

# President Zelensky and Mayor Goode

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
March 3, 2022



Aftermath of Philadelphia police bombing of MOVE house on May 13, 1985.

While landlords are raising rents by 40%, the capitalist media wants you to hate Russia. They are trying to turn Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky into a folk

hero.

Zelensky is a professional clown. He played the role of a Ukrainian president in a TV sitcom.

He was selected to be an actual president because U.S. imperialism needed a new look in Ukraine. Wasn't that the role of José Napoleón Duarte in El Salvador during the 1980s?

He was cheated out of winning El Salvador's 1972 presidential election by vote fraud. Duarte was later tortured and sentenced to death.

None of this prevented him from being the face of a bloody military regime that carried out the orders of the Pentagon.

When Duarte was a civilian president of a military junta, more than 800 people were murdered in the village of El Mozote. Most of the victims of this December 1981 massacre were children.

The Reagan administration desperately needed the atrocity to be covered up. They remembered how the My Lai massacre in Vietnam turned millions against that war.

Reagan was assisted by not only Duarte but also the New York Times. Because of their truthful reporting, Raymond Bonner at the Times and Alma Guillermoprieto at the Washington Post were viciously attacked by the right wing. Bonner was [driven out by the Times' management](#).

Today the New York Times and the Washington Post are among the loudest voices in the hate Russia chorus. They're much more influential in winning liberals and progressive people to NATO's war drive than Fox News ever could be. The killing of over 14,000 people in the Donbass republics by the Ukrainian regime is hardly ever mentioned by the media.

Duarte defeated the openly fascist Roberto D'Aubuisson in El Salvador's 1984 presidential election. This gave an excuse to many Democratic Party members of Congress to give billions to the killers in El Salvador's military.

### **Who are the ones with the guns?**

Zelensky is allowed to stay in Kiev's Mariinsky Palace because of his usefulness to Wall Street and European bankers. Millions of Ukrainians voted for Zelensky in 2019 because they thought he would stop the fascist gangs terrorizing Ukraine.

The fact that Zelensky is Jewish is used as alleged proof that fascism in Ukraine isn't a big problem anymore. After Barack Obama was elected U.S. president, many media commentators claimed racism in the United States wasn't much of a problem either.

The Black Lives Matter movement proved that to be a lie. Obama was put in the White House because a large section of the ruling class felt they needed a new brand for their empire.

Tens of millions of people rejoiced when the first U.S. Black president was elected. It also made it easier for the Pentagon to attack the African country of Libya than if some obvious racist had been in office.

While Zelensky is the figurehead seen on TV, fascists like those in the Azov Battalion and Right Sector have been brought into the Ukrainian army and police. One of the factors that allowed JFK's assassination was that half of the Dallas cops were Ku Klux Klan members.

The Deep State is the real state. Lenin pointed this out in "[The State and Revolution](#)." When Gen. Milley responded to Trump's attempted coup by saying "we're the ones with the guns," he was expressing a Marxist truth.





Ukrainian neo-Nazis burn the Odessa House of Trade Unions on May 2, 2014.

### **The Odessa and Philadelphia massacres**

Five years before Zelensky assumed office on May 20, 2019, at least 48 people at the House of Trade Unions in Odessa were murdered on May 2, 2014. Neo-Nazis prevented people from escaping. Many were burned to death.

It shows the fascist character of the Euromaidan movement's leadership that the union hall was attacked. None of the criminals who carried out this atrocity have been prosecuted. Leftists were arrested instead.

Zelensky has done nothing to seek justice for the victims of this massacre, just as he

has allowed the deadly shelling of the Donbass republics. Justice will only be carried out by Ukrainian leftists assisted by soldiers of the Russian Federation.

Six adults and five children were killed by Philadelphia police when the MOVE house was bombed on May 13, 1985. The cops were assisted by FBI agents and the Pentagon in dropping the bomb from a helicopter.

When Wilson Goode—Philadelphia’s first Black mayor—got up that morning, he wasn’t thinking 11 Black people would be killed along with the burning of four city blocks.

It was Philadelphia’s police chief who gave the order to “let it burn,” preventing the fire department from putting out the fire. But Mayor Goode still bears a responsibility for these murders.

The communist leader Sam Marcy could have added this terrorist crime as an appendix to his pamphlet “[Generals Over the White House](#).” He might have entitled it “Cops Over City Hall.”

### **“Neutrality” is a cop-out**

President Vladimir Putin was forced to intervene in Ukraine in order to stop it from being a NATO base aimed at the Russian Federation. If this had happened, the next step would have been World War 3.

The entire imperialist metropolis led by the United States has issued severe sanctions against Russia. These include seizing Russian assets and cutting off Russian banks from the SWIFT financial clearing system. Sanctions are acts of war.

Sincere pacifists may condemn all wars, but revolutionaries know that some wars are progressive and indeed necessary. For socialists and communists to condemn “both sides” in the current crisis is a cop-out.

The world was horrified at the MOVE bombing. But some wanted to blame one of the victims, MOVE leader John Africa, for this terrorist act.

These liberals also refused to defend Mumia Abu-Jamal, a revolutionary who has been imprisoned for 40 years and whom the capitalist state wanted to execute.

U.S. imperialism will not defeat itself. Revolutionaries have the right to accept assistance from anybody.

Soviet socialism was tragically overthrown and Russian Federation President Putin is no Lenin. Yet right now Russia's armed forces are playing an indispensable role in rescuing the Donbass republics and Ukrainian workers from fascist terror.

It does no good to sit on the sidelines. Victory to the Donbass republics and their allies!



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## **Plan to build ballpark at the Port of**

# Oakland threatens thousands of union jobs

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
March 3, 2022



Hunger strikers at Westlake Public School in Oakland, Calif., left, join protest, above, with ILWU Local 10 and Oakland Teachers on Feb. 17. They are fighting the closure of public schools and to save the Port of Oakland.

On Feb. 17, Struggle-La Lucha interviewed Clarence Thomas, a third-generation longshore worker, retired past secretary-treasurer of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 and author of [“Mobilizing in Our Own Name: Million Worker March.”](#) The book is about the struggles of ILWU Local 10, one of the most radical unions in the country and maybe the world. It is an anthology based on articles and interviews, photographs, and posters, with Thomas’ introductory analysis containing vital lessons for today’s labor movement.



**Struggle-La Lucha:** It's great to be talking with you as Local 10 and the Oakland teachers, along with other labor and community activists, rally in Oscar Grant Plaza to stop the privatization of Howard Terminal and the closure of eleven Oakland schools.

**Clarence Thomas:** At present, the City Council of Oakland is voting to certify an Environmental Impact Report presented by John Fisher, owner of the Oakland A's baseball team, in his quest to gentrify the Port of Oakland with a waterfront ballpark and development at Howard Terminal.

The Port of Oakland is the third busiest port on the West Coast, an economic engine for the entire region of northern California. ILWU Local 10 is the largest labor force at the Port of Oakland. It has a long militant labor history.

**SLL:** Why is the history of the ILWU Local 10 so important in this struggle?

**CT:** In the 1934 San Francisco General Strike, dock workers led by the legendary union leader Harry Bridges won control of the hiring hall and ended discriminatory hiring practices, known as the "shape-up." During the following years, ILWU Local 10 — with African American leadership — became internationally recognized as one of the most democratic and radical trade unions in the U.S.

**SLL:** I've heard Fisher's project described as building an "amusement park on top of an assembly line."

**CT:** Fisher wants to shut down Howard Terminal and replace it with a 35,000 seat ballpark; including 3,000 skybox condominiums for the wealthy, where you can watch a baseball game from your condo; a 400-room luxury hotel; and 1.8 million square feet of retail and commercial space.

