



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

San Francisco ceremony on U.S. military vessel foiled by protest for Gaza

written by Lallan Schoenstein
April 1, 2024



Screenshots from a video of the police and protesters who chained themselves to the gangway of U.S. military supply ship bound for Palestine.

An action to block U.S. military supplies for the Zionist campaign of genocide in Gaza shut down the Embarcadero, a major roadway on the eastern waterfront of the Port of San Francisco, on March 29. Protesters occupied the Embarcadero's northbound lanes near Pier 32 to stop a U.S. military ship from carrying military supplies to Israel.

The demonstration began during a ceremony celebration on the U.S. Naval Ship (USNS) Harvey Milk.* Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was among the officials attending. Pelosi is well-known for her hawkish belligerence — most recently, her provocative voyage on a U.S. destroyer through the Strait between China and

Taiwan.

As pro-Palestinian protesters began to scale the pier's fence, Pelosi fled. Some protesters breached the security fence surrounding the ship and chained themselves to the gangway. Police pointed heavy assault guns as others used bolt cutters to remove protesters they arrested. The massive USNS ship was held up in San Francisco Bay for the rest of the day.

Steve Zeltzer on Labor Radio interviewed an activist who told him that "she can't sleep at night unless she finds ways to oppose the attack on Palestinians. She called the ship's name a travesty to Milk's memory."

Sharif Zakut, an organizer from the Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC), said he has family in Gaza. Zakut said: "It's outrageous that Nancy Pelosi is commemorating a U.S. warship which is serving the genocidal Israeli Army and its government and is named after civil rights activist Harvey Milk.

"Biden now says he's for a ceasefire, but apparently, he can't open up the border for Palestinians to get food. It's ridiculous to believe he is for a ceasefire. If he was really for the end of this genocide, he would cut off military aid to Israel.

"The United States has trillions of dollars for the military. Yet people are suffering in the United States. We need health care. We need safety for queer and trans communities. We need safety for women's bodily autonomy. We need housing. We need better infrastructure.

"Instead the president and his administration would rather prioritize war making, genocide and continuing the occupation of Palestine."

Lara Kiswani from AROC said, "It is outrageous and unacceptable that our government continues to fund and supply the Israeli military as it carries out genocide against the people of Gaza."



Watch the full report here.

Longshore workers against genocide

There have been ongoing actions in the Bay Area to block the U.S. shipment of weapons being used to decimate the population of Gaza.

On Jan. 13, “over 3,000 workers and community members shut down the Port of Oakland to demand an end to U.S. economic and military support of Israel’s genocidal bombing campaign in Gaza. Thanks to the Bay Area’s steadfast commitment, operations at the Port were effectively shut down all day,” reported Jack Heyman, a retired International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 worker, to The Internationalist.

“Over 200 scheduled jobs were canceled during the afternoon shift. The Oakland Port preemptively called off the morning shift in anticipation of massive community turnout.”

As Jimmy Salameh, a Palestinian longshoreman and member of ILWU Local 10, said: “I’ve worked at the port for 10 years, and I can say for a fact that there was no business as usual out here today. How could there be in the middle of a genocide? I couldn’t be prouder of the people who turned out today to raise their voice against the war on Gaza and to demand that this port isn’t used for military purposes.”

On Nov. 18, Local 10 in the Bay Area unanimously passed a resolution recalling the

local's repeated refusal – in 2010, 2014, and 2021 – to work Israeli Zim Line ships when there were protests in defense of Palestinians and expressing “our determination to take action in their defense.”

It is also reported that ILWU Local 6 in the Bay Area, Local 8 in Portland, Oregon, as well as the San Francisco and Southern California Inland Boatman's Union in the Marine Division of the ILWU have called for a ceasefire in Gaza.

** Harvey Milk, the first openly gay man to be elected to public office in California, was murdered in San Francisco City Hall in 1978. While Milk served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War, he was forced to accept an “other than honorable” discharge rather than face a court martial for being gay. The LGBTQ+ community has expressed outrage that Milk, an advocate for peace, would have his name branded on a machine of war.*

