

New Orleans: Jewish activists protest Zionist meeting

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 7, 2024



Jewish Voice for Peace NOLA activists staged a rally and die-in outside New Orleans' Jewish Community Center while an Anti-Defamation League board meeting happened inside. Photos: JVP NOLA

New Orleans, Feb. 28 - Dozens of Jewish activists led by Jewish Voice for Peace NOLA gathered outside the Jewish Community Center to stage a die-in and to protest a board meeting of the Anti-Defamation League happening inside.

The ADL promotes a dangerous definition of anti-Semitism, which includes anti-Zionism. The ADL is complicit with genocide in Gaza. We were there as southern Jews to say the Anti-Defamation League does not represent us. Not in our name!



Cuba's whole heart for Gaza

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 7, 2024

It is impossible not to feel deeply the pain that Palestine is suffering today. Words can hardly be sustained without being flooded by tears, without impotence becoming the strength to raise our voices in the face of so much cruelty.

Thousands of lives have been taken and, as if that were not enough, today there is a latent threat that many more will be massacred in what has been called a final offensive.

When it seems that humanity is more committed to history, Israel, with terrifying impunity, brings back an updated version of the Holocaust.

The images that travel around the world are extremely harsh. They carry within them the bitter taste of vestiges of a past that has become more absurd and inhuman.

So how can we not cry out from the depths of our hearts, how can we not demand from those who believe they have the right to snatch dreams, the imminent peace for the Palestinian people?

From this side of the earth, where a society is built with all and for all, where the life of every human being matters, from this Cuba that earned with its own merit the right to dream and be happy, we demand the cessation of genocide against the Palestinian population.

“Palestine deserves to live in peace, the world deserves peace to live.”

Source: [Granma](#)



PFLP: Occupier lies about starvation massacre, international reaction a disgrace

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On the morning of Feb. 29, over 70 Palestinians were martyred, and over 250 wounded, after the Israeli Occupation Forces opened fire on Palestinians waiting for the arrival of food aid on Al-Rashid Street in Gaza City, northern Gaza Strip.

March 1: The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) confirmed that the [international statements and reactions](#) to the occupation's massacre of citizens, who were collectively executed after trying to reach food, do not rise to the level of the crime and represent one of the continuous attempts to cover up the brutal crimes of the occupation and the ongoing genocide campaign against our people.

The Front affirmed that this international complacency, which was limited to condemnation, "expressing concern," and calls for an independent investigation,

amounts to a green light for the occupation to continue lying about one of the most brutal crimes in human history, committing more massacres, and proceeding with the genocidal war.

The Front stated that there is no point to continue talking about a temporary truce that represents a vacation for the killers and relieves pressure on their supporters. The whole world must immediately act to stop the genocide and punish the occupier war criminals.

The Front stressed that the international system, whose deceit and bias towards the occupier were exposed, should not expect our people to stand idly by in the face of these massacres. Our people are capable of surpassing all imaginations about the limits of the Palestinian response.

The Front called on our people and our Arab nation to engage in all forms and tools of action to punish the criminals and the genocidal murderers, affirming that our people, our nation, and the supporters of Palestine and its oppressed people are the main front in confronting the criminal butcher Joe Biden and the genocide support coalition.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
Central Media Department
March 1, 2024

Source: [*Resistance News Network*](#)



Honor Aaron Bushnell, free Palestine!

written by Struggle - La Lucha
March 7, 2024

AARON BUSHNELL

(1999 – 2024)

¡PRESENTE!

“I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest. But compared to what people have been experiencing in Palestine at the hands of their colonizers, it’s not extreme at all. This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal.”



**SOCIALIST UNITY PARTY
STRUGGLE-LA-LUCHA.ORG**

Statement of Peace and Freedom Party congressional candidate John Parker.

U.S. Air Force soldier Aaron Bushnell self-immolated on Feb. 25 in Washington, D.C., to protest the U.S.-Israeli war on Gaza. He did so in front of the embassy of the apartheid state that occupies Palestine.

“I wish someone as courageous, honorable and human as Aaron Bushnell did not have to die. The tragedy we’re seeing in Gaza is a horror that is so painful for the

world that many in solidarity will do all they can to make it stop," announced John Parker, socialist candidate in California's 37th Congressional district.

"Aaron Bushnell was so frustrated by this genocide that he felt the only way to make it stop was to take his own life while wearing his uniform, to make the world pay attention to U.S. complicity in Israel's crimes. He felt so deeply about the more than 10,000 children murdered by U.S.-made bombs and shells," Parker explained.

"Joe Biden's \$14 billion assistance to further Israel's genocide increases his war crimes and the complicity of the United States, as was clarified in the International Court of Justice decision in the case brought by the South African government.

"That money adds on to the trillions already stolen from the wealth that we working people create, and leaves no room for basic necessities that we need here, leaving us with nothing but poverty, war and genocide. So Biden is not welcome here in South Central Los Angeles," said Parker.

