

# MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD



Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite! workers.org Vol. 66, No. 51 December 19, 2024 \$1



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## IWW STATEMENT

# U.S., Israel, Türkiye: Hands off Syria!

Workers World condemns the coup against the democratically elected government of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria and the brutal takeover by Syrian “rebels,” backed by the U.S., Israel and Türkiye, of Syria’s capital Damascus on Dec. 9.

Along with the liberation forces in Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon, the Syrian and Iranian governments had joined the Axis of Resistance. This alliance has been providing important military assistance to the Palestinian resistance on the front lines against the Zionist, terrorist state of Israel that has been committing genocide in Gaza for over a year.

The Syrian government had the revolutionary foresight to help uplift the Axis of Resistance. This was the only path towards liberation from U.S. imperialism and Zionism for the whole region. As a result, Syria remained in the crosshairs of imperialism and its client Israel, which

maintains an expansionist perspective that includes annexing both Syria and Lebanon.

For the U.S. and Israel, Assad’s main “crime” was refusing to be a puppet of imperialism. At present, Assad has been granted political asylum in Russia and is reportedly in Moscow.

This recent setback in Syria, which is harmful for the world movement, did not begin just a few weeks ago. It is rooted in over 13 years of imperialist attacks on this sovereign country.

After the U.S.-backed and -funded mercenaries and terrorist forces’ all-out effort in 2011 aimed to destroy Syria, the Syrian Arab Army was able to regroup and fought back heroically. At great cost, it was able to retake the major cities of Syria, including Aleppo, which is 40 miles from the Turkish border. But the struggle by the Syrian government to regain full control of Syria was frozen for years.

U.S./Turkish mercenary and terrorist forces maintained control of one-third of Syrian territory. This included the oil-rich and agricultural base of Syria. Armies of terrorist forces, enemies of Damascus, were paid, trained and fully outfitted in Türkiye and Jordan.

U.S. imperialism bragged for years that they were able to maintain the political and especially economic isolation of Syria through sanctions and the complete denial of all reconstruction aid for Syria. Meanwhile, Washington supplied ample funds for reconstruction in U.S.-controlled regions.

These deadly sanctions, another act of war, were an attempt by the U.S. to deny vital services, to starve the population and to hollow out the Syrian economy until it collapsed.

The worldwide anti-imperialist movement must keep the bigger picture in mind. This is a moment to uplift, salute

and remember the martyrs and resistance fighters in Syria who for decades and against all odds held firm against U.S. imperialist domination.

Israel’s bombardment and invasion of Syria with plans to occupy more territory show how the Israeli expansionists are exploiting the reactionary changes in Syria.

The global struggle has many fronts, including in occupied Palestine, Syria and the rest of West Asia. Because imperialism has no solutions to any crisis, we remain confident that the struggle will regroup and break forth again at a higher level.

Nothing is final in the class struggle, except that it will continue until imperialism is finally defeated on a global scale. The temporary setback in Syria shows that a battle may be lost but not the war.

Hands off Syria! Israel out of Syria! U.S. out of West Asia! □

## Philadelphia welcomes injured siblings from Gaza




Palestine Children's Relief Fund Philadelphia welcomed 14-year-old Tasneem and her sister Ashjan from Gaza to the community. About 100 community members came to greet the sisters with open and loving arms. Tasneem will now receive medical treatment in the U.S.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

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## 'Sanctuary for migrants!'



On Human Rights Day, Dec. 10, a diverse crowd of Philadelphia activists marched from City Hall to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices to defend the city's status as a Sanctuary City and to continue the fight against the detention and deportation of migrant workers and refugees.

Asian Americans United, Juntos, Vietlead, the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition, the New Sanctuary Movement and the Woori

Center organized the action, provided speakers and marched together in unity. Many speakers highlighted Mayor Cherelle Parker's responsibility to protect vulnerable communities against ICE and other federal officials in the upcoming Trump administration.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

# Workers World 2025 message: 'Long live Palestine!'

"They wanted to erase Palestine from the world; now the whole world is Palestine!" This slogan is truer now than ever, as millions of people from every corner of the globe, horrified at Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza, have responded with huge demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian people and opposing the Zionist state's murderous siege and U.S collusion.

Workers World newspaper critically reports on the catastrophic bombing of Gaza, where tens of thousands of people have been killed, nearly half children, and two-thirds of the buildings have been destroyed — hospitals, displaced persons camps, schools, houses, historic sites and more. Our staff and writers join protests opposing Israel's devastation and Washington's lock-step support and provision of high-tech weaponry, including 2,000-pound bombs.

Our coverage lambasts Israel's deadly strikes in Lebanon and Syria and the Zionist state's expansion into West Asia. The U.S. government's silence on the genocide and widening war is deafening

A major difference between our newspaper and the corporate media: WW is partisan, unwavering in our support of the Palestinian people, their allies and resistance organizations and the peoples of West Asia against U.S.-backed Israeli aggression. Our staff vows to keep exposing the real toll of Israel's militarism and denouncing Washington's complicity. Our articles explode the corporate

media's "Big Lie" about the Zionist state's founding and expose the truth: Israel was created by U.S./British-backed Zionist expulsion at gunpoint



Washington, DC, Nov. 4, 2023. WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

of 750,000 Indigenous Palestinians from their homes, farms and villages, to live in refugee camps in Gaza or elsewhere.

Our newspaper calls for solidarity with the Palestinian people and all oppressed peoples. If you agree with the slogan "Free Palestine," then WW is the newspaper for you.

### Join the WW Supporter Program

This pro-worker, anti-imperialist newspaper relies on our readers' backing. The WW Supporter Program was founded 47 years ago to help produce this pro-socialist newspaper and for over 30 years has supported the website workers.org, where new articles are posted daily and the weekly paper's PDF is displayed.

Workers.org contains timely news and analyses of global and U.S. struggles, posts bulletins from the Palestinian resistance, their allies and other national liberation movements and articles translated by our staff. Mundo Obrero publishes articles in Spanish.

Our writer-organizers report on anti-capitalist, anti-war and anti-imperialist struggles and promote people's movements against racism — and for the rights of Black, Latine, Indigenous, Arab and Asian peoples and women, workers, migrants, disabled and LGBTQIA2S+ people. **Workers.org is a resource for political activists.**

While WW's staff members and writers are volunteers, the 12 issues printed and shipped each year and the website incur expenses. Although many online publications require payment to read their articles, WW does not. **Our articles are free to all readers.**

Can you donate \$50, \$100 or \$200 per year? Contributing \$50 or more will entitle you to receive 12 print issues a year, five emails per week with links to articles posted online and upon request, a copy of the book "What road to socialism?"

Your donations help get class truth to more readers — and are appreciated. Write monthly or annual checks to "Workers World." Include your name, address and email; write "Supporter Program" on the memo line. Mail to Workers World, 121 W. 27th St., Suite 404, New York, NY 10001.

