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# South Africa puts Israel on trial before the world

By Monica Moorehead

No matter the judges' decision on the historic complaint brought before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the highest court under the auspices of the United Nations, by the South African government against Israeli genocide in Gaza on Jan. 11, the hearing itself will have everlasting political ramifications worldwide.

The 84-page document includes devastating, factual evidence on the heinous terror that Gazans have experienced since October 7 and continue to experience at this writing. As of Jan. 14 — 100 days since the genocide began — the Gaza Ministry of Health reported that close to 24,000 people have been slaughtered, with 70% of the victims being children and women. Over 60,000 people have been wounded. Countless thousands more Palestinians have been buried under rubble caused by indiscriminate Israeli airstrikes. More than 2,000 massacres have been carried out, wiping out whole Palestinian families and bloodlines. (Resistance News Network)

Most of these horrific statistics have either been minimized or censored altogether by the Western corporate media since October 7. This, amongst other reasons, is why the South Africa complaint is so timely and significant.

In its introduction presented to the ICJ, South Africa states, "The acts and omissions by Israel complained of by South Africa are genocidal in character because they are intended to bring about the destruction of a

substantial part of the Palestinian national, racial and ethnic group, that being the part of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip ('Palestinians in Gaza').



Palestinians rally at Nelson Mandela statue, Ramallah, occupied West Bank, on the eve of ICJ hearing on Israeli war crimes, Jan. 10, 2024. PHOTO: AL JAZEERA

"The acts in question include killing Palestinians in Gaza, causing them serious bodily and mental harm, and inflicting on them conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction. The acts are all attributable to Israel, which has failed to prevent genocide and is committing genocide in manifest violation of the Genocide Convention, and which has also violated and is continuing to violate its other fundamental obligations under the Genocide Convention, including by failing to prevent or punish the direct and public incitement to genocide by senior Israeli officials and others."

### Israel: the world's social pariah

The fact that the fascist Netanyahu government could not ignore this complaint has led to further isolation of this Nazi apartheid state. This is a political victory in itself. Israel's weak rebuttal to the complaint has been to label the South African legal team as being "antisemitic" and a "legal arm of Hamas." In its opening remarks during the ICJ proceedings on Jan. 12, Israel characterized the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) as being a "terrorist" organization over 130 times and used Hamas as a flimsy excuse for decimating all infrastructure in Gaza and its population for 100 days.

The strength of a united Palestinian resistance since October 7 has wreaked havoc on the Israeli economy, with losses in the tens of billions of dollars in U.S. military equipment, along with thousands of casualties, dead and

*Continued on page 6*

## On the centennial of Lenin's death A strong class orientation is needed in 2024

By Larry Holmes

The writer is Workers World Party's First Secretary.

The necessity for a strong class orientation and internationalism in understanding and in deeds is decisive in the spirit of the 100th anniversary of the

death of Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the great Bolshevik Revolution in the former Soviet Union.

### The relationship of class forces

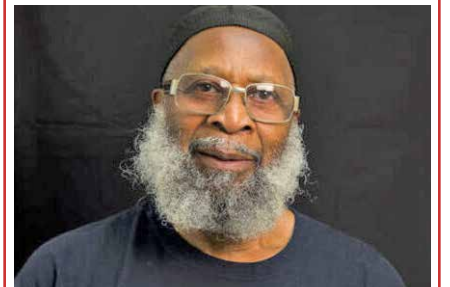
Obviously, every communist should know that the class struggle and all that it requires from the working class, ideologically, organizationally and strategically,

is central to Marxism/Leninism and the goal of socialist revolution.

It is necessary to remind ourselves of the relationship between the working class and revolutionary theory. It is more helpful if the way that we remind ourselves of this does not rely on theoretical conceptions alone that can seem

*Continued on page 8*

### Sekou Odinga, rest in power!



Sekou Odinga, Black liberation activist, member of Malcolm X's Organization of Afro-American Unity, New York City chapter of Black Panther Party, and former political prisoner who survived 33 years of state captivity before his release in 2014, died on Jan. 12, 2024.