"Aaron Bushnell's commitment to stop the killing in Palestine makes the upcoming March 2 demonstration at Los Angeles City Hall all the more important," said the socialist candidate. "Join me at City Hall starting at 1 p.m. to stop the U.S.-Israeli war on Gaza. Palestine will win!"

John Thompson Parker is a member of the Socialist Unity Party who has helped organize many demonstrations in solidarity with Palestine. He's running on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket in the March 5 primary in the 37th Congressional district, which includes South Central Los Angeles and much of Culver City and Inglewood. Early voting has already begun.



Hundreds rally in Jackson Heights: 'Bangladesh stands with Palestine'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Hundreds of people rallied for Palestine in the Jackson Heights section of Queens, New York City, on Feb. 24. They gathered in Diversity Plaza, the center of a South Asian community.

"Honor Our Martyrs" was the event's title. It commemorated the freedom struggles of both the Palestinian and Bengali peoples.

The rally was called by the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAAAV) and Bangladeshi Americans for Political Progress. Speakers included representatives from the Palestinian struggle; Bangladeshi Americans for Political Progress; Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence Astoria Tenants Union; New York Taxi Workers Alliance; The People's Forum; and the Party for Socialism and Liberation.

They denounced the U.S. paid-for murder of more than 30,000 people in Gaza.

Several spoke of the struggle to defend the Bengali language in the 1950s.

Flags from both Bangladesh and Palestine were carried. One of the signs read, "Bangladesh stands with Palestine."

Both Palestine and Bangladesh had been British colonies. British aristocrats looted trillions from South Asia.

The Biden administration has sent aircraft carriers to attack Yemen and shore up Benjamin Netanyahu's murderous assault on Gaza. Back in 1971, Nixon and Kissinger sent an aircraft carrier to try to intimidate the Bengali independence struggle.

The rally was also a mobilization against racist and bigoted violence. The Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence was founded in response to the 1982 racist murder of Chinese American Vincent Chin.

Six-year-old Wadea al-Fayoume was stabbed 26 times by his landlord last October, killing the Palestinian child.

A few blocks from the rally was where Julio Rivera was murdered by homophobic bigots in 1990. Jackson Heights is home every year to Queens Pride, the second largest Pride march in the New York City area.

From Bangladesh to Palestine, the people united will never be defeated!



U.S. soldier self-immolates outside Israeli embassy to protest Gaza genocide

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'Free Palestine' the active-duty airman yelled before collapsing to the ground



An active-duty member of the U.S. Air Force set himself on fire outside the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C., on 25 February in an act of protest against Israel's campaign of [genocide](#) in Gaza.

"I will no longer be complicit in genocide," the man, identified as [Aaron Bushnell](#), said during a Twitch livestream. "I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest," he added before igniting himself.

"Free Palestine!" Bushnell yelled until he fell to the ground.

<https://twitter.com/mhdksafa/status/1761988854381150223>

Feb. 26 — Officers from the U.S. Secret Service extinguished the fire outside the embassy. Bushnell was rushed to the hospital on Sunday with "critical life-threatening injuries," where he reportedly passed away.

The U.S. Air Force confirmed the incident involved an active duty airman.

Bushnell is the second U.S. citizen since [December](#) to self-immolate outside an

Israeli diplomatic building in an act of political protest.

Near-daily [protests](#) have rocked major U.S. cities for the past several months as an increasing number of people in the West demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

At least 30,000 people have been killed by the Israeli army in Gaza since 7 October, most of them women and children. The genocide of Palestinians has been facilitated with military and political support from the White House.

International organizations have warned that famine and disease will send the death toll soaring as [Israeli protesters](#) continue to block the entry of humanitarian aid into the besieged enclave.

Source: [The Cradle](#)



Palestinians' use of force to resist foreign oppression 'well founded' in international law: China

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Addressing the International Court of Justice, China on Thursday said the Palestinians' use of armed struggle to gain independence from foreign and colonial rule was "legitimate" and "well founded" in international law.

"In pursuit of the right to self-determination, Palestinian people's use of force to resist foreign oppression and complete the establishment of an independent state is (an) inalienable right well founded in international law," the Chinese representative told the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Citing resolutions by the UN General Assembly, Beijing's envoy to the world court said people struggling for self-determination could use "all available means, including armed struggle."

In his address to the ICJ, Ma discussed three areas, including the jurisdiction of the top UN court, the self-determination of the peoples, and international humanitarian law.

"The struggle waged by peoples for their liberation, right to self-determination, including armed struggle against colonialism, occupation, aggression, domination against foreign forces should not be considered terror acts," he added, citing international conventions.

However, Ma stressed that genuine acts of terrorism are another matter.

For the first time since its establishment in 1948, Israel is currently being tried before the International Court of Justice, the highest judicial body in the UN, on charges of committing the crime of “genocide” against Palestinians in Gaza.