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Workers World  
121 W. 27th St., Suite 404  
New York, NY 10001  
Phone: 212.627.2994  
E-mail: wwp@workers.org  
Web: www.workers.org



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Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

*Tear Down the Walls!* Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Teddie Kelly

Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Sasha Mazumder

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, Steve Gillis

Contributing Editors: G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Sara Flounders, Otis Grotewohl, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Deborah Rodriguez, Carlos Vargas

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## Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multi-gendered 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 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, class solidarity, and joining us in the fight for a socialist future, please sign up at [www.workers.org/join-form](http://www.workers.org/join-form) and an organizer will get back to you. Or contact a WWP branch near you. □

### If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact:

**National Office**  
121 W. 27th St., Suite 404  
New York, NY 10001  
212.627.2994  
wwp@workers.org

**Atlanta**  
PO Box 18123  
Atlanta, GA 30316  
404.627.0185  
atlanta@workers.org

**Bay Area**  
P.O. Box 22947  
Oakland, CA 94609  
510.394.2207  
bayarea@workers.org

**Boston**  
284 Amory St.  
Boston, MA 02130  
boston@workers.org  
instagram: @wwpboston

**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
335 Richmond Ave.  
Buffalo, NY 14222  
716.883.2534  
buffalo@workers.org

**Cleveland**  
cleveland@workers.org

**Durham, N.C.**  
919.322.9970  
durham@workers.org

**Houston**  
P.O. Box 3454  
Houston, TX 77253-3454  
713.503.2633  
houston@workers.org

**Minnesota**  
minnesota@workers.org

**Philadelphia**  
P.O. Box 5634  
Philadelphia, PA 19129  
610.931.2615  
phila@workers.org

**Portland, Ore.**  
portland@workers.org

**Salt Lake City**  
801.750.0248  
slc@workers.org

**San Antonio**  
sanantonio@workers.org

**Seattle**  
seattle@workers.org

**West Virginia**  
WestVirginia@workers.org

# Daniel Penny verdict: racist message on mental health, vigilante violence

By Keller O'Dekirk

On May 1, 2023, Jordan Neely was strangled to death in a New York City subway car. Yesterday, Dec. 9, his killer, Daniel Penny, was found not guilty of criminally negligent homicide and had the more severe charge of manslaughter dismissed because of a hung — predominantly white — jury.

Neely, 30, was a Black street performer struggling with severe mental illness, homelessness and trauma stemming from the murder of his mother at a young age. On the day of his slaying, Neely boarded the subway in the midst of an apparent mental health crisis, threw his jacket to the floor complaining of hunger and thirst and saying that he did not care whether he was imprisoned or if he died.

Penny, treating this desperate plea for help as a threat, crept up behind Neely and placed him in a chokehold. Neely struggled to escape and pleaded with onlookers to help, and one bystander called out that Penny was killing him. Penny did not loosen his grip for almost seven minutes, one full minute after Neely had apparently fallen unconscious.

Penny is a veteran of the U.S. Marines, but it doesn't take a trained killer like him to understand that depriving someone of air for an extended period of time kills them. That anyone could countenance the idea that any other outcome had crossed his mind is baffling — unless one is familiar with the treatment of mentally ill people, especially homeless mentally

ill people, and even more especially Black, homeless, mentally ill people in the U.S. The police routinely use excessive force, including lethal force, against people experiencing mental health crises.

During the 2020 uprisings after the murder of George Floyd and others at the hands of police, some of the more moderate demands raised by protesters included better



Protest outside Manhattan Criminal Courthouse, where the trial of racist killer Daniel Penny was taking place.

training for police who are called to deal with these crises or for these calls to be handled by other first responders with such training. Rather than implementing even these modest reforms, Democratic and Republican politicians came together to increase funding for police, to

swell their ranks, and to give them even more military hardware and training.

And now, with this verdict, the precedent is set for private citizens to mete out death to anyone, especially a person of color, who they think is too loud or scary.

That this verdict was decided in New York state is not surprising. Governor Kathy Hochul and disgraced New York City Mayor Eric Adams collaborated last year to step up the militarization of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, increasing patrols by the New York Police Department and the National Guard in order to combat fare beating. This effort cost more than the lost fare revenue and led to a shooting in September, when NYPD cops shot a fare beater, two bystanders and one of their own.

The Penny verdict flies in the face of the state's posturing around mental health, which has seen a flurry of stickers issued by the state Office of Mental Health proclaiming "it's okay to not be okay," and adopting the cute social media messaging of "tacos fall apart but we still love them."

Mental illness has a social aspect that is routinely ignored by liberal outlooks — stickers and hotlines don't put food in a person's belly or a roof over their head.

Social media posts about awareness do nothing to provide the security and safety mentally ill people need to keep from spiraling out of control. Bullets and strangulation are not the care we need or deserve. □

## Philadelphia Arena:

### '\$50 million, \$100 million—the whole thing is a sellout deal!'

By Joe Piette  
Philadelphia

For over two years, a growing movement has fought to stop the proposed construction of 76 Place, a basketball arena in Philadelphia that would threaten the existence of Chinatown, the last community of color in Center City. It's the people against the billionaires. A poll of city residents revealed 70% disapproval of the arena at that location.

The struggle is also against the billionaires' government. There's the federal government, where billionaires get what they want no matter which party is in office. But it's also on the local level in Philadelphia, where a few billionaires seem to have undue influence over Mayor Cherelle Parker and a majority of city council members.

For over a week, after multiple attempts to move the package of 11 bills and resolutions to allow the arena's construction out of committee failed, they were finally approved by a 12-4 vote in the "Committee of the Whole" — the committee delegated to decide whether the bills have enough support for a vote by the whole council. The bills will now come up for a final vote at the next City Council session on Dec. 19.

Mayor Parker and 14 out of the 17 City Council members are Democrats, with one lone Republican. Two members belong to the Working Families Party, both of whom oppose the arena.

So far three billionaires — private-equity investors Josh Harris and David Blitzer, managing partners of the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers, and developer David Adelman — have been successful in pressuring a large majority of the City Council to back them against the wishes of the people. Money carries a lot of weight.

#### Gridlock in the middle of the city

Numerous studies have criticized the location of the proposed arena. Besides being an existential threat to the viability of Chinatown, the arena deal would give the billionaires a \$400 million tax break — money that should be going to fund schools and other public services.

The city claims there will be 710 new jobs created, but 50% of Chinatown businesses will be negatively impacted, and part of the existing Fashion District shopping center will be torn down, likely resulting in a net loss of jobs.

Fearful of an influx of predatory developers, residents



Arena opponents hold signs and chant against the billionaires and their enablers in city government, Philadelphia, Dec. 11, 2024.

of neighborhoods south of the arena — the Gayborhood and Washington Square West — have joined the resistance to the project.

Arena opponents also fear the potential impact on the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), which is already cash-strapped. The arena proposal includes plans for SEPTA to build a new facility above the Jefferson Station in Center City, but SEPTA officials say they're not paying for these and other costs related to the arena.

The contentious 76ers' Community Benefits Agreement, or CBA, was created without input from the Chinatown community. Mayor Parker has refused multiple requests from Chinatown residents to meet with them, and a significant portion of the CBA is for some of the Mayor's pet projects instead of Chinatown. Spread over 30 years, the \$60 million is woefully inadequate in providing economic relief or preventing higher rents and the elimination of Chinatown's restaurants and other businesses.

Thousands of people have participated in multiple protests on the streets and in meeting rooms over the last two years. Over the last two weeks, these actions culminated with hundreds of people testifying at City Council hearings, with at least 80% of speakers opposing the arena.

At the Dec. 11 and Dec. 12 City Council meetings, chambers were packed with opponents chanting "Fifty million, 100 million — the whole thing is a sellout deal!" referring to the inadequate CBA.

The influx of more traffic on the narrow Center City

streets during arena events will also create gridlock, blocking emergency vehicles from accessing the nearby Jefferson Hospital. A vehicle protest during rush-hour on Dec. 12 with just 70 cars, plus signs and leaflets, was a small example of what gridlock might look like if the 18,500-seat arena is built.

#### Building trades break class solidarity

Unions rely on solidarity among workers for their very existence in the struggle against the capitalists that exploit them. At numerous City Council meetings, members of the construction unions broke working-class solidarity by speaking in favor of the billionaires' project. Their unions are disgracefully fighting alongside the rich and powerful against the wishes of a community of color.

