by the Pakistani intelligence agencies immediately after her return.

In 2008, she appeared in Afghanistan and was detained by the Afghan police under suspicion of planning a suicide-bomb attack and being in possession of notes on how to make chemical weapons and dirty bombs, accusations denied by the family and lawyers.

Currently, she is being held at Federal Medical Center (FMC) prison in Fort Worth, Texas.

### ‘Victim of U.S. war on terror’

Mosaab Sadeia, a 21-year-old member of the Islamic Leadership Council of New York and one of the organizers of the New York protest, said Siddiqui is a victim of the U.S.’s so-called “war on terror” and “unjustly” imprisoned.

“She is a prisoner of conscience, a political prisoner and victim of the U.S. war on terror. We are here to tell the Pakistani government to stand up for its citizen and secure her freedom,” Sadeia told Al Jazeera.

Author and antiwar activist Sara Flounders has followed Siddiqui’s case for more than a decade and believes she is innocent.

“She is a victim of secret rendition. I attended her court trial. It was just a show trial and a theater of war on terror,” Flounders told Al Jazeera over the telephone.

“The U.S. government should immediately free her and reunite her with her children.”

The protesters accused the prison officials of treating Siddiqui inhumanely. In July, she was attacked by a fellow inmate with a mug of hot liquid and later locked in solitary confinement.

### ‘Daughter of the Nation’

In Pakistan, Siddiqui’s case has attracted enormous support from across the political divide.

In 2018, the Pakistani Senate unanimously passed a resolution dubbing her “Daughter of the Nation.” On several occasions, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has extended his support for negotiating Siddiqui’s release with the U.S. government.

In July 2019, after meeting with the then U.S. President Donald Trump, Khan told the media that releasing Shakeel Afridi in exchange for Siddiqui could be a possibility in the future.

Afridi is a Pakistani surgeon allegedly

recruited by the CIA to track and trace Osama bin Laden, eventually leading to bin Laden’s killing.

In 2012, Afridi was sentenced to 33 years in prison under a colonial-era treason law by a Pakistani court. His appeal is still pending before a high court in Peshawar.

Maliha Shahid, spokesperson for the Pakistani embassy in Washington, said Siddiqui’s case is still a priority for the government.

### Growing support for release in the U.S.

Over the past few months, calls in the U.S. for release and repatriation of Siddiqui have become more intense.

Last month, the Boston chapter of United Steelworkers, a labor union, passed a resolution calling on the U.S. government to free Siddiqui and allow the visit of independent medical practitioners from Doctors Without Borders to evaluate her mental and physical injuries.

“This is one of the most egregious and outrageous cases that shows the U.S. government’s violation of human rights and international law. We can’t go anywhere on the globe and kidnap anyone,” Stevan Kirschbaum, the vice president of the union, told Al Jazeera.

“Our resolution aims to highlight and bring the case of injustice done to Aafia Siddiqui to living rooms across the U.S.,” he added.

Imam Omar Suleiman, a prominent American Muslim scholar and civil rights leader, protested in front of the FMC prison last month to bring attention to Siddiqui’s incarceration. □

San Francisco State University

Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi hails ‘win for pro-Palestinian movement’

By Michael Kramer

Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi, an associate professor at San Francisco State University, and Dr. Tomomi Kinukawa had scheduled an online open class to be held Sept. 23, 2020, featuring Palestinian hero Leila Khaled. But tech giants Zoom, Facebook and Google-owned YouTube caved in to Zionist pressure and shut it down just as it got started.

Abdulhadi is an internationally known Palestinian scholar and founding director of the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) Studies program at SFSU and a member of the Department of Race and Resistance Studies. Kinukawa is a lecturer in the university’s Department of Women and Gender Studies.

The open class was entitled “Whose Narratives? Gender, Justice and Resistance: a Conversation with Leila Khaled.” The program was to include panelists Rula Abu Dahou, acting director of the Institute For Women’s Studies at Birzeit University in Palestine’s West Bank, and Ronnie Kasrils, member of the South African Communist Party, the African National Congress and a founder of the ANC’s armed struggle formation Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Other scheduled speakers were Sekou Odinga, member of the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army and a former 30-year political prisoner, and Laura Whitehorn, a civil rights and antiwar activist who served 14 years in federal prison. Kasrils and Whitehorn are Jewish.

Leila Khaled is an icon of the Palestinian struggle. She was born in Haifa and is a refugee. She is a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Zoom representatives said her participation was the reason the

company shut down the class. The tech giant’s action was an attack on academic freedom, the Palestinian community and anti-Zionist Jews.

Israeli lobbying groups and Zionist organizations have attacked Abdulhadi and the AMED program for years both on- and off-campus. These groups include the Anti-Defamation League, Lawfare Project, StandWithUs and Act.IL, an app funded by the Israeli government.

But Abdulhadi not only mobilized local, national and international community support for the online program, she submitted a formal grievance through an internal SFSU procedure.