Israel’s practices and policies of “oppression have severely undermined and impeded the exercise and full realization of the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination,” said the envoy.

The conflict stems “from Israel’s prolonged occupation of Palestinian territory and Israel’s longstanding oppression of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian peoples’ fight against Israeli oppression and their struggle for completing the establishment of an independent state under occupied territory are essentially just actions,” he added.

Ma stressed that all parties involved in armed conflict “are obliged to comply with international humanitarian law.”

He said that following World War II, various people “freed themselves from foreign occupation, (and) their practices serve as convincing evidence.”

The top UN court is currently hearing oral statements by states on South Africa’s case against Israel over its war on Palestine, where the death toll since Oct. 7 is rapidly approaching 30,000 since Tel Aviv launched attacks on the besieged enclave of Gaza.

Western nations, including the US, the UK, and their allies have condemned the armed wing of the Palestinian Hamas group for launching a “terror” attack inside Israel on the morning of Oct. 7.

Palestine a ‘litmus test of humanity, wisdom of UN’

Calling the question of Palestine a “litmus test to collective conscience of humanity

and wisdom of the UN," Ma said China is committed to respecting the rule of law.

Backing a "comprehensive cease-fire" in Gaza and an early two-state solution through negotiation between Palestine and Israel, the Chinese envoy put Beijing's weight behind the jurisdiction of the ICJ to rule on the case brought by South Africa against Tel Aviv.

"China submits the court has the jurisdiction over the case (and has) no reason to decline to exercise its jurisdiction," stressed the Chinese legal advisor.

"Arguments against jurisdiction (of ICJ) are not tangible," he added.

Noting that the question of Palestine "goes beyond sphere of bilateralism," the Chinese envoy said: "China supports the court in discharging its jurisdiction, ... upholding the purposes of principles of UN Charter and providing legal guidance to UN."

On the right to self-determination of Palestinians, Ma said it was because of a "prolonged occupation and oppression of Palestinian" by Israel.

"Their struggle (is) for completing independence (of the Palestinian) state and for restoring the legitimate rights," he added.

Citing the UN General Assembly Resolution 3707 of 1973, the Chinese legal expert said it reaffirms the "legitimacy of people's struggle for liberation from colonial and foreign domination and subjugation by all available means including armed struggle."

"This recognition" of armed struggle, said Ma, "is also reflected in international convention, for example Arab convention for suppressing of terrorism of 1998 (which) affirms the right of peoples to combat foreign occupation, aggression by whatever means, including armed struggle in order to liberate their territories and

secure the right to self-determination and independence.”

“Armed struggle, in this context, is distinguished from acts of terrorism. It is grounded in the international law,” he noted.

“This distinction is acknowledged by several international conventions.”

Source: [Anadolu Agency](#)



Palestinians barred from Al-Aqsa Mosque

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Zionist regime targets Ramadan

Every year during Ramadan, Muslim people from around the world travel to the occupied city of Jerusalem to make a pilgrimage to the Mosque Al-Aqsa. This

sprawling religious site includes the iconic Dome of the Rock. Al-Aqsa is one of the most revered and significant sites in the Muslim faith.

This pilgrimage is viscerally sacred for all those who adhere to the Islamic faith. The journey should be peaceful, solemn, and bound in love. Unfortunately, the Zionist entity has for decades criminalized this pilgrimage for many Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

For years, Zionist shock troops have brutally and arbitrarily raided the Al-Aqsa complex and violently attacked worshippers inside or attempting to gain entry. Just [three years ago](#), the Zionist forces conducted exactly such a raid on Al-Aqsa during Ramadan. “Israeli” forces deployed pepper spray and rubber bullets against unarmed worshippers. Over 50 Palestinian people, many children, were injured in the Zionist pogrom.

Unfortunately, it seems that Zionism intends to escalate its war to not only eradicate the Palestinian people but to eradicate their cultural foundation. As such, the Zionist dictator, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced on Feb. 19 that there would be [militarily enforced](#) restrictions during Ramadan this year against Palestinians living within the 1948 borders or Jerusalem.

Even with all of Zionism’s horrors, the “Israeli” state has [never](#) gone as far as to ban Arab citizens of “Israel” from entering Al-Aqsa during Ramadan. One would think that a state that asserts itself as that of the Jewish people would know better than to wage war on sacred religious sites. This is just another indicator of the solemn truth about Zionism: It is no more about persevering the sanctity of Jewish life than it is about democracy. If Zionism respected Judaism at all, then its institutions would never dare to enact cultural violence against Muslim Palestinians so similar to that enacted against the Jewish community for centuries.

As if this new Islamophobic and racist policy wasn’t bad enough on its face, even

[Shin Bet](#), the police wing of the IOF, was made uneasy at the potential of the restrictions to spark a Palestinian uprising.

However, Netanyahu and his fascist running dog, security minister Ben Gvir, will continue with their implementation of this plan to restrict worship at Al-Aqsa during Ramadan. They will do so because this is the real nature of Zionism: to terrorize, oppress, and eradicate the Palestinian people on behalf of U.S. imperialism.