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**TEAR DOWN THE WALLS**

- Death penalty not quite dead 4
- Fighting for disability rights 5

**Reclaim the radical heritage of Martin Luther King, Jr.**

"We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed." (1963)

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- Activists resist Northeastern U's attack 3
- The fight against Israeli apartheid 3
- NYC midwives protest firings 3
- Cities, unions demand Gaza ceasefire 5
- Israeli youth defy military conscription 5
- Port of Oakland shut down for Palestine 6
- Corporate media censors genocide hearing 6
- Palestinian author, Susan Abulhawa speaks 7
- Bronx coalition unites with Yemen 7
- Editorial U.S., Britain, out of the Red Sea! 10

# Workers World hails South Africa's solidarity with Palestine

MUNDO OBRERO  
**WORKERS WORLD**   
*this week*

A statue of Nelson Mandela, erected by the Palestinian people, stands in Ramallah, on the occupied West Bank, in recognition of his support for their struggle, as leader of the African National Congress.

In 1990, after Mandela's release from prison, he explained the ANC's support for the Palestinian struggle: They "fully support the anti-apartheid struggle. They do not support us only in rhetoric. They are placing resources at our disposal, for us to win the struggle."

Mandela condemned the Israeli state for supplying South Africa's repressive apartheid government with weapons to use against the people. (Israel even offered the fascistic regime nuclear weapons!)

For years, Mandela drew parallels between the Palestinian and South African peoples' struggles for liberation and stressed the importance of global support for both.

This resolute solidarity with the Palestinian people is being shown at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, where South Africa has brought charges against Israel of genocide. This is a principled act of courage and solidarity.

The people of the world have shown their solidarity with Palestine by demonstrating in the millions. Workers World newspaper covers these actions and unwaveringly supports the Palestinian people. Our staff members join

the protests opposing Israel's genocide and Washington's lockstep support and provision of 2,000 pound bombs.

Unlike the corporate media, WW is partisan: Our paper has always sided with the Palestinians and their resistance organizations, just as our newspaper supported the militant anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Adhering to our principled support for national liberation movements, WW reprints and posts at workers.org statements issued by anti-Zionist resistance forces and their global allies and those of movements fighting imperialist domination and war.

WW calls for solidarity with the Palestinian people — and all exploited and oppressed peoples worldwide.

### WW needs your help!

Workers World newspaper relies on our readers' backing. The WW Supporter Program was founded 47 years ago to help build this socialist newspaper, which prints one issue a month. This fund also supports the website workers.org, where new articles are posted daily and the PDF of the weekly paper is displayed.

Workers.org contains news and analyses of global and U.S. struggles. Our writer-organizers report on anti-capitalist struggles and people's movements against racism, war and for women's, workers', migrants' LGBTQ2S+ and disabled people's rights.

While WW's staff is voluntary, the printed issue and the website incur expenses. Although many online publications require payment to read their articles, WW does not. **Our articles are free to all readers.**

### Join the WW Supporter Program!

Can you donate \$50, \$100, or \$200 per year? Contributing \$50 or more will entitle you to receive 12 print issues a year, an emailed PDF of every weekly issue and, upon request, a copy of the book "What road to socialism?"

Your donations can help get class truth to more readers. Write monthly or annual checks to Workers World. Mail them with your name, address and email to Workers World, 121 W. 27th St., Suite 404, New York, NY 10001. □



WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

Free Palestine rally in Washington, D.C., Jan. 13, 2024.

## Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people's movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and

worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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### ♦ In the U.S.