“We were vindicated!”

On Oct. 14, a panel of three SFSU faculty members upheld the grievance. It ordered the university to issue a public apology to Abdulhadi for not upholding academic freedom and said the school must provide a site for rescheduling the event on an alternate platform without interference.

The panelists asserted that SFSU had not only not defended Abdulhadi and Kinukawa against threats of arrest made by the Lawfare Project if the class went forward, but they stressed that the university amplified the threats.

Abdulhadi commented on the panel’s findings: “This is a huge victory not only for us, but for everybody speaking about Palestine and for our ability to teach about Palestine as part of the indivisibility of justice. After the pain and the anguish for over a year that we have suffered, by being vilified by character assassinations, by being chased by Zionists, by the hate mail, by all the nastiness that has happened, by the fact that the university did not have our backs, we were vindicated.”



Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi

However, Abdulhadi stressed, “the good news is that we have a huge movement of everybody coming together within San Francisco State, within California, within the U.S., internationally. We’re fighting for justice and for Palestine, and we see it as part of justice for all.” (Electronic Intifada, Oct. 15)

*Michael Kramer served in the Israeli Defense Forces and took part in the criminal occupation of Palestine, Syria and Egypt. In the late 1970s, Dr. Abdulhadi encouraged him to speak out as a supporter of the struggle to liberate all of Palestine from Zionist occupation. And he has done just that for decades.*

Alex Saab petition

Kidnapped Venezuelan diplomat speaks in court

By Solidarity Center

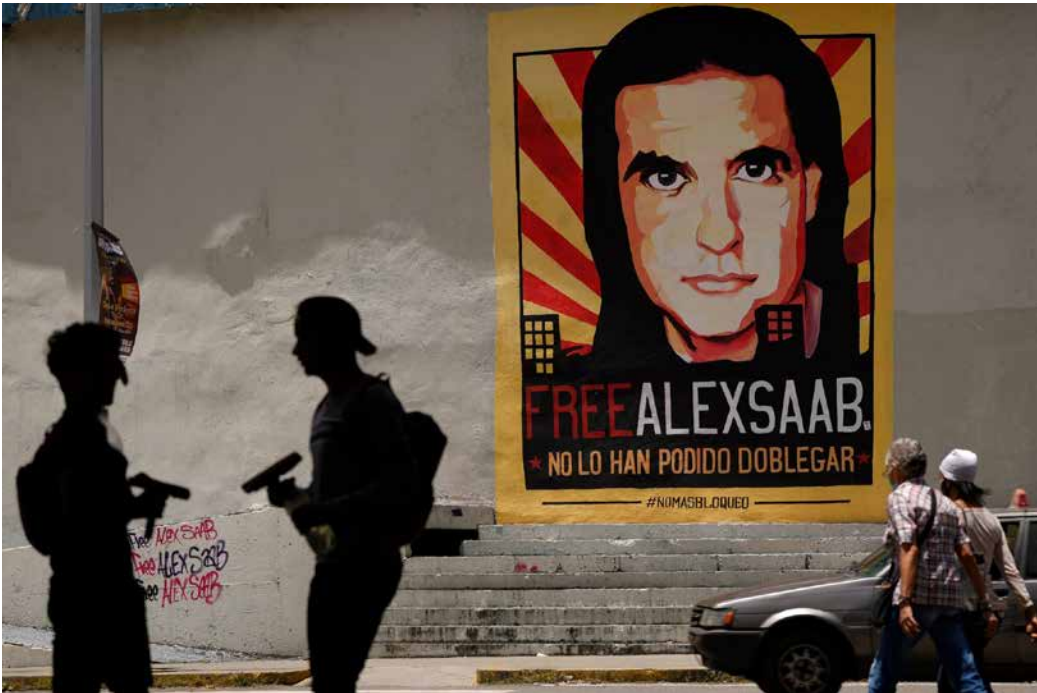
*Alex Saab made the following statement in U.S. Federal Court in Miami on Oct. 16. To sign a petition in solidarity with the Venezuelan diplomat, now prisoner of the U.S. government, see [bit.ly/Freedom4AlexSaab](https://bit.ly/Freedom4AlexSaab)*

My name is Alex Nain Saab Moran, with Venezuelan diplomatic passport number 045778720. I am a special envoy with diplomatic immunity to the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran since April 2018 and Venezuelan Ambassador Plenipotentiary Alternate to the African Union.

I was hijacked by Cape Verde on June 12, 2020, when my flight stopped to refuel on a special humanitarian mission to continue to the Islamic Republic of Iran by order of my president, Nicolás Maduro Moros.

I was kidnapped without an arrest warrant — required by law in Cape Verde — and without an INTERPOL warrant, in a country that has no extradition treaty with the U.S. They disregarded my diplomatic immunity, which was claimed by Venezuela immediately.