Lev Koufax is an anti-Zionist Jewish activist.



The links between East Palestine, Ohio, and Gaza, Palestine

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 7, 2024

President Biden [showed up](#) in East Palestine, Ohio, on Feb. 16 — a year after the Feb. 3, 2023, train wreck that poisoned the village. “You’ve been through hell,”

Biden told the residents.

What about the hell that families in Gaza and the rest of Palestine are going through, Mr. President? Thirty thousand people have been killed there with U.S.-made and U.S.-paid-for bombs and missiles.

Over 10,000 [children](#) have been murdered. More than 25,000 have been orphaned. Biden's response to this slaughter is to demand another \$14 billion for the apartheid killing machine that calls itself Israel.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., monthly [SNAP](#) (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, formerly known as food stamps, have been cut by an average of \$86 per person. Making these cutbacks more painful is that capitalist monopolies have [jacked up food prices](#) by 25% since 2020.

East Palestine is in Columbiana County, Ohio, where nearly [15,000 people](#) — one out of seven residents — depend on SNAP benefits to eat.

Biden said the Norfolk Southern train wreck in East Palestine “was an act of greed that was 100% preventable.”

The U.S.-funded massacre in Gaza, Palestine, is a bigger crime that's being waged for Big Oil, which uses Israel as its cops.

In the U.S., [Norfolk Southern](#) cut over 35% of its operating employees between 2018 and 2021 using the corporate model called Precision Scheduled Railroading to increase profits. Railroad management did this by running longer trains.

The train that poisoned East Palestine was 150 cars long, which means it had 1,200 axle bearings. A single “hot box” in one of these bearings — through no fault of the railroad crew — was enough to derail the train.

Three days after the derailment, on Feb. 6, 2023, [Norfolk Southern deliberately ignited five tank cars](#) that released a mushroom cloud of dangerous toxins. Many people, including Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, believe the explosion was done not out of safety concerns but to clear the tracks for trains.

Jobs not war

[Norfolk Southern CEO](#) Alan Shaw took home \$9.8 million in 2022. Yet the rail tycoon didn't want to give any sick days to workers.

Two months before the East Palestine disaster, Congress passed legislation that prohibited railroaders from walking off the job. "Amtrak Joe" signed the strikebreaking law in the White House. Only under the impact of the Ohio train wreck did Norfolk Southern agree to [sick days](#).

Pulling the strings at Norfolk Southern are some of the biggest banksters, like [BlackRock](#), which holds 6.4% of the corporation's stock. BlackRock also has \$4.6 billion invested in [Lockheed Martin](#), one of the largest war profiteers.

Thousands of Palestinians have been killed by [bombs dropped from F-16s](#) and other warplanes sold by Lockheed Martin. In addition, BlackRock has investments in the Israeli weapons maker Elbit Systems, whose drones kill children and their families.

The genocide in Gaza is a goldmine for only a few.

East Palestine borders Pennsylvania and sits between Pittsburgh and Cleveland. This region was once one of the biggest concentrations of industry in the world.

Almost all the steel mills in Pittsburgh, Youngstown (22 miles from East Palestine),

and Cleveland have been shut down. Deindustrialization destroyed hundreds of thousands of union jobs.

Columbiana County was the center of the U.S. ceramic industry. Hundreds of factories turned out plates and cups for dining tables across the country.

These potteries are also gone. The war profits grabbed by BlackRock and Lockheed Martin are not helping anybody in East Palestine.

Karl Marx — the great teacher of the working class — described the working conditions in British potteries in “[Capital](#)”: Testifying before an 1860 parliamentary inquiry, “Dr. Greenhow states that the average duration of life in the pottery districts of Stoke-on-Trent, and Wolstanton is extraordinarily short.”

Another physician, Dr. Arledge, said that these workers “are, as a rule, stunted in growth, ill-shaped, and frequently ill-formed in the chest.” Heartbreaking was the testimony of nine-year-old William Wood, who described how he worked from 6 a.m. in the morning to 9 p.m. at night.

The world labor movement fought to change these conditions. Capitalists want to bring back [child labor](#). When Trump was in the White House, he moved to roll back child labor rules.

We need a socialist revolution

The Great Migration of Black people from the U.S. South barely made it to East Palestine. White people account for 95% of [Columbiana](#) County’s population.

That’s why Trump and his fellow racist clown Rudy Giuliani went to East Palestine a few weeks after the train wreck. Along with Fox News, Trump claims that people in

East Palestine were being ignored because they're not Black.

That poison is the stuff of fascism. Trump and his kind despise all workers.

To build [Trump Tower](#) on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, Trump hired Polish immigrants to tear down an older building. They were paid low wages and given hardly any safety equipment to protect them against asbestos. It's unknown how many died of mesothelioma, a form of lung cancer.