Presently, there is no infrastructure for public traffic at all at the port. Two railroad lines run right in front of the Howard Terminal. One is for Amtrak, the other is for



Union Pacific Railroad which at times carry hazardous material.

There are good reasons why ports and other maritime facilities have zoning laws; which says that no matter how beautiful the scenery may be in terms of skylines and waterfront, you can't build housing on the maritime facilities.

**SLL:** Who Is John Fisher?

**CT:** He is a right-wing billionaire, who owns the Oakland A's, Gap clothing store, and is one of the major U.S. landowners. He is instrumental in many other gentrifying projects.

Fisher happens to be a major player in funding and operating charter schools. He owns KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) charter schools and has affiliations with Rocketship charter schools. Fisher and his family are very much involved in the implementation of charter schools on the West Coast.

The reason why I'm emphasizing this is because the city of Oakland is in the midst of closing schools in predominantly African American and Brown communities. For the record, along with generations of other African American and working-class families, I have been the beneficiary of Oakland Unified School District. If we want to have real working-class democracy and not just bourgeois democracy, we need public schools. If a country does not invest in its youth, it has no future.

When they close public schools, it's a precursor for charter schools. They are creating an environment where public schools can be converted into condominiums.

My father, Clarence C. Thomas, Sr., and his family were part of the great Black migration from Mississippi to Oakland, California, in 1936. He enrolled in Clawson Elementary School. For more than 20 years, Clawson elementary has been the site of upscale condominiums in Oakland. When I talk about the closure of schools — then the schools being converted into high-cost condominiums — it is based upon

fact.

**SLL:** I see that Local 10 and the Oakland teachers have joined forces.

**CT:** There are currently two Oakland teachers at Westlake Middle School — Maurice André San-Chez and Moses Olanrewaju Omolade — who are on a 17-day hunger strike. These teachers are demanding that the state invest money in education and not in closing schools. They say they will end their hunger strike if California Gov. Gavin Newsom, the superintendent of the Oakland Unified School District, and the School Board members, meet with them.

Thus far, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf and Newsom have been very dismissive of the teachers' demands.

Gov. Newsom wants to fashion himself as some kind of progressive. He had an opportunity to release many political prisoners from California state prisons, based on humanitarian release, because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. He refused to do that.

We have to be very clear about whose interests the Democratic Party serves, which leads me to bring up the issue of how Democratic politicians claim to be friends of labor. They have been demonstrating that they are anything but.

First of all, I'd like to call attention to two prominent California politicians. One is Rob Bonta, who is currently the Attorney General for the State of California. Bonta played a major role in effectuating legislation that would allow the publicly owned Howard terminal, specifically designated for maritime use, to be used as a site for recreation and luxury housing. In his role as State Assemblyman, Bonta and State Senator Nancy Skinner have been working in collaboration to make Fisher's gentrification plan possible.

Fisher is the stingiest baseball owner in Major League Baseball. This is not just

hyperbole. During the pandemic last year he refused to pay the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Authority the rent on the property where the A's currently play baseball. He said he had not been able to generate any money because of the pandemic. Yet he's attempting to acquire some of the largest public space in the city of Oakland. He wants an amusement park for the rich at a thriving working port.

**SLL:** Will Oakland benefit in any way from Fisher's proposal?

**CT:** No! The city of Oakland, like many major cities, is suffering from a lack of affordable housing. There is a growing population of people who are living on the streets and in parks. John Fisher is asking for a billion dollars from Oakland taxpayers to pay for infrastructure, on-site and off-site, for this development.

It's important for people who will be reading this interview to understand how neoliberal policies are driving John Fisher's efforts at the Port of Oakland. Neoliberalism is generally associated with economic policies including privatization, which is what is taking place at Howard Terminal and the closure of Oakland Public Schools.

**SLL:** Are other union leaders supporting Local 10 and the teachers?

**CT:** Most of the unions represented by the Alameda County Central Labor Council are supporting Fisher's project. The reason is because of the very large membership of the Building Trades unions. The Building Trades also have a lot of money and they support Democratic politicians. If we are to be very truthful, the Building Trades have a long history of racism and exclusion of people of color in their ranks. They say that the project will generate jobs. Yes, it will. Most of those jobs will be the better paying jobs which will go to the members of the Building Trades.

What happens after the project is built? What jobs will be available to the working class in the city? Not the kind of jobs that will allow them to be able to rent

apartments or buy homes.

Let me get to some specifics as to what this development would mean to port workers at the Port of Oakland. ILWU Local 10 is the only predominantly African American longshore union on the entire West Coast. Local 10 has a history of social justice, activism, and solidarity with the oppressed and the working class, at home and abroad.

ILWU Local 10 is one of the few places in the entire United States of America where Black people, specifically Black women and other women of color, can work and make the same amount of money as white men.

This development would curtail the future not only of ILWU members but also mitigate the capacity for the Port of Oakland in the midst of a pandemic. It is absolutely scandalous. The reason for this interview with you today is to be able to shed some light on it.

**SLL:** How did you become a member of ILWU Local 10?

**CT:** My grandfather migrated from Louisiana and went to work in a shipyard in Oakland in 1943. One year later he became a member of the ILWU. Some 20 years later, in 1963 — the year of the March on Washington — my father became a member of ILWU. In 1965 my great uncle Robert Harmon also became a member of Local 10. After the passing of my father, while an active member of Local 10 in 1985, I became a member of Local 10.

Trent Willis, who just completed his second term as ILWU Local 10 President, is a third-generation longshore worker. His father went to work on the waterfront the same year as my dad.

Leo Robinson, the rank-and-file leader of ILWU who was responsible for writing the historic resolution calling for the boycott of South Africa's apartheid cargo — also



became a member of Local 10 in 1963.

I am mentioning this because it is so important to understand what the ILWU meant to people who reside in the Bay Area and the impact that they've made, not only in the Bay Area but across the country and around the world.

Former Oakland mayor and U.S. Congress member Ronald V. Dellums, whose father was a longshore worker, attended Westlake Middle School where the teachers are currently on a hunger strike. Rep. Dellums played a critical role in Congress in advocating for sanctions against apartheid South Africa.

Dellums, Robinson, and I all graduated from Oakland Technical High School. It is not a coincidence that all of our social justice activism was in some way influenced by our fathers' membership in ILWU Local 10, one of the most democratic and militant rank-and-file unions.

In conclusion, during the years when there has been turmoil in the fight to end segregation and apartheid in the U.S., those waterfront jobs have meant so much to many in the Bay Area, not only Black people but the entire working class.

The union jobs allowed dock workers in the community to buy homes, to send their children to college, even though some of those members had no higher education at all. It enabled them to effectuate political change in the Bay Area. When Nelson Mandela was released from prison and did a worldwide tour, he came to Oakland where the longshore workers had refused to unload South African cargo. Mandela spoke to thousands at the Oakland Coliseum where the Oakland A's currently play baseball.