Building trades leaders claim to be fighting for jobs for their members, but they're ignoring what it might mean for the working class as a whole and siding with their exploiters (the billionaires) against the community. Instead of showing working-class solidarity with the community they would work in, the construction workers are willingly being used as a battering ram against their Asian, LGBTQIA+ and community siblings.

To make matters worse, Ryan Boyer, "leader of the Building Trades Council and longtime business manager for Laborers District Council, owns nearly 10,000 shares in a real estate investment trust fund managed by FS Investments, which is valued at more than \$223,600, according to federal securities disclosures. Since 2021, Boyer has held a board post on FS Credit REIT, one of about half a dozen funds managed by the Philadelphia-based investment company where Adelman [one of the billionaires behind the Arena] serves as vice chairman." (Philadelphia Inquirer, Dec. 12)

Solidarity requires construction workers to oppose their union's wrong-headed stance and to come out against the building of the arena in Chinatown. The arena project can be built elsewhere in the city, and the same jobs would be needed there.

If all our communities and workers organizations acted together in solidarity, we could win affordable housing, mass transit, better schools and so much more that could provide many more jobs than this billionaires boondoggle. □

# Tell Biden: 'Free them all!'

By Monica Moorehead

President Joe Biden issued commutations on Dec. 12 to an estimated 1,500 prisoners convicted of federal nonviolent acts, especially drug-related, as one of his final acts before he officially leaves office on Jan. 20, 2025.

Most of those prisoners had already been released and put under home confinement for at least a year. Their early releases occurred to help slow down the spread of the coronavirus within federal prisons. In addition, 39 other prisoners were pardoned for nonviolent convictions.

Biden claims that he is against the death penalty and could easily commute the sentences of 40 prisoners being held on the federal death row before pro-death penalty Donald Trump takes office.

Commutation is a form of clemency. According to the Associated Press, "Clemency is the term for the power the president has to pardon, in which a person is relieved of guilt and punishment, or to commute a sentence, which reduces or eliminates the punishment but doesn't exonerate the wrongdoing." (Dec. 12)

Weeks before granting commutations to the largest number of people in U.S. history, Biden granted a pardon for his son Hunter Biden, convicted of gun and tax violations.

In a public statement, Biden claimed, "America was built on the promise of possibility and second chances." If that were really true, what about second chances for political prisoners? There are three notable prisoners being held in federal prison who were railroaded by the U.S. government.

First there is **Dr. Aafia Siddiqui**. As a victim of xenophobia, anti-Muslim discrimination and racism, Siddiqui is a Pakistani national who was falsely arrested and convicted for "terrorism" under the U.S. Patriot Act passed following 9/11.

Siddiqui was illegally extradited from Pakistan and brought to the U.S. where she was sentenced to 86 years in prison for a crime she did not commit. She is currently housed in the Federal Medical Center, Carswell, a prison for women, where she has faced all forms of torture and inhumane isolation from her family. For many

years, mass demonstrations have been held in the U.S., Pakistan and elsewhere demanding her freedom.



Dr. Aafia Siddiqui



Leonard Peltier



Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin

Second, there is **Leonard Peltier**. He is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and a longtime leader of the American Indian Movement. He was falsely sentenced to two life prison sentences in 1977 for allegedly killing two FBI agents in 1975 on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He is currently incarcerated in the United States Federal Penitentiary, Leavenworth, in Kansas, and was recently denied parole in September. His supporters are demanding a compassionate release for the 80-year-old Peltier based on his failing health due to the lack of humane health care.

And third is **Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin**, aka H. Rap Brown. During the revolutionary period of the 1960s, Brown, along with the late Stokely Carmichael, aka Kwame Ture, were leaders of the Black Power

Movement. They challenged white supremacy and



the repressive COINTELPRO led by the notorious FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

Brown became a Muslim and changed his name. He moved to Atlanta to open up a mosque in order to serve the needs of the Black community, especially Black youth. In March 2000, Al-Amin was arrested and charged with the murder of a white sheriff's deputy without any concrete evidence. He was sentenced to life without a chance for parole. The 80-year-old Al-Amin is currently being held in the United States Penitentiary-Tucson, in Arizona, after spending many years underground in solitary confinement in a Colorado supermax prison. His real "crime" was his heroic resistance to the racist U.S. status quo.

The cases of federal prisoners, Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, Leonard Peltier and Iman Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, may have historical differences, but their commonality is that they all are victims of a deeply flawed, systemically racist judicial system that seeks to silence them not only as individuals but also for the righteous struggles for social justice and national liberation they represent.

That's why we must continue to demand from the White House: "Free them all!" □

## Philly demands freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Demonstrators in countries around the world marked the 43rd anniversary of the unjust and illegal imprisonment of Pennsylvania political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was arrested and brutalized by Philadelphia police on Dec. 9, 1981.

At the time, Mumia was falsely accused of the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and found guilty in a trial that was widely seen as racist and manipulated.

An impressive teach-in on the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, political prisoners and the prison-industrial complex took place Dec. 7 at Community College of Philadelphia, Center for Business and Industry. The teach-in was hosted by the Black Studies department and chaired by Gabe Bryant with Mobilization4Mumia.

The event kicked off with a phone call from Abu-Jamal, who discussed the importance of dismantling the prison industrial complex. He praised the remarkable things done by the movement against mass incarceration despite tremendous odds.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Protesters demand freedom for Mumia, Philadelphia, Dec. 9, 2024.

Responding to a question from an activist fighting against a Cop City in Hershey, Pennsylvania, Abu-Jamal said: "More cops in the U.S. will never mean less crime. Millions are spent to pay for civil damages when police violate people's civil rights. The cops protect the rich and corporate power. They do not protect us."

A short video featuring former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick speaking on Mumia's case in November 2020 was played before participants divided into break-out groups to discuss the issue of political prisoners. ([workers.org/2020/11/52533/](http://workers.org/2020/11/52533/))

The final portion of the teach-in consisted of a panel discussion featuring Candace McKinley, lead organizer for the Philadelphia Community Bail Fund; Jackson Kusiak from the Free Ant committee and the Free Khalif

Miller committee; Lolo from the Abolitionist Law Center; Janine Africa with MOVE; and Abu from Palestinian political prisoners' group Samidoun.

McKinley said that since 2017 over \$9 million has been raised in Philadelphia to help release over 1,000 people facing excessive bail. Lolo discussed the many restrictions put into place in

Pennsylvania and on a national level with the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 that make winning release from prison difficult, especially for elderly prisoners on life sentences. They noted that 27% of people in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections are over 50 years of age.

Janine Africa spoke on the struggle that won freedom for the MOVE 9, incarcerated in 1978 and imprisoned for over 41 years. Abu discussed the state repression against Samidoun, which is fighting to free over 10,000 Palestinian prisoners illegally held in Israeli jails.

### Dec. 9 protest

Some 50 protesters gathered by the Octavius Catto statue by Philadelphia City Hall on Dec. 9 for a rally and march marking the 43rd anniversary of the

state's unjust and illegal incarceration of Abu-Jamal.

Several speakers said that the struggle to free Mumia and other political prisoners coincides with the upcoming battle of progressive activists against the reactionary administration of Donald Trump, which threatens more state terrorism.

The demonstration marched a short distance to the offices of Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner, where speakers called on him to do the right thing for Mumia by granting him long-denied freedom. They addressed the racist police, judicial and prosecutorial misconduct that resulted in Mumia's incarceration, despite ample evidence of his innocence and the unjust ruling in May 2023 by Common Pleas Court Judge Lucretia Clemons who refused to consider new evidence found in the case.