- A strong class orientation is needed in 2024 . . . . . 1
- Fightback against Northeastern's racism . . . . . 3
- The fight against Israeli apartheid . . . . . 3
- Midwives protest firings at NYC hospital . . . . . 3
- Cities, unions back Gaza ceasefire . . . . . 5
- Port of Oakland shut down for Palestine . . . . . 6
- 'Don't let Israel succeed in its aims' . . . . . 7
- The Bronx is united with Yemen . . . . . 7

### ♦ Around the world

- South Africa puts Israel on trial before the world . . 1
- Some Israeli youth say 'No' to military . . . . . 5
- Western media whiteout on genocide hearing . . . 6
- U.S./Canadian crimes in Honduras condemned . . 10
- Israeli murder of Hamas leader in Lebanon . . . . 10
- Western hypocrisy on Xinjiang and Gaza . . . . . 11

### ♦ Tear down the walls

- Death penalty in U.S. is dying — but not dead yet . . 4
- Fighting for disability rights behind bars . . . . . 5

### ♦ Editorial

- U.S., Britain, out of the Red Sea! . . . . . 10

### ♦ Mundo Obrero

- Una arma para justificar el genocidio . . . . . 12

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# Fight back against Northeastern's racist attack on Palestinian solidarity!

By Will Hodgkinson  
Boston

Some 30 courageous Northeastern University (NEU) student activists rallied Jan. 10 in front of Ell Hall, where disciplinary hearings for three student supporters of Palestinian liberation were scheduled to take place. Huskies for a Free Palestine, a member group in the Boston Coalition for Palestine, organized the action to demand that the NEU administration drop all trumped-up “disciplinary” charges against its members and for Northeastern’s total divestment from the Zionist state of Israel.

The university is targeting students for protesting the ongoing Zionist genocide in Gaza. On Dec. 3, the University’s Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, with offices in Ell Hall, brought these charges against students who organized a Dec. 1 sit-in at the Curry Student Center to protest the University’s investments in the Israeli state’s murderous terror campaign in Gaza and the West Bank.

Jan. 10, the day of NEU’s show trial, was also the day before South Africa made its opening arguments before the International Court of Justice at The Hague, in the Netherlands, where the Zionist state faces judgment for its ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people.

Other Palestine solidarity groups and alumni have rallied in support of the students. On Dec. 13, NEU alumni published an open letter denouncing Northeastern’s witch hunt, demanding “that the University



Protesting NEU students fly Palestinian flags outside Ell Hall, Northeastern University campus, Boston, Jan. 10, 2024.

WWW PHOTO: MAIREAD SKEHAN GILLIS

end targeted discipline and repression, and respect the rights of all Northeastern community members to demonstrate and organize on campus.”

Other NEU alumni posted messages on Huskies for a Free Palestine’s Instagram page. “As a Palestinian American Northeastern alum I am APPALLED to be associated with my alma mater,” wrote one supporter. “Your disciplinary charges are unjustified and targeted. I vow to never encourage another prospective student to consider NEU again.”

NEU administration’s response to the solidarity action on Jan. 10 was an intensified crackdown. Campus cops and administrators prowled the public green where the demonstration was taking place, demanding students show their IDs and refusing to let in activists, including members of Workers World Party Boston, who had shown up in support.

Defying the police, protestors chanted

“Not another nickel, not another dime, no more money for Israel’s crimes!” and “In our thousands, in our millions, we are all Palestinians” in support of their comrades, with several waving Palestinian flags.

## Part of broader effort to quash student solidarity with Palestine

Northeastern’s persecution is part of the ongoing efforts by universities and other bourgeois institutions to quash the international Palestinian solidarity movement. Nearly all major universities in the U.S. and Western Europe have threatened and tried to intimidate activists associated with international Palestinian solidarity movements, including Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) and Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP).

Earlier this month, right-wing billionaire donors, led by hedge fund boss Bill Ackman, forced Harvard President Claudine Gay to

resign, following a racist Zionist smear campaign. ([workers.org/2024/01/76094](https://workers.org/2024/01/76094))

On Jan. 8, seven members of Brandeis Students for Justice in Palestine, now banned by the University, appeared in Waltham District Court after police attacked a November demonstration on the Brandeis campus.