Decaying capitalism wrecks small towns like East Palestine. Nearly [200 rural hospitals](#) have been shut down in the U.S. since 2005.

Almost all the hospitals in Gaza have been attacked by U.S.-armed Zionist forces.

Despite interstate highways and the internet, small towns in the U.S. are becoming more isolated. [Trump-appointed Postmaster General](#) Louis DeJoy wants to close thousands of rural post offices. Asian, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and white postal workers are helping to keep them open.

American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein, who is Jewish, demands a ceasefire in Gaza.

The Norfolk Southern's busy freight line through East Palestine carries Amtrak's Capitol Limited between Washington, D.C., and Chicago. But the nearest stop — in the wee hours of the morning — is in Alliance, Ohio, 33 railroad miles away.

Back in 1953, when it was a main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, five different passenger trains stopped in East Palestine: one going to Cleveland, another headed for Chicago, and three trains going east to Pittsburgh. ("The Official Guide of the Railways," November 1953)

Gaza also had a passenger station with trains going between Egypt and Palestine. Israel severed the railroad service.

People in Gaza are fighting for their lives and freedom. Working people in East Palestine need a revolution, too.

Super racist Trump and Genocide Joe Biden have nothing to offer the working class other than war and hate. The coming upsurge of the working class will reach East Palestine, Ohio, and help liberate Palestine.

The writer is a retired railroad worker.



Dock workers: Block military cargo to Israel

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Against the genocidal war on Palestinians in Gaza!

The massacre of Palestinians in Gaza is escalating as the misnamed Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continue their carnage, flattening whole neighborhoods and committing mass murder of civilians. Yemen and Southern Lebanon have now been drawn into the war. More than 35,000 Palestinians, mostly children and women, have been killed and 67,000 seriously injured, according to the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor (4 February).^[1] The United States is co-responsible for this genocide underway, as *all* the heavy (500-2,000-lb.) bombs causing the mass slaughter and *all* the warplanes from which they are dropped are *made in the U.S.A.* Without U.S. weaponry, the Zionist militarists would be stymied. “Genocide Joe” Biden’s pretense of concern about civilian casualties is nothing but cynical crocodile tears. *This is a U.S./Israel war.*

Hospitals, universities, and residential buildings are being deliberately targeted. Ambulances have been destroyed, and medical workers killed, recently including those seeking to rescue a 6-year-old girl trapped in a car where her parents were killed by Israeli fire. Israel has cut off food, water, medical supplies, electricity, and fuel, allowing only a trickle of humanitarian aid to enter. United Nations authorities report that 90% of Gaza’s 2.2 million people have been driven from their homes, and nine out of ten have less than one meal a day. Now, based on an Israeli claim, the U.S., along with Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, have stopped funding the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), making them complicit in the Zionist campaign to obliterate the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

How can this monstrous slaughter be stopped? In December, the South African government brought charges of genocide against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), a toothless body that in a January 24 ruling called for Israel to change its war policy to protect civilians. This predictably had zero effect. In the

U.S., the Center for Constitutional Rights and Defense for Children International - Palestine brought a case last November against war criminals Biden, U.S. Secretary of State Blinken, and Pentagon Chief Austin, calling to enjoin the defendants from “providing, facilitating or coordinating military assistance or financing to Israel.” (One of the Palestinian American plaintiffs, Monadel Herzallah, will be speaking at a labor forum against the genocidal war on Gaza at ILWU Local 10 on February 24.) On January 31, a federal judge in Oakland ruled that he didn’t have jurisdiction but echoed the ICJ ruling that “it is plausible that Israel’s conduct amounts to genocide.” So much for the courts.

Now, Israeli forces are poised to escalate the slaughter by attacking Rafah, where over a million Gazans are concentrated. On the Israeli-occupied West Bank, from October 7 to date, at least 390 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli soldiers and fascistic settlers, and thousands arrested. Backing the Israelis up, there are some 50,000 U.S. troops in the region and 19 warships in the eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea, from which U.S. warplanes and missiles are bombing targets in Yemen, Syria and Iraq and threatening Iran. Working people the world over should be demanding that Israel get out of Gaza and the West Bank entirely and that the U.S. and its allies get the hell out of the Middle East. As a first step, unions should use their muscle to stop all Western arms shipments to Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and anywhere else in the region.

Labor on Gaza: Paper resolutions but not a lot of action

Last October 18, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) issued an urgent appeal notably “calling on trade unions in relevant industries: 1) To refuse to build weapons destined for Israel. 2) To refuse to transport weapons to Israel. 3) To pass motions in their trade union to this effect,” as well as to take action against companies complicit with the Israeli siege, to pressure governments to stop military trade with Israel “and, in the case of the U.S., stop funding it.” In response, on

October 30, five Belgian transport unions issued a joint statement saying they were refusing to load or unload arms shipments heading to the war zone. And on November 6, the Barcelona dock workers' union announced it would "not permit activity in our port of ships containing war materiel," while calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

In Britain, Canada, and elsewhere, unions have passed motions, and there have been protests outside Israeli companies, notably the "defense" contractor Elbit. In Italy, rank-and-file dock unions in Genoa and other ports actually stopped operations with Israeli ships and held a national one-day strike against the war on Gaza on November 17 that shut down hundreds of warehouses in logistics hubs. In Sydney, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) joined protests against Israeli ZIM Lines ships and has called for an immediate ceasefire. In January, the 20-million-member International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) issued a statement, "Global Unions Call for Unified Action Following IJC Ruling on Gaza Genocide Case." Sounds good, but there is no call for labor action, just an appeal to the U.N. and "world leaders."