Protesters then took to the streets to march to 13th and Locust streets where Mumia was arrested and brutalized on Dec. 9, 1981, and unjustly accused of the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner.

Workers World has consistently covered the struggle to liberate Mumia for over 40 years. You can visit [workers.org](http://workers.org) to read articles that include what Mumia means for youth and more on recent developments in his case. □

## Houston activists show up for Mumia

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

Braving cold weather and drizzle, Houstonians held a spirited demonstration outside of the Fraternal Order of Police "union" hall Dec. 7 to mark the 43rd year of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal's 1981 arrest in Philadelphia. Those present demanded "Free Mumia now!" and "No death by incarceration!"

The FOP, which represents the METRO police in Houston, apparently notified the

Houston police, as dozens of cops were all over the neighborhood surrounding the FOP hall. The FOP was the target of the Houston protest since the Philly FOP members not only arrested and brutalized Mumia, but the organization pushed for his execution for the almost three decades that he was on Pennsylvania's death row.

A statement from Dr. Abdul Haleem Muhammad, the student minister of Houston's Nation Of Islam Mosque 45, was read as Dr. Muhammad, a longtime advocate for Mumia, was out of town. His

words ended with: "Mumia should have never been on death row yesterday or languishing in prison today. However, his suffering has exposed the ugly underbelly of America and ignited a global movement toward building a better world for our children. Together, we say with one voice: End the racist, anti-poor death penalty and the bloodsucking, profit-making prison industrial complex! Free Mumia now!"

Protesters began chants of "Free Mumia Now!" and a militant picket line was kept up for an hour, despite the cold

and the cops' presence.

During the demonstration, speeches were given by John "Bunchy" Crear, a longtime Black Panther, and Kofi Taharka, the national chair of the National Black United Front (NBUF). People read selections from Mumia's book, "Live From Death Row."

Participants were from Workers World Party, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, the Black Panther Party Alumni Association and NBUF. □

# Deport profiteers, not migrants!



By **Betsey Piette**

Within hours of Donald Trump's electoral victory on Nov. 5, private prison stocks began to soar in anticipation of Trump's plan to carry out mass deportations of undocumented immigrants. By Nov. 18, stock values for GEO Group and Core Civic – private prison industry leaders – had more than doubled in the month since mid-October in anticipation that Trump's aggressive deportation plan would increase detention center demand.

Yet even before Trump takes office, the private immigration detention industry was already getting a multibillion-dollar head start from President Joe Biden to expand immigration jails, as revealed by a Guardian investigation, reported on Dec. 6.

While Biden had issued an executive order in January 2021 to phase out the federal criminal system's use of for-profit prisons, his order left out the government's reliance on for-profit immigration detention facilities, where some of the worst abuse and unsanitary conditions have been reported.

For fiscal year 2024, Congress approved \$3.4 billion to detain 41,500 people per day – an increase from \$2.9 billion in 2023. Under Biden, the number of people detained in jails under the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) rose from 14,195 in 2021 to nearly 39,000.

As of 2023, 90% of people in ICE custody were held in private facilities, where according to Jesse Franzblau,

senior policy analyst with the National Immigration Justice Center, they “experience inhumane conditions and rights abuses that include medical neglect, preventable deaths, punitive use of solitary confinement, lack of due process and discriminatory and racist treatment.” (Guardian, Dec. 6)

Many of the complaints of abuse stemmed from ICE facilities in California owned and operated by GEO Group. Yet despite campaigns to shut them down, which included letters from U.S. senators, in October, Biden extended one GEO contract for five more years.

## ‘Deporter-in-chief’

But the crisis of for-profit immigration prisons goes back even to before Trump's first term. President Barack Obama is credited with creating the harshest and largest immigration enforcement regime in U.S. history, deporting around 3 million undocumented workers.

The Obama administration also expanded detention for many of the 231,000 children asylum seekers since 2010. (CATO.org, Jan. 25, 2017) The National Council of La Raza called Obama “the deporter-in-chief.”

Whether a Democrat or a Republican sits in the White House does not change the profit-driven nature of U.S. capitalism which created the crisis of migration. For decades under globalization, the development of high technology allowed the establishment of factories and sweatshops throughout Central and Latin America, driving wages down and

destroying local economies.

U.S. imperialism's support for corrupt governments and the overthrow of progressive leaderships helped to create the crime syndicates that force many migrants to flee their home countries.

For decades, both capitalist parties have failed to put forward serious and permanent immigration reform that would expand legal migration and legalize the status of the current undocumented immigrant population. Expanding deportations and militarizing the borders are not the solution. Undocumented immigrants are not the problem.

The solution lies in the creation of a mass employment program that includes educational opportunities – but that hasn't happened under any of the recent

presidents.

Under Biden, 15 colleges closed in 2023 and at least 16 nonprofit colleges and universities announced closures this year. Most were low-tuition dependent colleges without the mammoth endowments of major Ivy League universities.

Over the next five years, according to research from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, college closures will significantly increase. The connection between the funding of prisons and the lack of funding for education cannot be denied.

In the coming fight against the next Trump administration, workers need to unite against attacks on our migrant/immigrant siblings and for the jobs and education that everyone needs. □



Demonstrators demand that Wall Street stop bankrolling private prisons, New York, May 1, 2018.

# First Amendment: Anathema or weapon?

By **Bryant Arroyo**  
CU#1126, SCI-Pine Grove

I've been sitting in obscurity in solitary confinement now for over 280 days, in the inferno of the entrails of the Restricted Housing Unit (RHU) at Pennsylvania's state correctional institution in Pine Grove, litigating my federal lawsuit Arroyo v. McGinley (No. 1:23-cv-01083), while trying to figure out how I ended up in this situation.

Many of my comrades, advocates and supporters from the eastern region of Pennsylvania must be thinking that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) put my freedom of expression into a recession.

They certainly tried by denying me a single cell accommodation for my health issues and by forcing my transfer from the state correctional institution at Coal Township to the one at Pine Grove.

This is in retaliation for my work as a whistleblower, which is defined as “an individual who exposes the corrupt or malicious venal actions of a public or private organization, government, or entity, leaking information thought to be pertinent to the general public.”

My fellow inmate William “Billy” Rinick and I blew the whistle on Coal Township. Specifically, we blew the whistle on the fact that the state prison was in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and various fire/safety codes for its failure to install handicap-accessible fire and safety exit ramps.

They were well aware of that fact – as evidenced by the prison's Lt. Cohoon who declared that it would cost “several millions of dollars” to bring the prison into compliance; and that that was the

real reason why I was placed in solitary confinement to await transfer to another prison.

The pretext was that Bill and I were punished for exposing the names of correctional officers in the Workers World publication. But, as Lt. Cohoon stated, “It was never really about you guys exposing the staffmember's names in the Workers World newspapers. It was squarely about avoiding the Department of Corrections from spending millions of dollars to install emergency, exit and handicap ramps throughout the entire Pennsylvania prison system. It just isn't economically feasible.”

Lt. Cohoon then sought to extinguish the exercise of my constitutionally protected free speech rights by forcibly removing us from the general population and placing us into an RHU. This was done under the false pretext of “encouraging unauthorized group activity” for assisting Billy Rinick with his article which focused on mitigating fire and safety risks by implementing fire exits throughout the entire facility at SCI-Coal Township.