That Northeastern’s administration is frantic to suppress protests against the Zionist state—a settler-colonial outpost of the U.S. empire—should come as no surprise. The university sponsors research and co-op programs with weapons and tech companies, including Northrop Grumman, Raytheon and Boston Dynamics, which supply the Zionist state with the drones and weapons used by occupation forces to bomb and massacre Palestinians.

Egan Research Center, one of the buildings at NEU, even has an “amphitheater” named for Raytheon. Huskies for a Free Palestine continues to demand that Northeastern cut all ties with these corporations and end its complicity in Israel’s genocide. ([tinyurl.com/5n96d777](https://tinyurl.com/5n96d777))

That Northeastern refuses to do so, and instead persecutes those protesting this genocide, underscores the need to organize against ruling class repression worldwide and continue to build solidarity with the Palestinian people in their battle against the Zionist state.

For further information on how to support Huskies for a Free Palestine, please visit their Instagram page at: [tinyurl.com/2x75y6cd](https://tinyurl.com/2x75y6cd). □



The original statement can be found at [araborganizing.org](https://araborganizing.org).

The Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC) holds the Israeli regime entirely responsible for all unfolding violence we’ve witnessed across historic Palestine. In the face of such violence, we recommit ourselves to the struggle for freedom and justice in Palestine, in our region and globally.

Recent events did not occur in a vacuum but as a result of unrelenting colonial aggression. For the last two decades, 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza have been forced to live in a dense, open-air prison, besieged by Israel in violation of international law. Two-thirds of the population in Gaza are refugees who were forcibly displaced from other parts of Palestine. Half of the population is unemployed, and the vast majority are impoverished and are denied regular access to food, water and health care by the Israeli siege.

Completely surrounded by a militarized barrier, Gazans are denied freedom of movement. In 2018, the United Nations deemed

## The fight against Israeli apartheid is a fight for freedom for us all

Gaza “unlivable,” and since then, Gazans have experienced multiple bombardments by Israel, intensifying an already untenable situation.

The apartheid regime has cut off all food, water and electricity to Gaza and has engaged in carpet bombing of residential buildings, markets, schools, health facilities and mosques. Across the occupied West Bank, residents fear the worst, with many trapped in their homes as armed Israeli settlers threaten pogroms against Palestinian families, and closed military checkpoints prohibit any freedom of movement.

Israeli officials promise to “open the gates of hell,” labeling Palestinians “human animals,” and the massacres in Gaza have commenced with full support and aid from the U.S. government.

Over the past 75 years, Israeli violence has structured every aspect of Palestinian existence. From systematized land seizures to routine airstrikes, from arbitrary imprisonment to military checkpoints, enforced family separations to targeted killings,

Palestinians have been forced to live in a state of death, both slow and sudden.

All forms of resistance — peaceful and otherwise — have been brutally repressed by the Israeli regime. Even the most moderate international human rights organizations have labeled Israeli apartheid’s structural and military violence as genocidal. Here in the U.S., Palestinians in the diaspora — along with our allies — have been met with hate, violence, slander, criminalization and blacklisting.

Today, Palestinians are entering uncharted territory, facing the most brutal Israeli violence in history. Many have asked why the Palestinian people have not been met with the same solidarity that came so easily to the people of Ukraine. The coming days will require a firm stance against colonialism and a renewed commitment to ending the brutal occupation.

While the U.S. government and so many of its allies clamor to beat the drums of war and annihilation, we remain inspired by the steadfastness of our people, and we remain

committed to the righteous struggle for freedom, justice and self-determination.

We call on all to boycott Israel. We call on institutions to divest from Israel. We call on the U.S. government to sanction Israel and end the billions in military aid. We call on our community and allies to take action to stop the ongoing annihilation of Palestinians by demanding an end to the siege on Gaza, an end to the occupation, freedom for political prisoners and an end to U.S. aid to apartheid Israel.

The current violence could end immediately if those in power took even a small step toward the right side of history.