I was tortured physically and psychologically by the U.S. and Cape Verde, with the consent of the government of Donald Trump, and members of the government of Cape Verde including Minister Landim; Prime Minister Ulysess Correia da Silva; Carlos Reiss, head of national security; Paulo Rocha, minister of [internal affairs]; and the director of the Sal Prison, Mr. Correia, for eight



In Caracas, Venezuela, there are many expressions of public support for diplomat Alex Saab, who was working to end the U.S. blockade of his country.

months — and with the economic support of the U.S., Juan Guaidó [U.S.-backed pretender to the Venezuelan presidency], and former Venezuelan head of security, Narnia Iván Simonivis.

Under international pressure on the U.S. government and the decision of ECOWAS/CEDEAO [the Economic Community of West African States], I was moved to house arrest ...

The house arrest was a farce, since I always remained locked up as in prison and was watched 24 hours a day by an average of 50 military men who were the ones who handled the keys to the house in which I had no privacy or access to

telephone or letters. I had to do everything through only one lawyer, Dr. Pinto Monteiro, who was the only one authorized to visit me. My whole team of international lawyers was deported several times as soon as they landed in Cape Verde — a country that is a lackey of the empire, corrupt and cowardly.

All my human rights were violated; they violated their own laws, deadlines, terms, at the whim and orders of the United States. Now the [Cape Verde] constitutional court has decided to violate 12 constitutional points that were impossible to violate and have authorized my extradition.

I hold the U.S. government and the extremist opposition government of Narnia fully responsible for my integrity, for my life, in the prison to which they are taking me.

I will face the trial with total dignity and asserting my diplomatic immunity as a servant of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela since April 2018.

I wish to make it clear that I have nothing to collaborate with the United States, that I have not committed any crime in the U.S. or in any other country, that I will not lie to favor the U.S. against President Nicolás Maduro or his government — a government totally dedicated to the welfare of its people and which is going through an inhumane blockade by the United States that wants to take over the wealth of the country.

Let us surround our president and our government with a human shield and let us not allow ourselves to be defeated. They will never give in!

I declare that I am of sound mind, that I am not suicidal, just in case they assassinate me and say I commit suicide, which I would never do.

I love my wife Camilla and my children Shadi, Isham, Jad, Mariam Rose and Charlotte more than my own life.

I ask you to be strong and always stay united.

United we shall overcome! Always have faith in God!

*Petition with statement in English and Spanish, [bit.ly/Freedom4AlexSaab](https://bit.ly/Freedom4AlexSaab)*

# Colin Powell: a lesson

Colin Powell died on Oct. 18. Within hours of his death, ruling-class politicians, including all former presidents except Trump, had publicly praised him. Powell had been this country’s first Black national security adviser, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and secretary of state.

The corporate media, from the New York Times to Fox News, are now presenting the four-star general as a shining icon for others to emulate. And that’s a problem for those who love liberation and fight imperialism.

Any Black man appointed to those posts must have enormous drive and talent. And if Powell had grown up in a country where he was able to apply those qualities to become a warrior on the side of the oppressed, he might have become a great hero.

But Powell grew up in the United States. He competed within the capitalist system, not as a resistance fighter against that system. To succeed, he had to overcome enormous obstacles, and be twice as good as his rivals.

He ended up in the service of U.S. imperialism, imposing the Pentagon’s military power on the world’s people. Instead of becoming a hero for the oppressed, he became a servant of the billionaire ruling class, against the oppressed.

Powell came of age as an officer during the U.S. war against Vietnam. He watched a long, drawn out war against a people’s army wear down the U.S. military and turn ordinary soldiers into war resisters.

Perhaps as a result of this experience in Vietnam, Powell developed this strategy: “Identify clear political objectives, gain public support and use decisive and overwhelming force to defeat enemy forces.”

“Powell was the architect of the invasion of Panama in 1989 and of the Persian Gulf war in 1991,” wrote the New York Times on Oct. 18.

So Powell applied his strategy in Panama and in Iraq. It led to quick victories, with few U.S. casualties, accompanied by terrible war crimes against those two countries.

In Panama, the U.S. bombed civilian housing projects. In Iraq, besides murderous attacks on civilian targets, the U.S. trapped retreating Iraqi soldiers in 1991 after the war had officially ended and slaughtered thousands of them on a road thereafter called “the highway of death.” (“War Crimes,” by Ramsey Clark and others, Maisonnewe Press, Washington, D.C., 1992)

Then Powell committed a different kind of crime, leading to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. As secretary of state he lied to the world’s people, telling them that the U.S. had proof that Iraq possessed “weapons of mass destruction.” He knew Washington really had no evidence, as he admitted later.

Powell was loyal to an imperialist government. That meant he had to lie to justify a war, even if he thought the war was a bad idea. According to Powell, this caused him pain – but he did it. He followed orders.