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# **A victory! Professor Rabab Abdulhadi wins second grievance at SFSU**

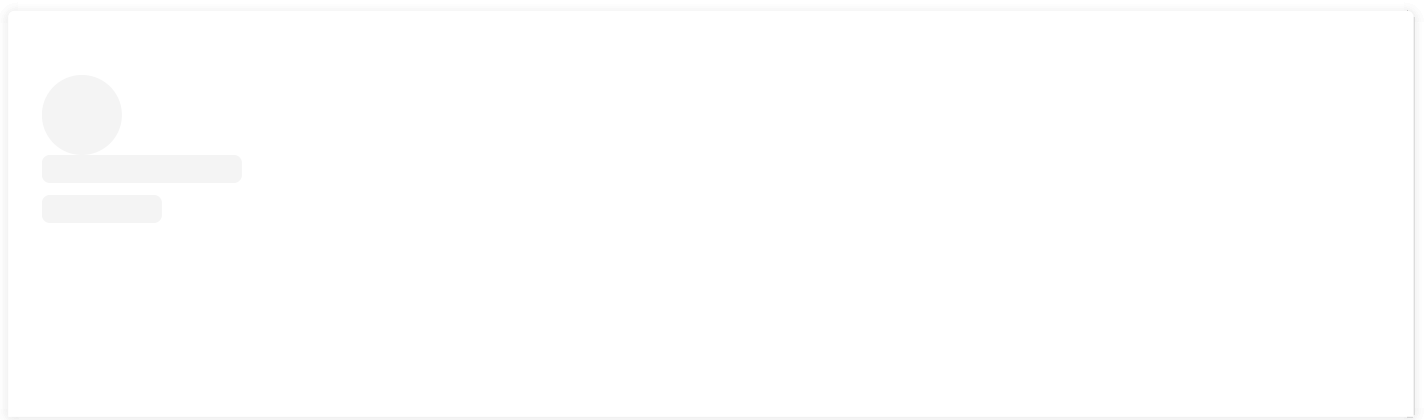
written by Struggle - La Lucha  
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A faculty panel has unanimously sided with Professor Rabab Abdulhadi at San Francisco State University (SFSU) in a grievance she filed through her union, the [SFSU chapter of the California Faculty Association](#). Dr. Abdulhadi's grievance reiterated her demand for SFSU to fulfill its outstanding commitment to build [Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas \(AMED\) Studies](#) by hiring two additional tenure-track faculty members, institutionally supporting AMED, stopping the attempt to dismantle AMED, and ending the creation of the hostile work environment to which Dr. Abdulhadi has been subjected for at least 13 years for her directorship of AMED and her refusal to abandon it.

Issued yesterday by the three-person Faculty Hearing Committee that adjudicated Dr. Abdulhadi's grievance on February 4, a [report](#) agreed with Dr. Abdulhadi's

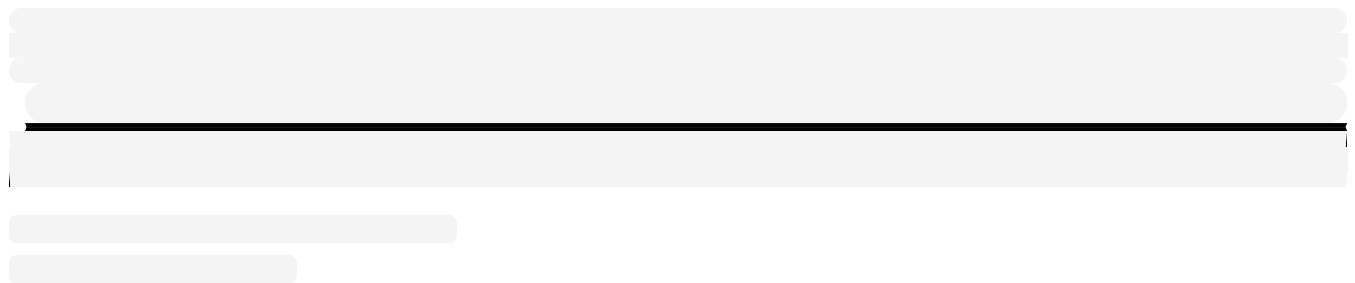
claims that SFSU breached her hiring contract and fostered a hostile work environment to pressure her to give up AMED Studies. The Faculty Hearing Committee supported Dr. Abdulhadi, and upheld AMED's independence and integrity.

The statutory grievance filed by Dr. Abdulhadi documented SFSU's refusal to honor the original Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) which the university signed when it recruited Dr. Abdulhadi to create and direct the AMED program in 2005. That MOU stipulated that two additional tenure-track positions would be hired along with Dr. Abdulhadi to ensure a full and sustainable academic, communal and advocacy multi-site space on the history, politics, cultures and social movements of Arab, Muslim and Palestinian communities as they intersect with and contribute to the indivisibility of justice within and outside of the College of Ethnic Studies at SFSU. The fact that those faculty positions were never filled served to thwart AMED Studies and turn it into a token, one-person operation without possibility of growth and development - had it not been for Dr. Abdulhadi's tenacity and determination to resist such designs. In addition, the grievance detailed how the university created a hostile work and study environment on campus for Dr. Abdulhadi and her Arab, Muslim and Palestinian students and their allies, including anti-Zionist Jewish students, staff and colleagues. These efforts have been publicly decried by numerous scholars and academic organizations, including the [SFSU chapter of the California Faculty Association](#).





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The February 4 Faculty Hearing Committee rejected the university's claims, including several bad faith actions that sought to undermine the transparency of the grievance hearing. Not only did the SFSU Administration fail to submit the list of




witnesses and evidence on time as per their own deadline. The university representatives made a mockery of the proceedings by sharing the names of their witnesses less than 24 hours before the hearing, contrary to the very agreement on which they had insisted.

The three committee members, Drs. Rita Melendez (Chair), Elahe Essani, and Hui Yang, relied on “written documents, direct testimony, and cross-examination of witnesses” to reach their findings defining Dr. Abdulhadi’s grievance “to be serious, thus requiring an immediate remedy.” The committee’s report recognized that Dr. Abdulhadi “met the burden of proof and provided evidence that the former Dean of Ethnic Studies (Dean Monteiro) promised two new faculty positions in AMED as a condition of Dr. Abdulhadi coming to SFSU,” as stipulated in her job offer. The report rejected the attempt by the SFSU Administration to engage in character assassination of Dr. Abdulhadi, stressing that SFSU “has fostered a hostile environment” and that “lack of hires has resulted in intellectual isolation for Dr. Abdulhadi and has had negative consequences in terms of her building an AMED program.” The report ordered SFSU to “issue an apology to Dr. Abdulhadi for not fulfilling the promise made to her upon her hire and for years of denying the requests for the faculty hires.”

The report comes on the heels of another recent victory achieved by Dr. Abdulhadi, AMED Studies communities, and Palestine scholarship and pedagogy. In October 2021, a Faculty Hearing Committee [ruled unanimously](#) that SFSU violated the academic freedom of Dr. Abdulhadi and her colleague, Dr. Tomomi Kinukawa, when the university failed to stand up to [Zoom’s silencing and cancellation](#) of an open classroom they co-organized on Palestine, titled “[Whose Narratives: Gender, Justice and Resistance: A Conversation with Leila Khaled](#)”, on September 23, 2020. The [Faculty Hearing Committee members](#) ordered the university administration to apologize to Drs. Abdulhadi and Kinukawa and host the censored webinar without interference from big tech corporations while also faulting the administration for

colluding with The Lawfare Project, a right-wing organization that has been part of a network of pro-Israel lobby industry groups intent on smearing, bullying and silencing scholarship, pedagogy and advocacy for Palestinian freedom for years, including that of Dr. Abdulhadi and AMED. The Lawfare Project's federal lawsuit against SFSU and Dr. Abdulhadi (the only faculty member named in this lawsuit) was [dismissed with prejudice](#) in federal court in 2018 after 18 months of persistent attacks against Dr. Abdulhadi.