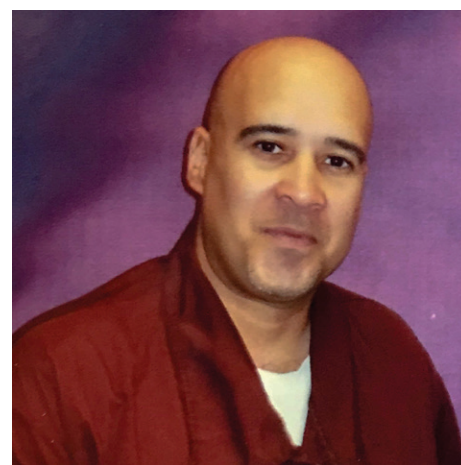
## Don't silence prisoners!

Prisoners have an absolute right to speak in their own voices, especially those who have been targeted by the PADOC, an entity which seeks to keep us enslaved by cowardly using inappropriate force to ban our expression and humanity.

It's not the first time I've been targeted, nor will it be the last. In the past, I've stopped an \$860 million coal gasification plant from being built 300 feet from the prison yard at the State Correctional Institution at Mahanoy.

I've pointed out the failure of the

system to accommodate life-sentenced prisoners with “compassionate release,” and I've raised the alarm about poor drinking water and other issues. On top of that, I'm an innocent man supported by the alleged victim's family members for the past 30 years.



Bryant Arroyo.

WW PHOTO

In response to all of that, I am now confined and isolated in solitary confinement – separated from my family, friends and supporters who are now all ten travel-hours or more away from me.

But I am free to speak! Whether in guilty man's brown or orange clothing, I'm still a Latino, a man and a jailhouse lawyer/environmentalist uprooted from my home district in response to the exercise of my constitutionally protected First Amendment rights in defense of myself and other inmates.

You can bet that the Inmate Publication Review Committee will attempt to censor this article by using a fictitious offense or by stating that I'm a threat for assaulting them with my First Amendment weapon.

For the record, no matter how the

PADOC twists the facts, I'll remain in their eyes a constitutional threat for indefatigably exercising my free speech.

The Free Speech clause of the First Amendment is the U.S. Constitution's foremost, majestic guarantee. The right to free speech, press, assembly, petition and association occupies a preferred place in the constellation of U.S. constitutional protections, as enshrined in the First Amendment.

It is quite alarming to know that Lt. Cohoon and the PADOC have used my freedom of speech to manufacture three false misconducts, as if my words could create a circle of violence towards correctional staff. These misconducts have been shown to be fabricated, because they were all dismissed by three separate hearing examiners, with the last one being dismissed with prejudice.

It is an exaggerated penological response.

All of this demonstrates how the PADOC trivializes physical harm in order to halt communication of any kind, while using unjustified state violence through their punitive use of excessive force against me; for, among other things, merely being quoted in William Rinick's interview in Workers World. (workers.org/2024/01/76247/)

Freedom of speech is the greatest antidote against violence. Freedom of speech is anti-violent!

The inner workings of the free speech clause are central to our democracy, because free speech enhances personal growth and self-realization. It defines your identity! Through the use of it, we are all vessels that are vested with freedom of expression every waking day and night of our lives. □

**WORKERS WORLD** ✨ *editorials*

# Health care for people, not for profit!

The United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" has 30 articles delineating what "everyone has the right to," such as work, education, rest, leisure and "the right to form and to join trade unions."

But the capitalist class routinely denies these rights to the workers with impunity.

Article 25 states: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of [them] and

of [their] family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services. ..."

Yet tens of thousands of people die every year because they cannot pay — and health insurers refuse to pay — for needed care.

That's murder for money — big money. It recalls a footnote to Karl Marx's *Capital*, in which he cites 19th-century British labor leader T.J. Dunning: "With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10% will ensure its employment anywhere; 20% certain will produce eagerness; 50% positive audacity; 100% will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300% and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged."

Or to the chance of its CEO — such as UnitedHealth Group boss Brian Thompson — being fatally shot by Luigi Mangione?

**Death by claim denial**

Denial of claims means more money in the pockets of health insurance companies. As Michael Moore pointed out in a recent essay: "In the United States, we have a whopping 1.4 million people employed with the job of **denying healthcare**, vs. only 1 million doctors in the entire country!" (Michaelmoore.com, Dec. 13)

How much profit do these denials help to generate? Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, the top five health insurance companies (UnitedHealth Group; Cigna; Kaiser Permanente; Elevance Health, the parent company of Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield; and CVS Health, which acquired Aetna in 2018) have raked in \$371 billion. UnitedHealth accounts for 40% of that total. (Jacobin.com, Dec. 11)

Gross margin per enrollee, which is the average amount per enrollee by which insurance company income exceeds what the company pays in claims, is a whopping \$1,982 for Medicare Advantage plans. UnitedHealthcare is one of the biggest promoters of these privatized Medicare plans. (kff.org, July 2)

**Health care is a right!**

That's not even the whole story of profiteering off that basic human need and right, medical care. For-profit hospital chains are making billions in profits. Even so-called "non-profit" hospitals are allowed to divert income toward grossly high executive salaries.

And then there are the superprofits of Big Pharma. Greedwatch reports, "In 2023, 16 of the largest drug companies reported \$684 billion in revenue, a figure

that is higher than the gross domestic product (GDP) of 88 percent of the countries in the world.

"This eye-popping revenue reflects the record-high prices drug companies set for drugs they launched in 2023 and overall prices that are three to eight times higher for U.S. patients than for patients in other high-income countries." (protectourcare.com)

Every single person in the U.S. could have free health care. Take out the profits, and the costs of providing that care will fall dramatically. And funds could come from cutting the bloated Pentagon budget — \$824.3 billion for fiscal year 2024.

Even many developed capitalist countries have some form of a no-cost or low-cost national health care system. But to implement something similar in the U.S. would take a huge bite out of the medical-industrial complex's bottom line — that's the profits for the owners.

It will take a huge fight to take health care out of private hands, but it is a just fight. It won't be won by individual acts of understandable violence like Mangione's. It will take an independent, anti-capitalist mass movement based on the workers and oppressed.

Health care is a right! Fight, fight, fight! ☐

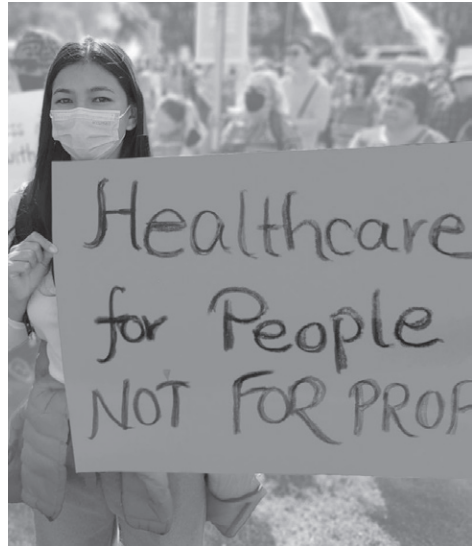


PHOTO: ONTARIO HEALTH COALITION

Canadians demonstrate against privatization of their health care system, Toronto, May 30, 2024.

## South Korea's problem: the U.S.

Since his Dec. 3 attempt to impose martial law, mass demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of people involving the most important labor unions and popular organizations from around the country came out in the streets of Seoul demanding that South Korean President Yoon Seok-Yeol be deposed.

After a popular rebellion repulsed Yoon's Dec. 3 coup attempt, the National Assembly reversed the call for martial law, and Yoon was forced to retreat — but refused to step down. Following continuous popular demonstrations, the National Assembly finally voted on Dec. 14 with more than the needed two-thirds majority to impeach Yoon.

The impeachment unleashed massive demonstrations celebrating what the vast majority of South Koreans hope will be Yoon's expulsion from office and his trial for ordering martial law.