That is the lesson of Colin Powell’s life: Avoid becoming a servant of imperialism, or run the risk that most of the world will condemn you as a willing accomplice of a mass-murdering empire and a war criminal. □

## WORKERS WORLD editorial

### Lebanon

# Rightist militia fires on demonstrators

By G. Dunkel

Demonstrators at an unarmed march in southern Beirut Oct. 14 were fired on by snipers from the Lebanese Forces, a Maronite Christian party whose militia was notorious for its brutality during the 1975-90 civil war.

According to Johnny Achi, founder of the Arab Americans for Syria, Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geaga is “nobody on the ground. He doesn’t even represent one fourth of the Christian voters, and he’s losing ground even there. This is a dirty militia who have no shame, who go out on the top of buildings and snipe at civilians.”

The demonstrators, from the organizations Hezbollah and Amal, with support from a Maronite Christian group called Marada, fetched rifles and rocket-propelled grenades they had left in their vehicles and fired back. The ensuing firefight lasted for over four hours and only ended after massive intervention from the Lebanese army.

The demonstration was protesting about how the investigation of the explosion of improperly stored fertilizer 14 months ago has been “politicized.” That Aug. 4, 2020, largest non-nuclear explosion in world history killed 200, wounded 6,000 and left 300,000 people homeless in densely populated Beirut.

The billions of dollars in damages to the port facilities of Beirut and the loss of tourist income due to the onset



Iranian oil tankers greeted in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley, Sept. 16.

of the pandemic, plus the effects of the conflicts in Syria, have led to a drop in its gross domestic product of nearly 40%. (France 24, Oct. 14)

Hezbollah is a mass-based organization in the Shiite community that led the fight against the Israeli invasion of 2006 and aided the Syrian government in its recent battle against imperialist intervention. It wins seats in Lebanon’s parliament and is part of the government.

What made the Oct. 14 clash especially important is that it was an obvious attack by the right-wing Lebanese

Forces on Hezbollah. For many Lebanese this recalled bloody fighting before and during the civil war.

### A people’s victory

The sanctions that the U.S. has imposed on Hezbollah, and on Syria and Iran, have damaged Lebanon’s economy and require elaborate and expensive workarounds to obtain essential goods.

Since almost all of Lebanon’s electricity is produced by burning diesel, this loss of income has meant that most households get one or two hours of electric service a day.

Thus it was a people’s victory when Hezbollah arranged for a shipment of diesel fuel from Iran. An Iranian tanker delivered the fuel to the Syrian port of Baniyas, which is already under U.S. sanctions. There it was picked up by trucks from a Hezbollah-owned company, al-Amana, which is also under sanctions, and driven across the border in mid-September without going through customs. Because it was done this way, no Lebanese official was responsible for violating the U.S.-imposed illegal sanctions.

U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland, who helped arrange the coup overthrowing Ukraine’s government in 2014, ended her visit to Lebanon on Oct. 14, coinciding with the attack on the demonstration. □

## Arab Americans for Syria activist says

# U.S. applied ‘divide and conquer’ strategy to Lebanon, Iraq

*Following the armed attack by the Lebanese Forces militia on Hezbollah and its allies at a demonstration in Beirut Oct. 14 and the subsequent firefight, Workers World correspondent Ted Kelly interviewed Johnny Achi, coordinator of Arab Americans for Syria. Below are excerpts from Achi’s remarks.*

What Syria fought ten years for was to evade “Lebanonizing” Syria. What do I mean by Lebanonizing a nation? That is the condition, when [the U.S.] talks about demanding “progress in the political process.” Syria refuses to agree to Lebanonizing. Iraq, by the way, did agree.

Under the U.S. occupation, Iraq got Lebanonized. And now Iraq does not enjoy freedom, Iraq does not join the fight against the Zionist state. Because the U.S. has got them to believe now that the president has to be a Kurd, that the prime minister has to be Sunni, that the head of parliament has to be Shia. The U.S. divided them, without really dividing them. They forced them to accept this division, which is what Lebanon accepted years ago.

They’ll never be free under these conditions because they’re always fighting among themselves. That’s what

the divide-and-conquer strategy is used for.

Syrians were presented, on paper, with a process to create a system based on ethnicities, on sectarian and religious grounds. This will never, ever happen in Syria. If we have to lose Syria as we know it, we will never agree to this U.S.-imposed condition.

That’s what Lebanon is living today, a sectarian divide. And these elements, the Christian militias of Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geaga, they are the arm of Israel in Lebanon. They will always instigate a fight with Hezbollah, which has been so incredibly patient. Every time that Iran or Hezbollah or Syria has a victory, Israel will retaliate through its dirty allies in Lebanon — through Samir Geaga.

The guy is not strong, believe me, but he receives billions of dollars from Saudi Arabia and is CIA-backed. He knows they have his back. He’s nobody on the ground. He doesn’t even represent one-fourth of the Christian voices, and he’s losing ground even there. This is a dirty militia that has no shame, who go out on the top of buildings and snipe at civilians. They killed six people yesterday [Oct. 14].