Rather than respect members of the SFSU faculty who volunteered their time and exerted their intellectual energy to serve on the Faculty Hearing Committee, SFSU President Lynn Mahoney vetoed the committee's unanimous decision that called for redress to Drs. Abdulhadi and Kinukawa. In so doing, President Mahoney sought to nullify the committee's recommendations and sabotage the grievance process. [Intellectuals and academics were outraged by President Mahoney's disregard of faculty rights and due process and called for her immediate resignation.](#)

These outcries and calls coincided with similar calls for the [resignation](#)  of California State University (CSU) Chancellor Joseph Castro, who in fact resigned on February 17, 2022 after reports appeared that he mishandled misconduct complaints. Chancellor Castro had been supportive of Mahoney, giving her a 10% salary increase despite faculty uproar over budget cuts and the firing of a significant number of lecturers, using the COVID pandemic as an excuse. Castro also presided over the [cancellation of the Edward Said faculty position at CSU-Fresno under Zionist pressure.](#)

Academics, public intellectuals, and the broader Palestine justice movement welcome yesterday's ruling and congratulate members of the Faculty Hearing Committee, Dr. Abdulhadi and the SFSU chapter of the California Faculty Association for their persistence in protecting faculty rights and refusing to join the SFSU Administration in its collusion with the Zionist, orientalist and racist agenda that seeks to silence the teaching of Palestine. During the 6-hour virtual February 4

hearing, SFSU arrogantly dismissed the seriousness of Dr. Abdulhadi's grievance and disregarded the university's own proclaimed principles of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). SFSU's actions demonstrated its cynicism regarding the university's well-publicized support for multiculturalism, equity and inclusion, which directly contradicts the history of SFSU's collaboration with and preferential treatment of Zionist groups, including the recent agreement with Hillel, Hillel International and the Academic Engagement Network, as well as the SFSU's longstanding unjustifiable harassment of Dr. Abdulhadi by subjecting her to multiple baseless audits for the sole purpose of discrediting Dr. Abdulhadi and placating the AMCHA Initiative, a pro-Israel lobby group. SFSU's deceitful practices, misrepresentation of facts, and continued attempts to smear Dr. Abdulhadi's character in the recent hearing once again showed SFSU's disdain for the AMED Studies program and its complicity with outside organizations that seek to silence Palestinian voices (see [Mondoweiss](#)).

[Evidence](#) presented in this most recent hearing, including testimonies by witnesses who were unable to testify due to SFSU's attempt to subvert the process, such as [Dr. Robin D. G. Kelley](#), [Dr. James Martel](#) and doctoral candidate [Saliem Shehadeh](#), further demonstrates the corporatization of SFSU and its administration's collusion with right-wing and Zionist organizations trying to dismantle and destroy the critical AMED Studies program. Testifying for Dr. Abdulhadi were Dr. Tomomi Kinukawa, Dr. Marc Stein, Dr. Blanca Misse, and AMED/Ethnic Studies Graduate Student Leith Ghuloum. Dean Amy Sueyoshi, Associate Dean Catriona Rueda Esquibel and Dean of Faculty Carleen Mandolfo testified for the Administration. Dr. Abdulhadi was represented by Professor of English and member of the Executive Board of the SFSU Chapter of the California Faculty Association, Dr. Larry Hanley. Professor Hanley was supported by a committed team of scholars, public intellectuals and activists representing AMED communities of justice who worked tirelessly and voluntarily to defend Dr. Abdulhadi and AMED Studies and its students as they have done throughout the last 15 years of Dr. Abdulhadi's battle to build AMED Studies and refusal to be stymied by the Zionist and corporatized agenda within and outside

SFSU. Yesterday's report by the February 4 Faculty Hearing Committee bodes well for the sustainability of critical challenges to these reactionary efforts and the racism and anti-intellectualism they entail.

For more information, contact [The International Campaign to Defend Professor Rabab Abdulhadi](#) or write to [Team@professorabulhadidefense.com](mailto:Team@professorabulhadidefense.com).



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# Biden's promise to appoint first Black woman to Supreme Court

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 3, 2022

During a Democratic presidential debate on March 16, 2020, candidate





Joe Biden said: “If I am elected president and have an opportunity to appoint someone to the courts, I would appoint the first Black woman to the court. It is required that they have representation. Now! It is long overdue.”

[Biden first made the promise](#) at a press conference in South Carolina on Feb. 26, 2020, when he accepted Rep. James Clyburn’s endorsement. Biden said he would be honored to appoint the first African American woman to the Supreme Court.

There he said: “The corridors of powers [should] reflect what America looks like – that includes the White House, that includes the staff there. That includes the Cabinet and that includes the Supreme Court and the Congress.”

U.S. Supreme Court seats have historically been filled only by white men – 115 of the 121 Supreme Court justices, or 95% of all appointments. There have been only three white women, two Black men and one Latina. But no Black women.

At the time he made his pledge in early 2020, Biden was fighting for the Democratic Party presidential nomination and was losing the battle. The pledge was forced on this most conservative of establishment Democratic candidates by the struggle of the masses for representation, which intensified with the George Floyd rebellion a few months later.

Biden saw no choice but to promise to address the historic lack of representation of Black people, especially Black women, in this powerful institution.

Hundreds of thousands nationwide were screaming “Black lives matter, reparations now!” Black people were dying of COVID-19 at a higher rate than whites, police were killing Black people indiscriminately, jobs were being lost, student debt continued to grow, people faced evictions, and white supremacists were coming out of the shadows, led by number-one tyrant President Donald Trump.

### **Securing Black women’s support**

What was Biden to do to win? He made promises to the people, specifically African American women, to choose a woman vice-president and appoint a Black woman to the highest court in the U.S. It helped him win the South Carolina Democratic primary, signaling a shift in his fortunes, even though there was no guarantee there would be a Supreme Court seat vacancy.

Bernie Sanders and other Democratic candidates began to drop out of the race. Biden won the nomination – which left him and Trump as the candidates of the two major capitalist parties. His promise was so profound that it helped ensure that an estimated 93% of Black women registered voters came out and cast their vote for Biden in November 2020.

Biden became the 46th president of the U.S. in January 2021. A year later, in January 2022, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer announced his plan to retire.

Biden had an opportunity to wriggle out of his promise at a press conference, like he has broken so many of his other campaign pledges. Instead he announced: “The person I will nominate will be somebody with extraordinary qualifications, character, experience and integrity. That person will be the first Black woman ever nominated to the United States Supreme Court.”

What was Biden thinking? Could it be that he does not really know how deeply seated racism and white supremacy are in the United States?

Once Biden's promise became a reality, the haters came out. Biden could have said he was going to nominate the best person to succeed Justice Breyer and then appointed a Black woman. Did Biden make a mistake by reiterating his campaign promise, or was all this media attention part of the plan?

The arguments being made in the media against affirmative action in relation to Biden's announcement are purely based on racism, trying to sell this as a reasonable argument to the masses of people. The burden of all these racist attacks is going to fall on whichever Black woman Biden appoints, during the confirmation hearings and possibly long after her confirmation.

The truth is, Supreme Court appointments have always been primarily political appointments, not based solely on merit or experience as a judge. The president can appoint whoever he or she wants, and the Senate has the power to approve or disapprove. It is rare that the Senate does not approve a presidential appointee.

The Black woman Biden chooses will surely possess all the qualities required of a Supreme Justice. The number-one qualification required of the appointee is to "uphold the Constitution at all costs." No one would do this with more sincerity, honesty and conviction than Black women, who have so long been denied their rights.