The struggle, however, is far from over. Yoon says he refuses to leave office. Protected by the details of the impeachment law, he can remain in office for up to six months. And powerful forces back him.

Yoon is on the far right of South Korean politics — once calling for a 120-hour work week for South Korean workers. He is a vicious enemy of North Korea and labels all his parliamentary opponents communists and traitors.

In 2022 he won the election with a plurality of less than 1%. Since that election, Yoon has been exposed as corrupt and incompetent to prevent major disasters. Yoon's support rate has dropped to about one in six, and his party was trounced in the parliamentary elections this year. It holds just a little more than one-third of the seats.

Given his weaknesses, one would think he could easily be removed. But what makes Yoon and his party still dangerous for Koreans is Washington's role. The U.S. counts on Yoon to carry out an unpopular war program.

While mouthing support for democracy, U.S. imperialism has occupied the Korean peninsula since 1945 and established a demilitarized zone since the end of the Korean War in 1953 with thousands of U.S. troops to keep the peninsula divided. The U.S. has supported military rule there in order to keep that country a vassal in its attempt to maintain hegemony on the world arena.

In 1980, when the people of Gwangju, South Korea, rose up against military rule, the U.S. — then under the Jimmy Carter administration — backed the military dictator Chun Doo-hwan and facilitated the movement of South Korean troops to bury that mass rebellion in blood.

Under both Republican and Democratic administrations, Washington has put in motion plans to build a



Koreans celebrate vote to impeach President Yoon Seok-Yeol. Seoul, Dec. 14, 2024.

NATO-like aggressive alliance led by U.S. imperialism. It includes Japanese imperialism and the U.S. junior partner of Australia, with the U.S. "former" colonies, the Philippines and South Korea. The latter two are meant to contribute territory for military bases and human cannon fodder for war against North Korea and China.

Anyone who supports the working class has the duty to support the Korean people's mobilization against the tyrant Yoon. Anyone who wants to stop an aggressive war in the Pacific has the duty to fight U.S. plans to build a military alliance in the Pacific. The first step is to demand that the U.S. troops get out of Korea! ☐

## Philadelphia Yoon's impeachment is our win!

By Workers World Bureau Philadelphia

Demonstrators who gathered outside City Hall in Philadelphia on Dec. 14 for a rally celebrating the impeachment of South Korea President Yoon Suk Yeol had a message to deliver: This impeachment is OUR win! But the struggle to remove Yoon isn't over yet.

The demonstration was called by Koreans4Decolonization@Penn after Yoon attempted to establish martial law, which only lasted a few hours before huge crowds and the National Assembly overturned his decree on Dec. 3.

Yeeun Yoo, with the Koreans4Decolonization@Penn and Our Lyagi, talked about her call with her father in Korea who reminded her that, while the Korean Congress took the vote, "it was the people who impeached Yoon. ... But the fight is far from over. The impeachment is merely an indictment, but we know that Yoon's pathetic and spineless followers will do anything to prevent this from happening."

Yoo continued: "But we also know that it has been the people — millions in Korea and in the streets of New York, Los Angeles, the Bay Area and now Philly — it has been

us, the masses, who have been out on the streets — and it will be us who ensure Yoon will not only be removed from office but also convicted.

"The fight against Yoon is a fight against the U.S. empire, a fight against militarism and imperialism. Under U.S.-occupied South Korea, we will never be safe nor sovereign until the U.S. empire CEASES to exist.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Marchers chant "U.S. out of Korea!" after a rally at City Hall, Philadelphia, Dec. 15, 2024

Impeachment alone will not remove the U.S. out of Korea nor prevent puppets like Yoon from rising again."

Joe Piette, with Workers World Party, was stationed in Korea as a GI during the U.S. war in Vietnam. He said, "South Korea continues to be dominated by the U.S. When I heard that autocratic, anti-worker, pro-war President Yoon Seok Yeol declared martial law Dec. 4 and sent troops to seize the National Assembly building, my first reaction was to question the role of the U.S.

"The current commander is U.S. General Paul LaCamera, who has operational control over 700,000 active-duty troops, of whom 28,000 are from the U.S. The U.S. has been complicit in Korea's earlier dictatorships, and I doubt Yoon could have sent those troops to the National Assembly building without General LaCamera's knowledge."

Sunhee Volz with Korea Peace Now Grassroots Network and Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance shared a statement released by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions [KCTU] after news of the impeachment: [This is] "merely the beginning. The power of workers and citizens

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# Sanctions, Syria and the need for solidarity

By Sara Flounders

This edited talk was given at the “Americas Without Sanctions” hybrid meeting. This program was held in-person at the historic Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, D.C., on December 10, 2024 — Human Rights Day. In addition, more than 400 people registered for the Zoom. The program was carried live on WPFW Pacifica radio in the Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Virginia area. It was also live-streamed on @SanctionsKill (Facebook) and is available on YouTube in English ([youtu.be/Pv2MyLejNfo?t=70](https://youtu.be/Pv2MyLejNfo?t=70)) and with Spanish translation ([youtu.be/IHRB-1quaho](https://youtu.be/IHRB-1quaho)).

The SanctionsKill Campaign has focused a great deal of time and energy over many years into exposing this horrific U.S. weapon of mass starvation, disease, hyperinflation and societal collapse as a weapon of U.S. policy.

As the coordinator of the SanctionsKill Campaign, I’ll be co-chairing tonight’s event on International Human Rights Day with Jill Clark Gollub of the Americas Without Sanctions Committee.

Sanctions, also known as Economic Coercive Measures, are a form of organized violence against a whole population.

There are more than 40 sanctioned countries, totaling one-third of the world’s population. This U.S. weapon is an all-out effort to destabilize and re-colonize the developing world — the Global South. It’s the cause of millions of migrations, a desperate effort to seek relief.

Tonight our focus is on the thousands of U.S. sanctions on Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, the sanctioned countries of the Americas.

But we can’t focus anywhere in the world without first raising our total solidarity with Palestine and the heroic resistance of 14 months — stretching back to more than 76 years.

Israel is truly committing genocide by every standard of international law, and yet its condemnation is truly disregarded. The war on Gaza, on the West Bank and on Lebanon is totally funded and equipped by the U.S. It continues because U.S. imperialism is in full support of the Zionist crimes. Democrats and Republicans backed these crimes for decades, now despite global solidarity of historic proportions.

Long before October 7, 2023, in the SanctionsKill Campaign we focused on the U.S. and Israeli sanctions on Gaza as a form of all-out war. There were U.S. and Israeli sanctions on Gaza ever since Hamas overwhelmingly won the elections in 2006.

All of Western and Central Asia and North Africa has

been ripped apart by U.S. sanctions and constant wars in the past 30-plus years — from Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Libya and Yemen to Afghanistan.

The largest number of sanctioned countries are the developing countries of Africa — from Libya and Tunisia in the north to Zimbabwe in the South, from Sudan and South Sudan in the East,

Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia in the Horn of Africa to Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia in the West and Congo in Central Africa.

All of these rounds of economic strangulation are an effort to disrupt and re-colonize Africa and Asia by the imperialist powers.

Suddenly this week, we see in gruesome detail the impact of 21 years of U.S. sanctions on Syria, once a prosperous, modern country with zero foreign debt and free health care and free education, including at universities. There was subsidized food, modern infrastructure, paid from the nationalized oil resources. Syria was a breadbasket and strong defender of Palestine for 50 years.

In 2003, when the U.S. invaded Iraq, Washington imposed rounds of sanctions on neighboring Syria. This went unnoticed here. But it caused hyper-inflation and shortages. The salaries of government workers, soldiers, teachers and medical staff were suddenly worthless.