Lebanese people went out on the streets to protest



WW PHOTO: TED KELLY

Johnny Achi voting in 2021 Syrian presidential election, May 26.

Continued on page 11

Post 9/11

# Human costs high for subsequent U.S. and NATO wars

By Joachim Guilliard

*The author is an anti-imperialist German analyst of the U.S./NATO wars in Central and West Asia. Translation by John Catalinotto.*

According to the latest report from the Costs of War Project at Brown University in Rhode Island, the wars the U.S. and its allies unleashed after September 11, 2001, killed over 900,000 people. This is a minimum.

Taking into account the large gaps in coverage and the far higher number of indirect casualties, the actual figure may exceed four million. In addition, the wars wounded and traumatized far more people in the affected countries, and displaced over 38 million people.

Nearly 20 years ago, within four weeks of the terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania, the United States launched its “Global War on Terror” on Oct. 7, 2001, with the invasion of Afghanistan. The campaign against Iraq followed in March 2003 and has since expanded to more than 80 countries. (tinyurl.com/bapy8kpk)

Although the George W. Bush administration and U.S. allies originally used the pretext of preventive or “preemptive self-defense” to justify the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, they justified their continuation by humanitarian goals, such as the defense of human rights. This latter pretext was also used to justify the NATO war against Libya and the intervention in Syria.

However, neither the U.S. nor its allies ever tried to determine the humanitarian costs of these types of “humanitarian interventions.”

A meta-study [study of studies — March 19, 2015] by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), which evaluated the available research, estimated the total number of all deaths in the countries initially mainly affected — Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq — to have reached at least 1.3 million after the first ten years.

For the second decade of the “post 9/11 wars,” as the Western world’s wars of this century are called in the United States, no similarly careful analysis has yet been done.

However, Neta Crawford and Catherine Lutz of Brown University’s renowned Costs of War Project have consistently published case numbers for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, and later for Syria and Yemen. According to their Jan. 9 report this year, over 900,000 people



U.S. post-9/11 wars left Libya in ruins, and killed millions worldwide.

had been killed in combat operations in these five countries by August 2021, about 375,000 of whom they classified as civilian casualties.

These case numbers are based only on passively observed cases, that is, those reported by media and similar sources or registered by clinics. Under war conditions, however, only a small portion of cases can be recorded, depending on the intensity of the fighting.

## Actual number of casualties is probably higher

It is also difficult to distinguish between civilians and combatants. The authors therefore assume that both the actual number of those killed and the proportion of civilians are much higher.

They omit the indirect victims of the wars, those people who died due to the collapse of supplies of food, water and electricity, blocked access to health facilities or the outbreak of epidemics caused by the war.

Their number usually exceeds that of direct casualties many times over. In general, “Costs of War” contributor David Vine said, one should assume a total of four times as many dead as they had determined. By the end of October 2019, he already estimated these losses at 3.1 million. (tinyurl.com/7v3b63zc)

Vine referred to a comparative study by the September 2008 Geneva Declaration Initiative, which found that indirect deaths in most armed conflicts were three to fifteen times higher than direct deaths.

The IPPNW study reached a similar conclusion. Comparison with mortality studies on Iraq showed that realistic estimates obtained through representative surveys were at least five to eight times

higher than casualty figures obtained through passive observation.

In Afghanistan, according to Crawford and Lutz, combat operations directly killed some 170,000 Afghans over the course of nearly twenty years of U.S. and NATO warfare. Thus, we must assume at least 800,000, and possibly more than a million direct and indirect casualties in that country alone, which means over 40,000 per year.

According to the information collected by the two researchers, around 284,000 Iraqis fell victim to the war in their country. This nearly doubled the 165,000 war deaths they calculated for the first eight years after 2011.

Based on mortality studies in Iraq, the IPPNW study quite conservatively estimated the total number of Iraqi casualties through 2011 to be at least one million dead.

Extrapolating this accordingly, we must now assume over 1.8 million dead in Iraq. According to a representative survey published in May 2018 in the journal PLOS Medicine, 90,000 of these alone were victims of the recapture of the million-strong city of Mosul from the hands of the “Islamic State.”

## Up to 3.6 million casualties — Libya excluded

David Vine's extrapolation therefore rings entirely credible. Overall, the total number of victims in the wars considered by “Costs of War” would thus now already be 3.6 million. However, this still omits Libya, the third country against which NATO states waged direct war after 2001.

According to a plausible estimate by Nicolas Davies, a journalist and researcher at the U.S. peace organization

Codepink, more than 250,000 Libyans fell victim to the NATO aggression and the subsequent collapse of the government. (tinyurl.com/4zpkakw2) Finally, Somalia, where the U.S. has long intervened with air strikes, covert operations, and the arming and support of local forces, is also excluded.

Davies estimates that this war may have resulted in more than 500,000 deaths since the U.S.-backed Ethiopian invasion in 2006. It is therefore likely that the total number of deaths from the wars and interventions of the United States and its allies over the past two decades already exceeds four million.