In the United States, beginning in October the United Electrical Workers (UE) circulated a petition to other unions with demands for a ceasefire and restoration of food, fuel, water and electricity to Gaza, demands that were taken up by the United Auto Workers (UAW), American Postal Workers Union (APWU), National Nurses Union (NNU), Service Employees (SEIU), Painters (IUPAT), Flight Attendants (AFA) and even the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and National Education Association (NEA). But these appeals were *not* opposed to Israel's war on Gaza as such, and in the case of the UAW specifically were rendered moot by its endorsement of warmonger Democrat Biden, who has emphatically backed and enabled the Israeli slaughter, for president. The rest of the liberal union leaders will certainly follow suit.

As for the national AFL-CIO, after first quashing a ceasefire call by a local labor council in Washington State last October, on February 8, it issued a statement that begins by “condemn[ing] the attacks by Hamas,” does not oppose the Israeli assault on Gaza, and calls for the release of Israeli hostages held in Gaza but not for freeing the more than 8,000 Palestinians held hostage in Israeli prisons. In short, *this is a pro-war statement* – but what else can you expect from the outfit whose international “labor” operations in conjunction with U.S. intelligence agencies earned it the nickname “AFL-CIA” in much of the world?

What about the ILWU?

While hundreds of Palestinian civilians are wantonly slaughtered by the mass-murdering IDF occupation forces every day, while the specter and reality of this genocidal war horrifies millions around the world, what has come from the titled officers of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) has been a thundering silence. This is no accident. It goes hand-in-hand with the action (and inaction) on union matters by the ILWU International leadership under Bob McEllrath (2006 to 2016) and, currently, Willie Adams. The common denominator is *class collaboration*. Where McEllrath focused on cooperation with the shippers’ Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), Adams has set his sights higher, seeking a seat at the White House table, literally, and dock jobs threatened by automation or Palestinians facing genocide be damned.

At the beginning of November, as outrage was building over the Israeli forces’ massive slaughter in Gaza, several ILWU locals were working on resolutions of solidarity with the besieged Palestinians. On November 3, a ship of the U.S. Military Sealift Command, the Cape Orlando, rumored to be headed to Israel, docked in Oakland, where it was met by hundreds of protesters responding to a call from the Arab Resource and Organizing Committee (AROC). I and others headed to the docks to express solidarity with the protest, which lasted for 12 hours before police forced

demonstrators away from the bollards so the crew could let the lines go. As the ship arrived in Tacoma the next day, 1,000 pro-Palestinian demonstrators blocked the dock. Longshore workers did not cross their picket line. Soldiers were brought in to work the ship.

Then, on November 6, the ILWU International Executive Board (IEB) met in San Francisco, chaired by President Adams. ILWU Local 5 in Portland put forward a resolution citing ILWU's proud history of convention resolutions and longshore actions protesting Israeli attacks on Palestinians. It called for a ceasefire and "upholding and amplifying our Union's long history of solidarity with the people of Palestine." But some Locals objected and a motion was introduced to table the resolution, which was accepted by the chair and passed. Even so, on November 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 Locals 6 (Bay Area warehouse) and 8 (Portland longshore), as well as the San Francisco and Southern California regions of the Inland Boatman's Union in the Marine Division of the ILWU, have bucked the IEB's kibosh and called for a ceasefire in Gaza.

The shameful blocking of a resolution calling for an end to the slaughter in Gaza was a 180° turn from the ILWU's history of solidarity. Ever since the militant 1934 West Coast waterfront and San Francisco general strike, the ILWU's founding president, Harry Bridges, was hounded by the government, which tried to deport him four times, especially during the "Red Scare" at the height of the anti-Soviet Cold War. In 1949, an ILWU strike shut down Hawaiian ports for six months. In 1953, the union undertook a general strike that paralyzed the islands to protest the conviction of regional director Jack Hall and six others as Communists under the Smith Act on

charges (later overturned) of conspiracy to overthrow the territorial government.

Every ILWU president since Bridges has confronted either the bosses' courts, the cops, or the feds. But government hostility didn't stop union members from opposing and undertaking militant action against U.S.-backed oppressor regimes. In 1984, Local 10 undertook a historic boycott of the *Nedlloyd Kimberley*, a ship from apartheid South Africa, after the Local leadership bowed before a court injunction was taken up by community protesters who continued to block the ship for several more days, an action that was hailed by South African anti-apartheid fighters in South Africa.