Economic crisis is fertile soil for a well-funded opposition that blames everything on government corruption and never mentions U.S. sanctions. This opposition exploded with U.S. help and funding in 2011 in an uprising called the Arab Spring.

We’ve all seen the same tactics — in Cuba, in Nicaragua, in Venezuela. We’ve seen how U.S.-funded mercenaries can rip a country apart. Tonight we’ll discuss the people-centered measures to counter the sanctions.

## Aim of sanctions: Divide, conquer, destroy

Al-Qaida, ISIS and other competing gangs operating without plan, coherent ideology or leadership surged into Syria. All were funded by the U.S. and also by Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. They were funded to tear Syria apart. There was wild propaganda, a Western media onslaught. Then by 2014, claiming they were fighting ISIS forces, the U.S. military started bombing Syria, destroying all possible infrastructure.



Left to right: Dr. Samira Addrey, Friends of Latin America; Lautaro Sandino, Nicaraguan Ambassador to the U.S. and Sara Flounders speak at Dec. 10 program in Washington, DC.

The solidarity of Hezbollah, Iran and Russia helped save Syria and at great cost, regain control of Syria’s cities. But one-third of Syria remained under U.S. and Turkish control through contending mercenary gangs. This area was oil- and resource-rich and Syria’s agricultural breadbasket.

There are U.S. bases in Syria and still in Iraq

to this day, along with U.S. trainers and contractors in Jordan. Sanctioned Syria could not gain funds or supplies, even from the United Nations, for reconstruction or emergency relief.

In the years of no heat, little electricity, old weapons, constant bombardment, demoralization can take hold. The lines can collapse. The Syrian Arab Army literally collapsed this week. It is a shock to all forces resisting a U.S. takeover. They could not withstand another offensive of well-trained, newly-equipped mercenaries.

Right now, the U.S. Air Force and the Israeli Air Force are bombing Syria relentlessly. There are hundreds of bombing runs destroying every industrial center, government ministry and communication center. Why? Isn’t the government defeated? Hasn’t the Syrian Arab Army dissolved?

The U.S. and the Zionist forces want to ensure that nothing can be rebuilt. They want to dismember Syria. They want to ensure that no supplies can possibly reach sanctioned and war-torn Lebanon. This is an all-out effort to demoralize and divide the Palestinian resistance. Israeli tanks are on the outskirts of Damascus.

That’s what the corporate media means by “Free Syria.” This is Israeli-occupied Syria.

This means that we need to escalate our solidarity with Palestine, Syria and Lebanon and with the sanctioned countries of the Americas. The threat is real. The impact of sanctions is cumulative.

We are honored to hear from peoples’ representatives of the sanctioned countries of the Americas on people-centered policies they have developed to counter U.S. sanctions and U.S. destabilizations.

The best way to really begin this program is with our salute to Palestine and to continued resistance. Our response must be to strengthen solidarity with renewed determination. □

## Yoon’s impeachment

Continued from page 6

that prevented unconstitutional martial law and achieved Yoon’s impeachment must now be directed towards achieving major social reforms. The KCTU will lead the way. We shall be at the forefront of creating a new society.”

Volz added: “We must take the strength of the Korean people to stand up here against the U.S. empire and demand an end to America’s longest war. Both in Korea and here in the U.S. we must fight for an end to the war economy and build a people’s future that truly takes care of us and the planet. End the Korean War now!”

Dan Valenzuela from Anakbayan Philadelphia addressed the similarities between Yoon’s declaration of martial law and Filipino President Ferdinand Marcos’ response to alleged “anti-state forces” and a “communist threat” demonstrated through mass student uprisings in metro Manila in 1972.

Valenzuela stated: “The common factor was the presence of U.S. imperialism

aimed to capture and maintain power over each of our country’s respective puppet governments. In both instances these betrayals were met with militant resistance by the very masses they sought to oppress.

“These are the defining moments that ultimately determine how events are seen through history. It should be defined not just by the cowardly irresponsibility of our nation’s leaders but by the heroic struggle of resistance that defeated these attempts on our freedoms as we seek justice and accountability for the countries they are sworn to serve.”

Valenzuela ended his comments with the chant: “U.S. out of Korea and the Philippines!”

Hannah Lee with Koreans4Decolonization@Penn moderated the rally.

The energetic group marched around the crowded Christmas Village area next to City Hall, chanting “U.S. out of Korea!” and other slogans before ending a few blocks away beneath the South Korean flag on Benjamin Franklin Parkway, lined with flags of countries from around the world. □

## Action defends Syria from U.S.-Israeli occupation

By G. Dunkel  
New York

If the Israeli settler-colonialist and U.S. imperialist leaders believe that the recent setback in Syria has crushed the Axis of Resistance to Zionism, the protest Dec. 15 in Manhattan’s Union Square in New York City countered that claim.

The Bronx Anti-War Coalition (BAWC) called the protest. In its Dec. 5 call to action, the BAWC stated, “The U.S./CIA regime change war that began in 2011 aimed to destabilize Syria, and now the focus is on destroying the Axis of Resistance and its ability to fight back. By targeting Syria, they hope to dismantle the infrastructure and alliances that sus-



WWW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

Union Square protest, in New York City, Dec. 15, 2024.

tain Resistance forces like Hezbollah, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, paving the way for Zionist and imperialist expansion.”

People at the protest chanted: “Say it loud, say it clear. We don’t want Zionism here!” and “Free, Free Palestine from the river to the sea!”

Larry Holmes, first secretary of Workers World Party, addressed the demonstrators, saying: “The settler regime is in its last days. If they think, if the imperialists think that they have crushed the resistance, the Axis of the Resistance, they are in for a very painful awakening. That resistance is going to grow stronger.

“There is an important ally of the resistance—the people of the world—everywhere and on every continent. The Palestinian resistance depends on us to be strong in the belly of the beast. Fight those who try to shut down the students and their encampments. Fight those who fire people who put pro-Palestinian stuff on their social media. Fight the social media who try to eliminate pro-Palestinian posts. Make our movement stronger in 2025, so we can play our role in liberating Palestine, from the river to the sea.”

The protesters marched to Washington Square Park where they held a wrap-up rally. An activist from BAWC told the crowd: “We need to unite. To rise above sectarianism. Rise above religious differences. Our fingers will be pointed towards the U.S. government and the Zionist entity.” □

## DECLARACIÓN DE WW/MO

# Siria: la lucha no ha terminado

Por los editores de Mundo Obrero

Mundo Obrero condena el derrocamiento del gobierno democráticamente elegido del presidente Bashar al-Assad en Siria. Assad ocupaba la presidencia de Siria desde el año 2000. Los «rebeldes» sirios, respaldados por Estados Unidos, Israel y Türkiye, tomaron la capital de Siria, Damasco, el 9 de diciembre. A Assad se le ha concedido asilo político en Rusia.

Junto con las fuerzas de liberación de Irak, Yemen y Líbano, los gobiernos sirio e iraní se han unido al Eje de la Resistencia. Esta alianza ha estado proporcionando una importante ayuda militar a la resistencia palestina en el frente contra el Estado sionista y terrorista de Israel que lleva más de un año cometiendo un genocidio en Gaza.

El gobierno sirio tuvo la previsión revolucionaria de ayudar a levantar el Eje de la Resistencia. Este era el único camino hacia la liberación del imperialismo estadounidense y del sionismo para toda la región. Como resultado, Siria permaneció en el punto de mira del imperialismo y de su cliente Israel, que mantiene una perspectiva expansionista que incluye la anexión tanto de Siria como de Líbano.