Even more difficult to assess is the enormous human toll that the wars have also taken on the countries involved. These include the people who have been seriously injured in the wars, often permanently.

According to the U.N., their number is usually more than twice as high as the number of those killed. Far greater still is the number of those who have had to flee the war.

While the number of refugees and internally displaced persons recorded by the June 18 U.N. refugee agency UNHCR was already very high at the beginning of the century, at 38 million, it has since more than doubled to 82.4 million.

As David Vine and colleagues identified in another recent study, at least 38 million fled the “eight most violent wars waged by the United States since 2001.” In this study, they include Libya, Somalia, and the Philippines. (tinyurl.com/3njew2u6)

The number of displaced persons thus exceeds that of all wars since 1900, except for World War II. However, it is still a very conservative estimate, according to the authors.

The total number of people displaced by U.S. wars after Sept. 11, 2001, is probably closer to 49-60 million, which may even exceed that of World War II.

*Translator's note: From inside the U.S. we should point out that these wars have been led by both Republican and Democratic Party administrations, and that the only difference regarding human victims is that the Democratic Party leaders emphasized the “humanitarian” pretext for U.S. interventions. Also, since the author focused on the victims in West Asia, they exclude the victims of the U.S.-backed coup in Honduras and those from U.S.-imposed sanctions against Venezuela, Nicaragua, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Cuba.*

## U.S. ‘divide and conquer’ strategy

Continued from page 10

the “freedom and democracy” the U.S. wanted them to do. They had no weapons, were in civilian clothing, standing out front of a court. They said, “Don’t politicize the investigation of the 2020 Port of Beirut explosion [that killed 200 people].” For that the Lebanese Forces snipers fired on them.

These killers will be caught but they unfortunately will not be brought to justice. Because they want to draw Hezbollah into an internal fight, just like they want to push Syria to retaliate against the Jewish state.

We will not be brought into a fight that is not of our own choosing. They should know that our patience is too strong. Our diplomacy is stronger than the world will ever know. Innocent lives should not be lost just to gain some political ground. The armed clash was very unfortunate. But it will not lead to civil war.

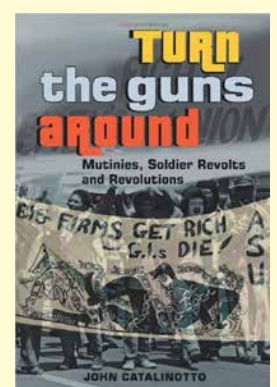
Hezbollah knows there is one enemy and the enemy is south of us [in Israel]. This is where the fight is, if we’re going to carry on a fight.

That’s why the Axis of Resistance is coming back, because we will not be brought into a fight that is not of our own choosing. □

## Turn the Guns Around

By John Catalinotto

Draftees and enlistees — eighteen-year-olds from the South Bronx, factory workers from Buffalo, miners’ sons from Kentucky, unemployed youth from Watts — hate the military and the Vietnam War. They throw a wrench into the Pentagon’s war machine, becoming leaders of the anti-war movement and organizing a union in the conscript military to battle war, racism and their officers.



Get your copy today at [workers.org/books](https://workers.org/books)



WW/MO FOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

**Frente al Hospital Danilo Rosales en León, Nicaragua con miembros del equipo médico y la delegación estadounidense del 5 de octubre. Rosales cirujana y heroe Sandinista fue asesinada en 1967 por el régimen de Somoza respaldado por EE.UU.**

# Nicaragua, con atención médica y educación gratuita, desafía la dominación de EE.UU.

Por Sara Flounders

La razón por la que Nicaragua es etiquetada como una “amenaza inusual y extraordinaria para la seguridad nacional de los Estados Unidos”, una superpotencia corporativa militar, quedó muy clara para una delegación que visitó el país del 3 al 10 de octubre. La delegación fue organizada por la Alianza para la Justicia Global / Nica Network. (AFGJ, siglas en inglés)

Nicaragua, un pequeño país en desarrollo de 6,6 millones de habitantes, vive en marcado contraste con sus países vecinos: Honduras, El Salvador y Guatemala. El poder de Estados Unidos los domina, y más de medio millón de personas han huido de la violencia extrema, el caos y las desesperadas condiciones económicas de estos países. En la frontera estadounidense, esos migrantes se enfrentan a redadas racistas, redadas y deportaciones, aunque son las políticas estadounidenses las que los obligan a huir.

A diferencia, comparativamente pocas personas se han ido de Nicaragua.

## Estabilidad de Nicaragua es un desafío para la dominación estadounidense

La reciente delegación se reunió con médicos nicaragüenses, personal médico, organizadores comunitarios, maestros, especialistas en desastres y planificadores financieros para conocer el impacto del Plan de Desarrollo Humano del país, que respalda su estabilidad.

