

Baltimore activists take on Amazon: Stop investing in genocide; justice for workers

written by Struggle-La Lucha Baltimore bureau
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Struggle-La Lucha interviews Andrew M of the PPA

SLL: We understand that the Peoples Power Assembly launched a campaign this past Labor Day around Amazon divesting in genocide and demanding justice for its workers. What are the concrete demands of the campaign and its goals?

The “Amazon: Invest in Workers, not Genocide” campaign makes demands of both Amazon and the Baltimore City government. As the campaign grows, our demands will remain open to feedback from Amazon workers and the broader community. Currently, they are:

Amazon:

- Institute a \$30 minimum wage and proportional wage increases for all workers.
- Full-time benefits for all workers.
- Shut down Project Nimbus and all other projects, contracts, and investments with the apartheid government of Israel.

Baltimore City:

- Hold an open forum for Amazon workers and the community to testify on working conditions without fear of reprisal.
- Pass a city council resolution divesting the City from all projects, contracts, and investments with the apartheid government of Israel.

SLL: In what ways is Amazon investing in genocide?

The Israeli military uses Amazon’s “Project Nimbus” to automate the software they use to operate their weapons systems. In other words, it allows Israel’s military to use *artificial intelligence* to surveil, target, and kill Palestinian civilians.

SLL: How have you been implementing your work, and what has been the response?

An important aspect of this campaign is that, on the one hand, Amazon workers know their community supports them. On the other hand, the community needs to understand Amazon’s working conditions.

PPA members have been to major transit hubs in Baltimore City, including some Amazon shuttle stops, to hand out and tape up flyers.

Maybe a more important aspect of the campaign is to connect the worker struggle with the anti-imperialist struggle. So, while our flyers list our demands, they also aim to expose the connection between their employer, Amazon, and the genocide in Palestine. There's room in the budget to kill innocent people, but none for raises or health care.

The response from the broader community in Baltimore has been overwhelmingly positive. Amazon workers were enthusiastic about starting a conversation and talking more about conditions at work.

In one of these conversations, we learned that Amazon prohibited the use of headphones or earbuds except for its own brand.

SLL: How is your campaign related to Starbucks and the Maersk campaign?

We see our campaign as a localization of the Palestinian Youth Movement's [Mask Off Maersk campaign](#).

These kinds of campaigns are crucial to the mass movement to free Palestine — they offer solutions and a program for accomplishing them. They identify the corporations that we all recognize in our everyday lives and expose their role in the system that creates and profits from war and genocide. But more importantly, they offer a way to plug in and fight back.

PPA members have met with many Starbucks Workers United members and organizers at solidarity sip-ins to discuss this campaign. It's abundantly clear that, at least among the rank-and-file membership, the union effort's organizers are pro-Palestine, including various calls to boycott Starbucks. In fact, [Starbucks sued SBWU members](#) for speaking out in support of Palestine.

This puts SBWU, at least as an organization, in a precarious position. For now, members can't say anything in support of Palestine as representatives of SBWU. However, we welcome SBWU members to our demonstrations around Palestine so they can raise their struggles.

SLL: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Anyone interested in the campaign can join the email list by signing up at <http://tiny.cc/WorkersNotGenocide>.