## **Constitution and slavery**

For its time, 230 years ago, the U.S. Constitution was "one of the most revolutionary documents, that ... affirmed a form of government never seen before in the history of humanity, that ... was the very paragon of democracy and accorded equal rights to all" under the law - at least in theory. (Sam Marcy, ["Two contradictory trends in U.S. politics"](#))

Yet how is it that a key institution of this new government was the Supreme Court,

which can invalidate the rights of the majority of the people in this country?

As Marcy explained, it was established as a court of last resort for the rich and powerful. “Whenever the bourgeoisie is in a crisis, they will let nine people, unelected, appointed for life, decide the most critical issues concerning life in the United States.”

The first seven Supreme Court justices appointed by George Washington were slave owners or came from slave-owning families. This is no surprise since Washington was a slave owner himself and in that period chattel slavery was legal. For the elite of this new state, slaves were needed to carry out the hard labor, keep up the living quarters and tend to the needs of the rich whites. No way could they function without slaves.

The “Founding Fathers,” including some who would number among the original seven justices, struggled with how to address slavery. They did not explicitly write the word “slavery” in the Constitution, but included key clauses protecting the institution, including the fugitive slave clause and the three-fifths clause.

Harriet Tubman knew that President Abraham Lincoln was not an abolitionist. His main interest was preserving the Union. Tubman knew that she had to continue to free as many enslaved people as humanly possible.

She had the opportunity to meet Lincoln, to wait in line to meet with him. This would have been an historic moment recorded in history, but she chose not to go. Harriet Tubman, a fugitive slave, served in the Union Army during the Civil War. In the end she had to fight to get compensation in the form of a small pension for her service.

Throughout history, Black women have fought to truly extend the rights stated in the Constitution to every person in the U.S.

## **A political institution**



We know that the appointment of a liberal Black woman will not tip the scales while six right-wing justices stand firm in their opposition to women's reproductive rights. The U.S. Supreme Court will remain in the position to give a heavy blow to the women's movement. Reversing Roe v. Wade, agreeing with the narrow option of abortion only up to 15 weeks, or leaving the decision up to individual states, will place a heavy burden on all oppressed and working-class women in the United States.

We need to change the way Supreme Court justices are chosen. These individuals should be democratically elected by the people with defined qualifications and term limits.

The bottom line is that this is all political. We all know that the time is long overdue for a Black woman to be on the Supreme Court and that the words Biden spoke are true.

Biden's long political career includes his role in the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee. I remember the 1991 confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas, especially the awful treatment of Anita Hill, who testified about Thomas' history of sexual harrassment.

Biden chaired the confirmation hearings and had an opportunity to do the right thing, but he did not want to subpoena the two additional women that could have brought more evidence to support Hill's claim.

Now, in 2022, he had an opportunity to appoint a Supreme Court justice with extraordinary qualifications, character, experience and integrity; to make history without all this drama.

Instead, he may find himself apologizing to another Black woman for stealing the fire and dampening the spirit of the first Black woman associate justice on the U.S.

Supreme Court.



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# **NYC student advocates mark National Transit Equity Day**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
March 3, 2022

# Transit Equity Day Feb 4th



#WeArePIST

Parents to Improve School  
Transportation



Feb. 4 - [Parents to Improve School Transportation \(PIST NYC\)](#) convened education, disability, and labor advocates to expose multiple facets of New York City's chronic student transportation failures and to propose solutions via a School Bus Bill of Rights.

The event, marking the birthday of civil rights icon Rosa Parks - Transit Equity Day - brought together a diverse group of parents and caregivers, elected officials, including State Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon and the Office of Public Advocate, the local Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and environmentalists.

"Transportation for access to education is now a civil and human right under many laws and international conventions, but just like the people of 1955 Montgomery, we need collective action to get it," said Johnnie Stevens, who coordinates the School Bus Bill of Rights referendum campaign for "safe, on-time, fully staffed school bus routes for students of all abilities and all housing circumstances."

Organizers from across the city charged that policy changes before and during the pandemic have led to missed school, health risks for riders and a shrinking workforce.

Claudia Galicia from Sunset Park explained the Department of Education “authorized the routes to double this year,” adding, “families may be informed when a child in the same school is COVID positive, but the bus routes include children from several schools.”

Bronx parent and Comite Timon leader Milagros Cancel spoke on the resulting inhumanity of long rides for children with medical and neurological conditions. Speaking in Spanish through tears, Cancel urged everyone to march over the Brooklyn Bridge on March 19 for equity in student transportation, saying, “This is criminal what’s happening.”

All attendees agreed: driver, attendant, paraprofessional and bus nurse shortages pre-dated COVID. In the words of Public Advocate Jumaane Williams: “The inequities and inadequacies in our educational system – which existed prior to the pandemic and have been exacerbated by it – extend to our buses. Shortages of staffing, length of rides, and overcrowding are persistent issues which disproportionately harm communities of more color and students with disabilities. The city must work to hire and train more staff at fair wages, develop shorter routes, and provide transparency and accountability throughout these processes.”

Williams was represented at the meeting by First Deputy Nick E. Smith and other staff.

Amy Tsai of the Citywide Council for District 75 (special education) reminded the gathering that “there was a huge furlough in 2020, so over that summer, a lot of kids weren’t able to utilize the Learning Centers for related services or instruction.”

First Vice President of the Citywide Council on Special Education, Paullette Healy, added, “We have special education recovery services that started in December, and families cannot access them because there’s no transportation to get our children home.”

Sara Catalinotto of PIST NYC said, “We predicted, over 10 years ago, that cuts to pay and Employee Protection Provisions (EPP) would push many school bus drivers and attendants from the workforce.”

Rima Izquierdo of Bronx Family Autism Support elaborated on the concurrent shortage of school bus paraprofessionals and bus nurses, indicating her child in the background, who was “stuck at home again because his bus para called in sick, and there is no one else designated to ride with him.”

### **Labor solidarity**

Charles Jenkins of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists NY Chapter, pledged support, saying that workers “need to be paid on a professional level that has benefits so that we can hire the best qualified and the best skilled folks to transport precious cargo.”

Another stated goal of this campaign is to prevent and troubleshoot problems efficiently without bias. Catalinotto cited “inequity in getting route information, let alone solutions, from DOE’s Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) depending on how much time, internet access and computer savvy a family has, and in what language they are fluent.”

Galicia blasted the OPT’s complaint hotline as an exercise in futility, saying: “There are long hold times, no follow-up, and no solutions. I don’t have enough hours of the day to make a complaint – two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon – because the limited travel time of my child is being violated.”

Parent and advocate Maggie Sanchez testified in detail that: “Students in temporary housing miss more instruction and services, due to transportation problems, compared to their peers. We know what it’s like not to receive a bus route for weeks on end due to a simple address change.”

Beth Heller of Brooklyn Heights added, “Rather than correct the route problems, OPT sent cabs and car services for my child. I had to accompany him to and from school for a total of four hours a day. When OPT neglected to reserve a return trip, it cost \$60 to get home. If OPT were to send us to and from my son’s non-public school for a full academic year it would cost \$42,300. That could easily pay someone’s salary.”

State Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon offered her support for a School Bus Bill of Rights. Simon congratulated the coalition for “seeing this as a multi-pronged problem, [with] people assigned to and coordinating different areas of the battle.”

Justin Wood of the Clean School Bus Coalition cited evidence that “unhealthy conditions are caused by the diesel and gasoline school buses themselves, creating serious health issues for students, in both general and special education... and we know there’s linkages to severe COVID-19 illness now as well.”

Event organizers said they had also received messages of encouragement from Teamsters Local 808 Secretary-Treasurer Chris Silvera, City Council member Gale Brewer, Community Education Council 17 President Erika N. Kendall, and various labor, education and community activists.