En marcado contraste con otros países centroamericanos que han privatizado la atención médica con fines de lucro, Nicaragua ha establecido atención médica pública gratuita y basada en la comunidad, así como educación gratuita para todos. A diferencia de sus vecinos, Nicaragua ha establecido un enfoque importante en la planificación de desastres, esencial en una región propensa a huracanes, volcanes, terremotos y tsunamis.

La delegación de la AFGJ pudo medir la diferencia entre Nicaragua hoy y el estado del país en 2007, cuando 16 años de políticas neoliberales respaldadas por Estados Unidos dejaron todos los programas sociales vendidos a inversionistas privados.

## Retomando Nicaragua para el pueblo

En 1979, el Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional había derrotado a la dictadura de Somoza respaldada por Estados Unidos. Cuando el FSLN llegó al poder gubernamental, Estados Unidos envió mercenarios armados para librar una guerra implacable en Nicaragua. El gobierno del FSLN fue derrotado cuando en 1990 se eligió una lista reaccionaria de candidatos respaldados por Estados Unidos.

En 2007, la Coalición Sandinista del FSLN volvió a ocupar cargos políticos en unas elecciones generales, con un enfoque marcadamente diferente. Han intentado revitalizar los programas de la Revolución Sandinista y los años de lucha contra la dominación estadounidense.

Desde el regreso de los sandinistas, ha habido avances asombrosos en la supervivencia materna e infantil, la esperanza de vida e incluso en la construcción de nueva infraestructura de carreteras, electrificación y saneamiento. Las mujeres ocupan

cerca de la mitad de los escaños electos en la legislatura nacional y son la mayoría de los médicos, profesionales de la salud y planificadores.

Estos éxitos concretos son lo que Washington y el poder empresarial de Estados Unidos encuentran tan amenazador. El ejemplo de la independencia de Nicaragua es demasiado peligroso para el control de Estados Unidos sobre la región.

## Plan de desarrollo humano

Hay mucho orgullo y entusiasmo nacional en Nicaragua por los resultados del Plan de Desarrollo Humano. Todas las personas con las que se reunió la delegación de las AFGJ fueron enfáticas sobre la diferencia que se logró al movilizar a la población con un enfoque holístico y el impacto positivo en cómo se sienten las personas sobre sí mismas y cómo cuidan a sus vecinos.

El plan ha aumentado enormemente la inversión pública en servicios básicos de salud, educación, agua potable y saneamiento ambiental, especialmente en áreas rurales ignoradas durante mucho tiempo. Hoy, el 66 por ciento del presupuesto de Nicaragua se destina a la salud y la educación, una gran inversión para cualquier país.

Más de un siglo de explotación empresarial estadounidense y ocupación militar directa por EE.UU., dictaduras militares respaldadas por EE.UU., y guerras de la Contra respaldadas por EE.UU., y seguidas por el gobierno de las élites más reciente respaldado por EE.UU., habían dejado a Nicaragua empobrecida y subdesarrollada cuando los sandinistas regresaron en 2007.

La costa caribeña del país en el este, donde vive la mayoría de los nicaragüenses de ascendencia africana, quedó casi completamente empobrecida, con el desarrollo restringido a las áreas urbanas de habla hispana de la costa del Pacífico. Alrededor del 90 por ciento de los servicios médicos se destinaron a menos del 10 por ciento de la población: la élite gobernante y una clase media próspera. Millones de personas no tenían acceso a la atención médica.

Ahora, sin embargo, la mortalidad infantil y materna es menos de un tercio del nivel de 2007. En ese momento, menos del 50 por ciento de la población tenía acceso a la electricidad. El gobierno del FSLN proclama con orgullo que el 98 por ciento de los hogares tienen acceso a la electricidad. El país es autosuficiente en cuanto a las necesidades alimentarias básicas. En 2007, el 48 por ciento de la población del país vivía por debajo del umbral de pobreza. Ahora la pobreza es del 18 por ciento. La educación, incluida la facultad de medicina, es gratuita.

## Edificando la infraestructura

Las carreteras son fundamentales, tanto para el transporte de mercancías como para elevar el nivel de acceso a la atención sanitaria y la educación. Hoy Nicaragua se jacta de tener las mejores carreteras pavimentadas de Centroamérica. Grandes partes del país, que alguna vez estuvieron totalmente aisladas, ahora forman parte de la vida nacional.

La excavación de pozos y las pruebas de agua constantes han llevado agua potable al 95 por ciento de las áreas urbanas

y a más de la mitad de las comunidades rurales. Si bien el alcantarillado y el saneamiento modernos se han más que duplicado en las áreas urbanas, siguen siendo un desafío en las áreas rurales.

Lo que impresionó a la delegación de las AFGJ en las sesiones informativas de los planificadores del gobierno fue la evaluación honesta de lo que aún se necesita lograr para elevar el nivel de vida de toda la población. Pero las ganancias confirman que la inversión del gobierno actual en programas de bienestar social ya está teniendo un gran impacto.

