

# Why Is The AFL-CIO Taking \$71 Million From Trump & The Republicans? The Elephant In The Room?

LEPAIO Statement (Labor Education Project On AFL-CIO International Operations)

For decades, the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center, its overseas operations center, has taken massive amounts of money from the US government through the National Endowment For Democracy (NED) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID); estimates are over \$1 BILLION altogether. This means that something like 95% of all money for AFL-CIO foreign operations comes from the US government each year! And not only has this never been honestly reported, but it has been directed to undercut progressive labor organizations around the world, but has also supported efforts to overthrow democratically-elected governments and to undermine progressive labor organizations who are fighting to improve the lives of their members.

After the Trump government came to power in its second term, it shut off the funding for the NED and USAID. The AFL-CIO Solidarity Center's executive director Shawna Bader-Blau filed a court document claiming that the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center was supporting independent and democratic unions around the world. <https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/02ac-Exhibit-C-Solidairty-Center.pdf>

However US labor operations supports US imperial interests around the world which is what they really have been doing.

AFL-CIO President Liz Schuler, who was previously on the board of the National Endowment for Democracy, apparently convinced Trump and the Republicans to continue to fund the NED and the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center. Its operations were extensive and spread around the world. At one time before the funds were shut off, this center had operations in 92 countries with 26 regional offices around the world, with nearly 400 employees in the US and around the world. Employees have to go through a government security check before they are hired.

Despite efforts of US trade unionists over decades, the AFL-CIO leadership and the Solidarity Center officials refuse to honestly report why they are in these countries, who they are working with, and what specific goals they seek.

Labor activists have uncovered some of their destruction: we know the Solidarity Center and its CIA-linked predecessor organizations. have helped overthrow democratically-elected, pro-labor governments in Guatemala (1954), Brazil (1964), Chile (1973), and they supported an effort that failed in Venezuela in 2002. We know they have supported dictatorships in Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, South Africa, and The Congo. They have also set up pro-corporate business unions similar to the United States in many countries. (This, and much more, has been detailed in Jeff Schuhrke's 2024 book, "Blue Collar Empire," and in Kim Scipes' earlier 2010 book, "AFL-CIO's Secret War against Developing Country Workers: Solidarity or Sabotage?")

More recently, the Solidarity Center has also been involved in massive operations in Mexico to bring "democracy" to Mexican unions funded by over \$300 million. The union corruption in Mexico is supposedly being "cleaned up" by US funded operations in Mexico. In reality, this is an effort to recolonize the Mexican labor movement. The US has colonized Mexico and controls its telecom, rails, mines and many other resources of the country. This colonization does not represent the interests of US or Mexican workers and unions.

We labor activists and militants need to fight for the AFL-CIO and our national unions to break relations with the US government and stop taking funding from the US government. We also need to demand that AFL-CIO top level leadership open the books of the AFL-

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CIO and detail all their continuing international operations. We need to build international labor solidarity with workers around the world, not to sabotage workers struggles.

We are LEPAIO, the Labor Education Project On AFL-CIO International Operations. Many of us are long-time labor solidarity activists from different unions and from different parts of the US who created LEPAIO during 2022 to educate trade unionists in this country about US imperialism, the role of the AFL-CIO in supporting these efforts to dominate other countries, and its efforts to destroy global labor solidarity: we argue for real international solidarity among workers.

Should American workers and their organizations be undermining workers' struggles in other countries around the world –or do you think we should be supporting workers' militant class struggles around the world, helping them build a better world for all of us? The silence by some in the labor movement including

the Labor Notes leadership and the journal Labor Notes has failed to report the AFL-CIO's complicity with US imperialism. The AFL-CIO is now getting \$71 million from the Trump government and there is not a mention of it by Labor Notes. This should not be covered up.

Please check us out at <https://aflcioint.education>. We would love for you to join us and project our work further, and we can set up educational webinars for you and your co-workers to discuss what we can do. We seek opportunities to talk and discuss—and hopefully engage in action. We look forward to hearing from you!

American union leaders should not be undermining workers' struggles in other countries. We should be supporting those struggles even if we don't necessarily agree with everything they are fighting for.

**WE SHOULD ALWAYS OPPOSE US IMPERIALISM!**  
We need to build international solidarity since all of our struggles are linked, they all come from capitalism.

### LEPAIO Zoom Event (as part of LaborFest 2026)

**Thursday, July 16, 4:00 PM (Pacific time) 7:00 PM (East Coast)**

## **The AFL-CIO “Solidarity Center” & Why Is Trump Is Funding It?**

This year, Trump and the Republicans agreed to re-fund the National Endowment For Democracy (NED) which funds the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center with \$71 million. The “Solidarity Center” has received over \$1 billion from the US government, yet it has never made a report to the AFL-CIO members whose name it uses about what the money is for and where is it going.

This forum will look at the history and role of the “Solidarity Center” and recent developments in this center and why this must be an issue for unions and the workers of the United States.

#### **Initial Speakers:**

**Frank Hammer** - UAW 909 Retired President

**Carol Lang** - AFT PSC Delegate & CUNY Professor

**Kim Scipes** - Former printer, University Professor & AFL-CIO Researcher

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<https://aflcio-int.education>

Register in advance for this meeting:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/LCto5HpBTDaKtft2Xglk8A>  
or go to [LaborFest.net](http://LaborFest.net), and register



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