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# **After a year of Biden, why do we still have Trump's foreign policy?**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
March 3, 2022



Joe Biden and the Democrats were [highly critical](#) of Donald Trump's foreign policy, so it was reasonable to expect that Biden would quickly remedy its worst impacts. As a senior member of the Obama administration, Biden surely needed no schooling on Obama's diplomatic agreements with Cuba and Iran, both of which began to resolve longstanding foreign policy problems and provided models for the renewed emphasis on diplomacy that Biden was promising. Tragically for America and the world, Biden has failed to restore Obama's progressive initiatives, and has instead doubled down on many of Trump's most dangerous and destabilizing policies. It is especially ironic and sad that a president who ran so stridently on being different from Trump has been so reluctant to reverse his regressive policies. Now the Democrats' failure to deliver on their promises with respect to both domestic and foreign policy is undermining their prospects in November's midterm election. Here is our assessment of Biden's handling of 10 critical foreign policy issues:

**1. Prolonging the agony of the people of Afghanistan.** It is perhaps symptomatic of Biden's foreign policy problems that the signal achievement of his first year in office was an initiative launched by Trump, to withdraw the U.S. from its 20-year

war in Afghanistan. But Biden's implementation of this policy was tainted by the [same failure](#) to understand Afghanistan that doomed and dogged at least three prior administrations and the hostile military occupation for 20 years, leading to the speedy restoration of the Taliban government and the televised chaos of the U.S. withdrawal.

Now, instead of helping the Afghan people recover from two decades of U.S.-inflicted destruction, Biden has seized [\\$9.4 billion](#) in Afghan foreign currency reserves, while the people of Afghanistan suffer through a desperate humanitarian crisis. It is hard to imagine how even Donald Trump could be more cruel or vindictive.

**2. Provoking a [crisis with Russia](#) over Ukraine.** Biden's first year in office is ending with a dangerous escalation of tensions at the Russia/Ukraine border, a situation that threatens to devolve into a military conflict between the world's two most heavily armed nuclear states. The U.S. bears much responsibility for this crisis by supporting the [violent overthrow](#) of the elected government of Ukraine in 2014, backing [NATO expansion](#) right up to Russia's border, and [arming](#) and [training](#) Ukrainian forces.

Biden's failure to acknowledge Russia's legitimate security concerns has led to the present impasse, and Cold Warriors within his administration are threatening Russia instead of proposing concrete measures to de-escalate the situation.

**3. Escalating Cold War tensions and a dangerous arms race with China.** President Trump launched a tariff war with China that economically damaged both countries, and reignited a dangerous Cold War and arms race with China and Russia to justify an ever-increasing U.S. military budget.

After a [decade](#) of unprecedented U.S. military spending and aggressive military expansion under George W. Bush and Obama, the U.S. "pivot to Asia" militarily

encircled China, forcing it to invest in more robust defense forces and advanced weapons. Trump, in turn, used China's strengthened defenses as a pretext for further increases in U.S. military spending, launching a new arms race that has raised the [existential risk](#) of nuclear war to a new level.

Biden has only exacerbated these dangerous international tensions. Alongside the risk of war, his aggressive policies toward China have led to an ominous rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans, and created obstacles to much-needed cooperation with China to address climate change, the pandemic and other global problems.

**4. Abandoning Obama's nuclear agreement with Iran.**After Obama's sanctions against Iran utterly failed to force it to halt its civilian nuclear program, he finally took a progressive, diplomatic approach, which led to the JCPOA nuclear agreement in 2015. Iran scrupulously met all its obligations under the treaty, but Trump withdrew the U.S. from the agreement in 2018. Trump's withdrawal was vigorously condemned by Democrats, including candidate Biden, and Sen. Bernie Sanders [promised](#) to rejoin the JCPOA on his first day in office if he became president.

Instead of immediately rejoining an agreement that worked for all parties, the Biden administration thought it could pressure Iran to negotiate a "better deal." Exasperated Iranians instead elected a more conservative government and Iran moved forward on enhancing its nuclear program.

A year later, and after eight rounds of shuttle diplomacy in Vienna, Biden has [still not rejoined](#) the agreement. Ending his first year in the White House with the [threat of another Middle East war](#) is enough to give Biden an "F" in diplomacy.

**5. Backing Big Pharma over a People's Vaccine.**Biden took office as the first COVID vaccines were being approved and rolled out across the U.S. and the world. [Severe inequities](#) in global vaccine distribution between rich and poor

countries were immediately apparent and became known as “vaccine apartheid.”

Instead of manufacturing and distributing vaccines on a nonprofit basis to tackle the pandemic as the global public health crisis that it is, the U.S. and other Western countries have chosen to maintain the [neoliberal](#) regime of patents and corporate monopolies on vaccine manufacture and distribution. The failure to open up the manufacture and distribution of vaccines to poorer countries gave the COVID virus free rein to spread and mutate, leading to new global waves of infection and death from the delta and omicron variants.

Biden belatedly agreed to support a patent waiver for COVID vaccines under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, but with no real plan for a “[People’s Vaccine](#),” Biden’s concession has made no impact on millions of preventable deaths.

**6. Ensuring catastrophic global warming at COP26 in Glasgow.**After Trump stubbornly ignored the climate crisis for four years, environmentalists were encouraged when Biden used his first days in office to rejoin the Paris climate accord and cancel the Keystone XL Pipeline.

But by the time Biden got to Glasgow, he had let the centerpiece of his own climate plan, the Clean Energy Performance Program (CEPP), be [stripped out](#) of the Build Back Better bill in Congress at the behest of fossil-fuel industry sock puppet Joe Manchin, turning the U.S. pledge of a 50% cut from 2005 emissions by 2030 into an empty promise.

Biden’s speech in Glasgow highlighted China and Russia’s failures, neglecting to mention that the U.S. has [higher emissions](#) per capita than either of them. Even as COP26 was taking place, the Biden administration infuriated activists by putting [oil and gas](#) leases up for auction for 730,000 acres of the American West and 80 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico. At the one-year mark, Biden has talked the talk, but when it comes to confronting Big Oil, he is not walking the walk, and the whole

world is paying the price.

**7. Political prosecutions of Julian Assange, Daniel Hale and Guantánamo torture victims.** Under Biden, the United States remains a country where the [systematic killing](#) of civilians and other war crimes go unpunished, while whistleblowers who muster the courage to expose these horrific crimes to the public are prosecuted and jailed as political prisoners.

In July 2021, former drone pilot Daniel Hale was sentenced to 45 months in prison for exposing the killing of civilians in America's [drone wars](#). WikiLeaks publisher [Julian Assange](#) still languishes in Belmarsh Prison in England, after 11 years fighting extradition to the United States for exposing U.S. [war crimes](#).

Twenty years after the U.S. set up an illegal concentration camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, to imprison 779 mostly innocent people kidnapped around the world, [39 prisoners remain](#) there in illegal, extrajudicial detention. Despite promises to close this sordid chapter of U.S. history, the prison is still functioning and Biden is allowing the Pentagon to actually build a new closed courtroom at Guantánamo to more easily keep the workings of this gulag hidden from public scrutiny.

**8. Economic siege warfare against the people of Cuba, Venezuela and other countries.** Trump unilaterally rolled back Obama's reforms on Cuba and recognized unelected Juan Guaidó as the "president" of Venezuela, as the U.S. tightened the screws on its economy with "maximum pressure" sanctions.

Biden has continued Trump's failed economic siege warfare against countries that resist U.S. imperial dictates, inflicting endless pain on their people without seriously imperiling, let alone bringing down, their governments. Brutal U.S. sanctions and efforts at regime change have [universally failed](#) for decades, serving mainly to undermine the U.S. claim to democratic and human rights credentials.