## Atención médica comunitaria sin fines de lucro

El Plan de Desarrollo Humano enfatiza la atención médica primaria y preventiva basada en la comunidad. Hay un fuerte enfoque en enfrentar siglos de desigualdad en la costa caribeña subdesarrollada y en áreas rurales que nunca antes habían visto a un médico.

Se ha ampliado la red de cobertura de salud, con 192 centros de salud y 1.233 puestos de salud que brindan la primera línea de atención vecinal para inmunización, hipertensión arterial y control de la diabetes. Hay 178 “casas madres” donde las mujeres pueden dar a luz con seguridad, recibir consejos de enfermería y tener un cuidadoso monitoreo de embarazos complicados.

La formación de médicos, enfermeras, técnicos médicos y administradores de salud es de alta prioridad. Los trabajadores médicos son empleados estatales sindicalizados.

Profundizar la atención de la salud significa construir y equipar hospitales, instalaciones de prueba, clínicas médicas móviles y otra infraestructura de apoyo. Desde 2007 se han construido 19 nuevos hospitales y están previstos seis más.

Y aquí hay una gran cantidad de atención a los pequeños proyectos de desarrollo comunitario, como la instalación de pozos, reparación de techos, la preparación de inundaciones y planes de evacuación contra desastres, y talleres en la salud y el bienestar.

La atención médica gratuita incluye muchas cosas que Medicare no cubre en los EE.UU., como atención dental, audífonos, anteojos y productos farmacéuticos. Las hierbas medicinales tradicionales, la fisioterapia, los masajes y la nutrición se están integrando en la atención médica. La recreación, el deporte y la cultura se consideran parte del cuidado de la salud.

## Brigadas voluntarias de salud

Una innovación efectiva son los Voluntarios de la Brigada de Salud, defensores de la salud de la comunidad elegidos en su mayoría originalmente de la Organización Juvenil Sandinista para servir en las regiones rurales. Ahora todos los barrios tienen brigadistas capacitados.

Por ejemplo, la ciudad de León, con una población de 200.000 habitantes, cuenta con 3.000 brigadas de voluntarios que van de puerta en puerta a registrarse con los vecinos para darles atención personalizada y educación sanitaria.

Organizada años antes de la pandemia de COVID, la red Brigadista se utilizó para

respaldar amplios programas de vacunación contra la gripe, la neumonía, el sarampión y otras enfermedades infantiles; para combatir el dengue, zika y la malaria; realizar encuestas nutricionales, censos sanitarios y educación sanitaria; y ayudar a las personas a llegar a sus citas, recibir medicamentos y recibir atención de seguimiento.

## Cuidado de la salud y COVID

Cuando llegó el COVID, la infraestructura social brigadista brindó apoyo instantáneo en salud a una población ya vacunada para muchas enfermedades y bien educada en medidas básicas de salud y saneamiento.

Nicaragua tuvo una intensa discusión sobre la dificultad de cerrar por completo una economía que todavía se basa en pequeños agricultores, pequeños productores, artesanos, mercados locales y desarrollo económico comunitario. Alrededor del 41 por ciento de los nicaragüenses vive en áreas rurales y el 31 por ciento de la fuerza laboral está empleada en la agricultura.

En lugar de un cierre, los profesionales de la salud y los brigadistas fueron de casa en casa, educando a las familias sobre cómo protegerse del virus. Se hizo hincapié en las pruebas y el aislamiento.

El impacto de la educación comunitaria fue visto por la delegación de AFGJ dondequiera que viajara. En todos los lugares a los que iban, los nicaragüenses llevaban máscaras: en restaurantes, calles, edificios gubernamentales, escuelas, cafés de barrio. Cuando las personas entraban a los edificios o se reunían en grupos, todos se rociaban las manos con desinfectante.

Nicaragua se vio afectada por un lento lanzamiento de la vacuna COVID, debido a la distribución desigual de las vacunas a nivel mundial. A mediados de septiembre comenzaron a llegar mayores donaciones de vacunas a través del sistema internacional COVAX. El objetivo es una población completamente vacunada antes de enero de 2022.

Pero las vacunas podrían haber llegado antes: Estados Unidos donó vacunas a todos los países de Centroamérica excepto Nicaragua. A principios de septiembre, Estados Unidos había desechado más de 15 millones de dosis de vacunas COVID, más que suficiente para haber vacunado a todos los nicaragüenses dos veces. El uso de la “diplomacia de la vacuna” punitiva y la negación de Estados Unidos de la ayuda humanitaria pandémica resalta la intención de la clase dominante estadounidense de utilizar cualquier esfuerzo para derrocar al gobierno sandinista.

Nicaragua enfrenta una intensa presión estadounidense y muchos desafíos basados en siglos de opresión colonial e imperialista. Pero hay una gran cantidad de energía creativa enfocada en mejoras que impactarán al mayor número de personas y abordarán la desigualdad histórica con determinación revolucionaria.

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