Para Estados Unidos e Israel, el principal «crimen» de Assad fue negarse a ser una marioneta del imperialismo.

Este reciente revés en Siria, perjudicial para el movimiento mundial, no comenzó hace sólo unas semanas. Tiene sus raíces en más de 13 años de ataques imperialistas contra este país soberano.

Después de que en 2011 Estados Unidos respaldara y financiara a mercenarios y fuerzas terroristas, cuyo



7 de septiembre de 2013, Nueva York.

FOTO MO: G.DUNKEL

objetivo era destruir Siria, el Ejército Árabe Sirio pudo reagruparse y contraatacó heroicamente. A un gran coste fue capaz de retomar las principales ciudades de Siria, incluida Aleppo, que se encuentra a 63 kilómetros de la frontera turca al norte. Pero el conflicto para recuperar el control total de Siria estuvo congelado durante años.

Las fuerzas mercenarias y terroristas de Estados Unidos y Turquía mantuvieron el control de un tercio del territorio sirio. Esto incluía la base agrícola y rica en petróleo de Siria. Ejércitos de fuerzas terroristas, enemigos de Damasco, fueron pagados, entrenados y completamente equipados en Türkiye y Jordania.

El imperialismo estadounidense se jactó durante años de haber podido mantener el aislamiento político y sobre

todo económico de Siria mediante sanciones y la negación total de toda ayuda a la reconstrucción de Siria. Mientras tanto, Washington suministraba amplios fondos para la reconstrucción en las regiones controladas por Estados Unidos.

Estas sanciones mortíferas, otro acto de guerra, fueron un intento de Estados Unidos de negar servicios vitales, matar de hambre a la población y vaciar la economía siria hasta su colapso.

El movimiento antiimperialista mundial debe tener presente el panorama general. Este es un momento para elevar, saludar y recordar a los mártires y combatientes de la resistencia en Siria, que durante décadas y contra viento y marea se mantuvieron firmes contra la dominación imperialista estadounidense.

El bombardeo y la invasión de Siria por parte de Israel con planes de ocupar más territorio muestran cómo los expansionistas israelíes se aprovechan de los cambios reaccionarios en Siria.

La lucha global tiene muchos frentes, incluso en la Palestina ocupada, Siria y el resto de Asia Occidental. Dado que el imperialismo no tiene soluciones para ninguna crisis, seguimos confiando en que la lucha se reagrupará y estallará de nuevo a un nivel superior.

Nada es definitivo en la lucha de clases, excepto que continuará hasta que el imperialismo sea finalmente derrotado a escala mundial. El retroceso temporal en Siria demuestra que se puede perder una batalla pero no la guerra.

¡Fuera las manos en Siria! ¡Israel fuera de Siria! ¡EE. UU. fuera de Asia Occidental! □



FOTO MO: G. DUNKEL

Protesta en Union Square, Nueva York, en solidaridad con Palestina, Líbano y Siria, 15 de diciembre de 2024.

# Global labor actions and the role of the working class

By Otis Grotewohl

Many labor actions and strikes have broken out around the world in recent months, intensifying in early December.

One major event that shook the world was the militant response by South Korea's largest labor union federation against South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's brief declaration of "martial law" on Dec. 3. That evening, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions announced an indefinite general strike demanding the right-wing president step down.

President Yoon rescinded the decree six hours after his arbitrary announcement which had suspended civilian government functions and established temporary military control. Partially due to pressure from the KCTU, the South Korean parliament voted to impeach Yoon on Dec. 14. The Constitutional Court has up to 180 days to determine whether to dismiss Yoon as president or restore his powers.

Following Yoon's impeachment, the KCTU wrote: "The impeachment is merely the beginning. We must build a society where workers don't die on the job and where public services — health care, care work, education, transport, housing and energy — are guaranteed. The KCTU will lead the way. We shall be at the forefront of creating a new society." (KCTU Facebook, Dec. 14)

## Strikes rock Italy

Workers in Italy conducted various strikes in early December. Several unions rallied and struck in Florence on Dec. 11. The Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL), the Italian Confederation of Trade Unions and the Italian Labour Union: Transport (UILTrasportil)



Korean Confederation of Trade Unions rallies to demand South Korean President Yoon's impeachment.

orchestrated a four-hour stoppage to express solidarity with the victims of a fuel depot explosion and fire in Calenzano on Dec. 9.

On Dec. 13, Unione Sindicale di Base (USB) and Cobas unions carried out a 24-hour strike in Rome to raise awareness over the rising cost of living and low wages. The two unions demanded higher wages and a shorter work week.

Additionally, the communist-led USB made Palestine a central focus. "Ours is a strike against the war economy and thus also against our government's support for the Israeli state," said one USB spokesperson. (middle-east-online.com, Dec. 13)

On Dec. 15, TechnoSky air navigation workers and air traffic controllers in Italy waged a 24-hour strike at several airports. There is a four-hour transportation workers' strike scheduled to take place on Jan. 10, 2025, called by the FAISA-CONFAL union.

## Other key labor actions in Europe

In addition to the various struggles in Italy, there are strikes that have either occurred or been set by transportation workers in France, Scotland, Finland and Spain. Fuel tank drivers at the Edinburgh Airport in Scotland announced a 19-day strike that is scheduled to last from Dec. 18

until Jan. 6. The Finnish Air Line Pilots Association conducted a strike from December 9-13.

Workers in France have been mobilizing since mid-November, starting with transportation unions who struck against airline ticket tax hikes. French rail worker unions have announced strikes in opposition to privatization, and farmers have collectively protested capitalist "free trade" policies. Virtually all the French trade unions called a strike on Dec. 5 following the government's proposal of massive budget cuts and attacks on employee benefits, such as sick leave.

In Germany, workers have been fighting back against Volkswagen's plans to close at least three plants and unleash mass layoffs. On Dec. 2, Volkswagen workers launched two-hour rolling strikes at nine plants across the country, including the three factories that are being threatened with closure. These strikes were followed up with four-hour strikes on Dec. 9.

## Significance of global class struggles

The strikes and work stoppages that are ringing in the new year reflect the anger most workers feel towards corporate greed and bourgeois institutions. Canadian postal workers have also been on strike in recent weeks. Much like with the other labor actions around the world, there is much public support for the postal workers, despite the corporate media's attempt to portray the labor actions as "inconveniences" for non-striking workers.

Class consciousness is increasing among workers and oppressed people throughout the globe. The major strikes being conducted are an indication of the growing

class consciousness and discontent against the billionaire class.

The reactions workers expressed on social media regarding the recent shooting of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson are another sign of rising class consciousness and awareness. Thompson's death exposed the crisis of the for-profit health care system in the U.S. and the enormous amount of insurance claim denials. Very few workers showed sympathy for Thompson, due to his role as a health insurance CEO.

At the same time, communists have historically rejected political assassinations, because independent working-class mobilization is the correct path in opposing corporate greed and class exploitation.

Collective labor actions are the most effective way to combat capitalism and its cutthroat enforcers. Workers are uniting with one another in pushing back against capitalist attacks on different continents, and in doing so, they are educating each other and sharing important lessons. As material conditions have changed, tactics and strategies have also evolved. Workers have become creative in their actions to adjust to technological changes, such as automation and artificial intelligence.

In addition to raising the level of class consciousness, some of the labor actions have elevated political consciousness. The general strike in South Korea along with the various labor actions around Palestine are examples of the growth of political development. The recent work stoppages make it clear that, despite dialectical changes over the decades, the working class has the revolutionary potential to defeat capitalism and bring down imperialism. □