Guaidó is now the [least popular](#) opposition figure in Venezuela, and genuine grassroots movements opposed to U.S. intervention are bringing popular democratic and socialist governments to power across Latin America, in Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Honduras — and maybe Brazil in 2022.

**9. Still supporting Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, and its repressive ruler.** Under Trump, Democrats and a minority of Republicans in Congress gradually built a bipartisan majority that voted to [withdraw from](#) the Saudi-led coalition attacking Yemen and to stop [sending arms](#) to Saudi Arabia. Trump vetoed their efforts, but the Democratic election victory in 2020 should have led to an end to the war and humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

Instead, Biden only issued an order to stop selling “[offensive](#)” weapons to Saudi Arabia, without clearly defining that term, and went on to OK a \$650 million weapons sale. The U.S. still supports the Saudi war, even as the resulting humanitarian crisis kills thousands of Yemeni children. And despite Biden's pledge to treat the Saudis' cruel leader, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, as a pariah, Biden refused to even sanction MBS for his barbaric murder of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

**10. Still complicit in illegal Israeli occupation, settlements and war crimes.** The U.S. is Israel's largest arms supplier, and Israel is the world's largest recipient of U.S. military aid (approximately \$4 billion annually), despite its illegal occupation of Palestine, widely condemned [war crimes](#) in Gaza and [illegal settlement](#) building. U.S. military aid and arms sales to Israel clearly violate the U.S. [Leahy Laws](#) and [Arms Export Control Act](#).

Donald Trump was flagrant in his disdain for Palestinian rights, including transferring the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to a property in Jerusalem that is [only partly](#) within Israel's internationally recognized borders, a move that infuriated Palestinians and drew international condemnation.

But nothing has changed under Biden. The U.S. position on Israel and Palestine is as illegitimate and contradictory as ever, and the U.S. embassy remains on illegally occupied land. In May, Biden supported the latest Israeli assault on Gaza, which killed [256 Palestinians](#) , half of them civilians, including 66 children.

## **Conclusion**

Each part of this foreign policy fiasco costs human lives and creates regional, even global, instability. In every case, progressive alternative policies are readily available. The only thing lacking is political will and independence from corrupt vested interests.

The U.S. has squandered unprecedented wealth, global goodwill and a historic position of international leadership to pursue unattainable imperial ambitions, using military force and other forms of violence and coercion in flagrant violation of the UN Charter and international law.

As a presidential candidate, Biden promised to restore America's position of global leadership, but as president he has instead doubled down on the policies through which the U.S. lost that position in the first place, under a succession of Republican and Democratic administrations. Trump was only the latest iteration in America's race to the bottom.

Biden has wasted a vital year doubling down on Trump's failed policies. In the coming year, we hope that the public will remind Biden of its deep-seated aversion to war and that he will respond, however reluctantly, by adopting more rational ways.

*Medea Benjamin, co-founder of [CODEPINK for Peace](#), is the author of "[Inside Iran: The Real History and Politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran](#)" and "[Kingdom of the Unjust: Behind the U.S.-Saudi Connection](#)." Nicolas J.S. Davies is an independent journalist, a researcher for [CODEPINK](#) and the author of "[Blood on Our Hands: The American Invasion and Destruction of Iraq](#)."*



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# **Blaming the victims: The Bronx fire tragedy wasn't an accident**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
March 3, 2022



Seventeen people died in the Jan. 9 apartment building fire that broke out in the Bronx, New York. Eight of those killed were children.

Ousmane Konteh was just 2 years old when he perished. Haouwa Mahamadou was 5 when she died. Some survivors are fighting for their lives in hospitals.

The fire broke out in the 19-story Twin Parks North West tower at 333 E. 181st St. Many of the victims belonged to immigrant families from the West African country of Gambia. Families with roots in the Dominican Republic were also residents.

The country of Gambia was used by the British Empire as a source of enslaved Africans and then as a peanut plantation. Gambia and all Africans deserve reparations.

The entire Dukuray family perished. They were the mother Fatoumata, the father

Haji, 12-year-old Mustapha, 11-year-old Miriam and 5-year-old Fatoumata.

Four members of the Drammeh family lost their lives. Muhammad Drammeh was killed one day after his 12th birthday. He died along with his mother, Fatoumata Drammeh, and his two sisters, Fatoumala Drammeh and Nyumaaisha Drammeh.

[Fatoumata Tunkara died](#) with her 6-year-old son Omar Jambang. Isatou Jabbie, Sera Jannah, Haji Jawara and 12-year-old Seydou Toure perished.

The fire apparently started when an electrical space heater plugged into an outlet caught fire. Families are forced to use space heaters because landlords don't provide enough heat. That's a crime.

Toxic smoke rose rapidly from a third-floor apartment, filling halls and stairways with poison. All of the people who died were killed by smoke inhalation.

The Twin Parks tower wasn't ancient. It was built in 1972. Yet it didn't have sprinklers or exterior fire escapes.

Lethal smoke rose in the tower because it's lighter than air. More modern buildings raise the air pressure in the stairwells to keep out smoke. The newer structures also equip stairwells with dampers.

So why didn't the Twin Parks tower have these life-saving features? It's because the building was privately owned and making it safe would cut into the landlords' profits. Many of the tenants paid their rent with Section 8 vouchers.

One of the owners is Rick Gropper, co-founder of the Camber Property Group. The outfit bought Twin Parks in 2020 with other companies as part of a \$166-million, eight-building deal. Gropper likes to pick up properties like Twin Parks with Section 8 tenants because it offers tax breaks.

So what is Rick Gropper doing on newly-elected New York City [Mayor Eric Adams' transition team](#) for housing issues?

### **They didn't have to die**

Following the tragedy, people throughout the New York City area and across the country have responded with sympathy and love. They have raised close to a million dollars for the families at the Twin Parks tower.

Meanwhile, Mayor Adams and television commentators initially gave lectures on the importance of closing doors if your apartment catches fire. The clear implication of the media barrage was to blame victims for their own deaths.

[Adams did admit](#) that “there may have been a maintenance issue with this door.” A year after a 2017 Bronx fire that killed 12 people, the city council [passed a law](#) ordering self-closing doors to be installed in all buildings by mid-2021.

The mayor even questioned the need for tenants to have space heaters, contending there were no outstanding heating complaints at the Twin Parks tower. There were actually [four heating complaints filed](#) by the tenants last year with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

Thousands of tenants in New York, including those living in New York Housing Authority buildings, are forced to have space heaters or boil water on their stoves to keep warm.

Another problem was that fire alarms would go off many times without cause, leading residents to ignore them. All these problems could have been fixed so 17 people didn't have to die.

But that would have meant hiring more maintenance workers and cutting into Rick Gropper's profits. Gropper may think of himself as a liberal who attends charity



balls. But owning apartment houses for profit is a dangerous practice, just like privately owned nursing homes where tens of thousands have died of COVID.

Just to break even and pay the mortgage, landlords will have to cut back on repairs and maintenance workers. The result is a lack of heat, doors that don't close and increased risk of fires.

Close to two hundred people marched on "billionaires' row" in midtown Manhattan's 57th Street on Jan. 12 to protest the ending of the New York statewide ban on evictions.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul wants to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday this year by ending the moratorium on Jan. 15. Hochul said kind words for those who died in the Bronx, but sees nothing wrong with 250,000 families facing eviction in the middle of winter.

Marchers not only called out the governor, they also went to the headquarters of mega-landlords like LeFrak and BlackRock and condemned their crimes. People chanted in memory of the "Bronx 17."