In 2002, in the build-up to the Iraq war, President George Bush II threatened to send troops to occupy West Coast ports if the ILWU walked out during contract bargaining. Democratic senator Diane Feinstein called on Bush to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act, which he did. In April 2003, ILWU longshore workers respected the lines of anti-Iraq war protesters in the Port of Oakland, who were viciously attacked by the police using concussion grenades, rubber bullets, wooden dowels, and tear gas. A number of protesters were hospitalized, and scores arrested, including myself as the Local 10 business agent on the scene. Then, on May Day 2008, acting on a Local 10 resolution, the ILWU shut down every port on the Pacific Coast, demanding an end to the U.S. war on Afghanistan and Iraq – the first strike by U.S. workers against a U.S. war since 1919.

ILWU tops swing hard to starboard on Israel-Palestine

But today, it's different. ILWU president Willie Adams clearly disagrees with the union's longstanding defense of Palestinian rights. This is not new. In 2006, when he was secretary-treasurer of the ILWU International, Adams traveled to Israel on a trip sponsored by an evangelical Christian pro-Zionist group. He wrote an article for the ILWU newspaper, *The Dispatcher*, fulsomely praising Israel with no mention of the oppression of Palestinians in the giant open-air prison that is the Gaza Strip or of the

attacks by fascistic Zionist settlers against the Palestinian people in the West Bank. When Adams asked *Dispatcher* editor Steve Stallone for his opinion of his article. Stallone told him: “It’s problematic. It conflicts with the ILWU’s official position established by its highest decision-making body, the convention.”

Stallone showed Adams union resolutions of the 1988 and 1991 ILWU conventions defending Palestinian rights and criticizing Israeli attacks. Shortly after, Stallone was fired, in good part for his critique of Adams’ pro-Zionist article, which was challenged in the *Dispatcher* by a letter to the editor from 38 angry members in Canada and the U.S. The firing, engineered by newly elected International president Bob McEllrath and Adams, both from the conservative leaderships of the Pacific Northwest locals of the ILWU, was an early marker of the union’s rightward trajectory. It revealed a top-down bureaucratic tendency to undo democratically decided political positions. This was reflected in deepening capitulation to the shipping bosses “at home,” as successive longshore contracts failed to defend longshore and clerks’ jobs from the threat of automation.

Another stark example was McEllrath’s sabotage of the struggle in 2012 to unionize a scab export grain terminal (EGT) being constructed in Longview, Washington. He ordered Local 21 to drop plans to occupy the site and then saddled it with a contract, leaving the control tower fully in the hands of management. Meanwhile, the union accepted a \$20 million dollar fine over its job actions in the Port of Portland, Oregon, stemming from an ill-advised dispute with the IBEW over a couple of reefer jobs. It even went into bankruptcy proceedings rather than shutting down the coast in response to this attack. But more on that later.

The ILWU’s sharp right turn was reflected in the bargaining over the 2022 Pacific Coast Longshore Contract Document (PCLCD), especially over relations with the federal government. Adams sat in a photo op for President Biden on the deck of the USS *Iowa* in June 2022 before the expiration of the previous contract. He dutifully

vowed not to strike, abandoning the ILWU's historic program of "no contract, no work" and surrendering labor's leverage in the bargaining. Then, in an unprecedented move, he invited U.S. acting secretary of labor Julie Su into the contract negotiations with the employers' PMA. Adams kept members working without a contract for a year when the ILWU was not facing a no-strike clause and could have walked out at any time. Instead, the union leadership kept the "wheels of commerce rolling."

Adams brags that he's the first ILWU president to meet at the White House with a U.S. president. After the *six-year* 2022-28 PCLCD was finally ratified last August, Adams was rewarded with a visit to Washington to be photographed with Biden, in which the Democratic president praised the contract as "a good deal for the United States of America." Adams was back at the White House for another photo op in November, when he applauded Biden's "Global Labor Directive," which the ILWU president said will "reverse decades of labor-hostile trade deals" like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). What a fraud! Biden voted for NAFTA and helped Democratic president Bill Clinton fast-track that job-killing deal through Congress in 1993.

ILWU on the ILA warpath

For decades, the West Coast ILWU traded on its reputation as the "progressive" U.S. dock workers union. The ILWU courageously opposed the Korean War at its height and refused to send arms to the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile in 1978 and to the military junta in El Salvador in 1980. At the same time, the union leadership was careful not to cross vital "red lines" of the imperialist rulers. Thus, the ILWU marched in demonstrations against the Vietnam War, but even as it struck against the PMA in 1971, it continued to move war cargo. And as Jimmy Carter's anti-Soviet war drive went into high gear in 1980-81, social-democratic ILWU president Jimmy Herman denounced the Soviet Union over the CIA-funded, Polish nationalist

Solidarność, Ronald Reagan's favorite "union."