Housing is a human right. The power of the people will make it happen.



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# Brooklyn, N.Y., teachers demand ‘safety not swagger’

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 3, 2022

Around 100 teachers, students and parents rallied at the Barclays Center sports arena in downtown Brooklyn, New York, Jan. 5 to demand real health and safety protections for public school communities throughout New York City. The action was organized by the Movement of Rank and File Educators (MORE-UFT), a progressive faction of the United Federation of Teachers.

Signs and banners alerted onlookers that “NYC schools are not safe!” MORE-UFT activist Annie Tan, a special education teacher in Brooklyn’s Sunset Park neighborhood, led chants of “Who keeps us safe? We keep us safe!”

Speakers condemned the new mayoral administration of former cop Eric Adams and his predecessor Bill de Blasio for denying students and teachers a remote learning option during the surging COVID-19 omicron variant sweeping the city.

Before the December holiday break, omicron was spreading rapidly through city schools. Both the outgoing and incoming Democratic administrations refused to take measures to ensure the safety of school communities upon the resumption of classes on Jan. 3, and rejected numerous calls to postpone in-person classes to give time for all students and workers to be tested.

Many community members told horror stories from their own schools: sick children being sent to classes due to lack of testing and the Department of Education's lack of communication with non-English-speaking parents; high numbers of teacher absences meaning students are crammed into auditoriums, further heightening the risk of spread; illness of food preparation workers leaving teachers scrambling to feed lunch to hungry kids.

Mayor Adams boasted of "New York swagger" as a reason to force students and teachers back into the school petrie dish. A sign held high by an African American teacher at the Jan. 5 rally responded succinctly: "Safety not swagger."

Unfortunately, UFT President Michael Mulgrew has been collaborating with the city administration in covering up the extent of the crisis and refusing to listen to the demands of the union's members and the broader school community.

MORE-UFT members held a follow-up action at UFT headquarters on Jan. 11, demanding action from the union leadership.

MORE-UFT demands include: KN95 or N95 for students, faculty and staff; weekly testing for all staff and students, and result data to be shared; repair or replace insufficient ventilation systems; student absences excused if parents choose to keep children home during the surge; and remote learning options.

New York residents are urged to call the city's information hotline 311 and say: "I am very concerned about COVID safety in NYC public schools. I believe weekly

testing of all staff and students is the only way to keep schools safe.”







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# Stop winter evictions!

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
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Jan. 8 - A hundred people marched today in New York City in sub-freezing temperatures to stop evictions. Landlords across New York State want to kick 250,000 families out of their homes.

People gathered at Brooklyn's housing court at 141 Livingston St. Tenants find little justice there. Officials are often just rubber stamps for the landlords.

"Housing is a human right, fight, fight, fight!" was a favorite chant. Speakers pointed out the impossibility of finding affordable housing in the capital of capitalism. Over half of the tenants in New York City [pay half of their income](#) for rent.

The current moratorium on evictions ends on Jan. 15. Landlords want to use Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday to start throwing families' furniture on the street.



New York Gov. Kathy Hochul doesn't want to extend the moratorium. It was only because millions of people were in the street demanding Black Lives Matter that there was any ban on evictions during the pandemic.

Marchers demanded the moratorium be extended until June 30.

After a short rally, people marched to 26 Court St., home of some of the landlords' favorite law firms. People then went over the Brooklyn Bridge with their colorful banners to Manhattan's housing court.

Among the organizations that came out today were the Crown Heights Tenant Union, Democratic Socialists of America, the Party for Socialism and Liberation and the Socialist Unity Party.

The CHTU is joining other groups in calling for a "march on billionaires' row" on Jan. 12 at 6 p.m. at 57th Street and Broadway in Manhattan.

Kicking people out of their homes in the winter can be a death sentence. Every attempted eviction has to be stopped.





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**Workers organize and strike to fight pandemic and capitalist**

# inflation

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 3, 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic continues as the new year begins, spreading faster with the Omicron variant. Average daily infections in the U.S. are over 500,000. Total deaths are approaching 1 million. The coronavirus is now the top killer of adults ages 25 to 44 in the U.S., [reports the Journal of the American Medical Association](#).

“For years, the number-one cause of death in my age group [25 to 44] was not cancer or heart disease but accidents, followed closely by drug overdoses and suicide,” says Dr. F. Perry Wilson of the Yale School of Medicine. “COVID-19 changed that.”

The pandemic’s deadly impact is the result of capitalist governments putting profits before people’s lives. It doesn’t have to be this way. [Look at China](#). Since the beginning of the pandemic, only 4,849 COVID deaths have occurred in China.

In the U.S., while the working class was suffering and dying in the pandemic, Wall Street was booming.

“Global stock and bond markets never had it so good,” reports economist Michael Roberts. “Central bank-financed credit flooded into financial assets like there was no tomorrow.

“The result has been a staggering rise in financial asset prices (stocks and bonds) and in real estate. Central banks have injected \$32 trillion into financial markets since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, lifting global stock market capitalization by \$60 trillion.

“And companies worldwide raised \$12.1 trillion by selling stock and taking out loans

as a result. The U.S. stock market index rose 17% in 2021, repeating a similar rise in 2020. The S&P 500 index reached a record high. The Nikkei 225 Index had its highest annual gains since 1989.

“But as we go into 2022, the days of ‘easy money’ and cheap loans are coming to an end. The huge stock market boom of the last two years looks likely to peter out,” Roberts explains.

“So this year could be the one for a financial crash or at least a severe correction in stock market and bond prices, as interest rates rise, eventually driving a layer of zombie corporations into bankruptcy.

“This is what central banks fear. That is why most are being very cautious about ending the era of easy money. And yet they are being driven to do so because of the sharp rise in the inflation rates of prices of goods and services in many major economies,” concludes Roberts.

## **Inflation is for profits**

What about inflation? Workers can’t have prices rising faster than their wages and benefits.

The big business-controlled media reports about inflation, however, are meant to boost corporate profits.

What needs to be looked at economically is the state of wages. Are wages keeping up with rising prices? Over the last two years of the pandemic, inflation has been relatively low but wages have been stagnant. That means that wages have been kept at poverty levels or even have been going down.

Inflation is rising now, but that’s because businesses are raising prices, which has resulted in record profits.

What's needed is not a focus on inflation but a focus on wages.

Karl Marx led a battle in Britain for raising workers' wages. Marx pointed out that wage rises do not cause price rises (inflation is price increases, not wage increases). As Marx put it in ["Value, Price and Profit,"](#) when he debated with trade unionist John Weston, who argued that wage rises would cause inflation:

"Firstly. A general rise in the rate of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but, broadly speaking, not affect the prices of commodities.

"Secondly. The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages.

"Thirdly. Trades unions work well as centers of resistance against the encroachments of capital."

Prices are not driven by wages. Gas prices are soaring, but no one can say that's because petroleum workers are being paid that much more (they aren't). In fact, according to Oilman Magazine, some 107,000 jobs "vanished" from the U.S. oil, gas and chemicals industry during the last two years.

So wages are not driving up gas prices. Profit-gouging is.

## **Labor unions fight**

Yes, labor unions have been central to the fight for better wages and working conditions. 2021 was a year of strikes, unionization efforts and worker mobilizations.

Low-wage workers suffered disproportionately during the pandemic and are demanding increased wages, sick pay, meal and rest breaks, better benefits and shorter shifts.

As the new Omicron strain spreads quickly across the United States, threatening to draw the pandemic out even longer, workers organizing and fighting back is the only way forward out of the crisis.