The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) on the East and Gulf Coasts, on the other hand, has backed every U.S. imperialist war. Yet in 2022, the ILWU joined the ILA in support of the U.S./NATO-provoked imperialist war in Ukraine, refusing to work Russian ships. And now both unions are mum about the genocidal war by Israel and the U.S. against the Palestinians in Gaza. They are not alone. The International Dockworkers Council (IDC), which in 2014 and 2021 issued sharp denunciations of Israeli massacres in Gaza, has said nothing about the genocide currently underway. The only recent "action" by the IDC, now headed by Dennis Daggett (son of ILA president Harold Daggett), was a statement in November against "any kind of war or confrontation" that didn't even mention Gaza and a January visit to Pope Francis in the Vatican, where likewise no mention of Gaza was reported.

In contrast to the complicit silence of the ILA and ILWU leaders in the U.S., the Canadian section of the ILWU on December 20 issued a brief statement calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and expressing "solidarity with the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions." It did not, however, call for any specific action, such as boycotting war materiel. Not coincidentally, the week before, the Canadian government voted for a ceasefire resolution in the United Nations. In January, Canadian ILA Locals 273 (St. John, New Brunswick) and 1953 (St. John's, Newfoundland) took a stand for a ceasefire in Gaza. The reality is that almost all trade union leaderships are part of a privileged *labor bureaucracy* that is ultimately beholden to the capitalist-imperialist rulers. Occasionally, some may break ranks, particularly when they, as well as the workers' organizations they lead, are under attack. But mostly that will reflect divisions in the ruling class, as with "antiwar" Democrats over Vietnam.

Many liberals are calling for a ceasefire in a desperate effort to put an end to the horrifying slaughter of the people of Gaza, even though they don't oppose the U.S./Israeli war as such. But precisely because of the latter, they are condemned to

impotence in the face of the kill-crazed Zionist warmongers who will not stop, nor will Biden stop them. Plus, any “negotiated ceasefire” would leave the Israeli occupiers in place, which is intolerable to the people of Gaza. And the besieged Palestinians have a right to defend themselves against the murderous Israeli onslaught. Rather than seeking in vain to pressure Biden and the Democrats in Congress, what’s needed is to use labor’s power to *block* the imperialist war machine. Dock workers are at the choke point for transporting military cargo. We can stop it. The bureaucrats will say that violates the contract. But ILWU Local 10 has done it before, and it can do so today against the genocide in Gaza.

What’s needed is a leadership that is prepared to wage sharp class struggle against the bosses on the docks and beyond. With that, we can impose workers’ control over automation, help win organizing drives for Amazon workers, fight racist police repression, and strike a powerful blow against imperialist and Zionist wars. In this global economy, port workers hold an awesome power if they are organized and armed with a program and leaders willing and able to use it. The supply chain problems during and after the pandemic made the importance of the ports clear to the imperialist rulers, which is one big reason why ILWU leaders are suddenly getting invites to the White House to chitchat in front of the cameras. Class-conscious union leaders would say instead: government hands off! To unchain workers’ power, we need to break with the Democrats and all capitalist politicians and build a workers’ party on a class-struggle program.

Genuine solidarity with the besieged and massacred Palestinian people must demand, as did motions last December by Painters Local 10 and Ironworkers Local 29 in Portland, Oregon, “the immediate end to Israel’s bombing of Gaza; for Israel to vacate Gaza and the West Bank, and to end all arming and funding for it now.” In Oakland on January 13, AROC called for a “Port Shutdown for Palestine,” to “Stop Military Aid to Israel!” and for “Ceasefire Now!” A couple thousand protesters were mustered, starting at 5 a.m. and going till 4 p.m. The PMA evidently realized that if

they ordered up longshore workers while all the terminal gates were picketed, the workers would not cross. So employers didn't even order longshore workers from the union hiring hall. *The next time, it should be the ILWU itself that initiates the action, as it did in the apartheid ship boycott in 1984.*

The Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions has called on transportation unions to refuse to touch arms to Israel. We must honor their request *now!* **War cargo to Israel - too hot to handle! Defend the Palestinians, defeat the war on Gaza!**

Notes.

[1] While Gaza Health authorities report 27,700 killed at this time (February 10), the figures cited above include those who have been reported missing for 14 days, mostly buried under the rubble.

Jack Heyman is a retired Oakland ILWU longshoreman who was an organizer in San Francisco of the historic 1984 union boycott action of a ship from apartheid South Africa, the 2008 May Day anti-war protest shutting down all West Coast ports against the U.S. imperialist war in Afghanistan and Iraq, the militant 1997 Bay Area solidarity port actions for the Liverpool dockers and numerous anti-Zionist port protests from 2002-2021. He published the class struggle Maritime Worker Monitor with the late Portland longshoreman Jack Mulcahy who died last year in a mountain-climbing accident on North Sister peak in Oregon.

Source: [CounterPunch](#)