While we understand the feelings of despair, confusion and fear that may be gripping our families, friends and community, we take this moment as an invitation to recommit ourselves to the revolutionary roots of Palestinian liberation — where the struggle to abolish apartheid, Zionism and fascism in our homeland is one and the same with an international struggle for economic and political democracy, for education and health care for all, for the right to relations to land, for social justice, gender justice and climate justice, shaped in the interests of working people.

We fight for the day all peoples in historic Palestine and all peoples of the world can live in dignity and peace.

End the War on Gaza! Free Palestine! Long live international solidarity!

*AROC envisions powerful and liberated Arab communities living with freedom and self-determination, from the Bay Area to our homelands. We are abolitionists, feminists and internationalists who believe that the liberation of SWANA (South West Asian North African) people is inextricably tied to the liberation of all oppressed people.*

## Midwives protest firings at NY Presbyterian Hospital



Nurses and midwives from the Bronx and Manhattan joined a rally Jan. 11 in support of midwives who recently received letters of termination from New York Presbyterian Hospital. They spoke outside Presby’s Allen Hospital at the northern tip of Manhattan, demanding that management reverse its decision to fire the midwives.

This issue is vital not only for the working midwives, but for the patients they serve, who are mainly Black, Brown and immigrant women from Harlem, Washington Heights and the Bronx. The midwives have a long history of safely caring and advocating for their patients. The New York State Nurses Association, which represents the midwives, organized the event.

— Report and photo by Ellen Catalinotto

# Death penalty in U.S. is dying – but not dead yet



By Gloria Rubac

It is a slow and painful death, but executions in the U.S. are going to die! The death penalty is gasping its last breaths as even Republicans are condemning it these days.

The big picture of capital punishment is that the United States is moving away from the death penalty. Here are some new facts:

- For the first time in the U.S., a majority of people believe that the death penalty is applied unfairly, according to an October 2023 Gallup Poll.
- Twenty-six states, a slim majority, have either abolished the death penalty (23) or have a moratorium on executions in place (3).
- In 2023, only five states conducted executions and seven states imposed new death sentences, the lowest numbers in 20 years.
- There were three people exonerated on death rows in 2023, bringing the total number of exonerations to 195 since the death penalty was reinstated in the U.S. in 1976.

Texas was one of just five states to carry out executions in 2023, but led the country with eight people put to death. The other four states were Alabama (2), Florida (6), Missouri (4) and Oklahoma (4).

Even in Texas, which leads the U.S. with total 586 executions, change is coming. Death sentence convictions have fallen from a high of 48 in 1999 to three people sent to death row by Texas juries in 2023. Convictions with a death sentence have been in single digits for the past nine years in Texas.

Virginia made history in 2021 when it became the first former Confederate state to abolish the death penalty. Now two other former Confederate states, Kentucky and Missouri, along with Ohio, have bills to abolish the death penalty before their legislatures.

Rep. Jim Murphy, a Missouri Republican, told the media that he “believes the death penalty is something that we really need to examine and put to an end because there’s just too many errors to be made and it’s just too big an error to make.” ([tinyurl.com/mthy79kv](https://tinyurl.com/mthy79kv))

So, there is definitely some good news. But the horrors of executions do continue unabated.

## Death penalty still despicably racist, and torture

But the flip side of this big picture is that the death penalty is still despicably racist, and is still torture. It is still killing people who had totally incompetent attorneys, people who are mentally ill, and people with extremely low mental abilities. And it is still killing innocent people.

According to the Death Penalty Information Center, “79% of the people executed this year [2023] had at least one of the following impairments: serious mental illness, brain injury, developmental brain damage, an IQ in the range considered intellectually disabled, and/or chronic serious childhood trauma, neglect and/or abuse. One-third or eight of the people executed had all three. At least three prisoners were under the age of 20 at the time of their crimes.”

This is important because death penalty proponents and district attorneys, more often than not, dehumanize people in order to rationalize their killing. Prosecutors make those on trial out to be “monsters” who have to be eliminated. But the fact is that all of them needed help, likely throughout their whole lives, and the capitalist system totally failed them.

## Innocent, but still sentenced to death row

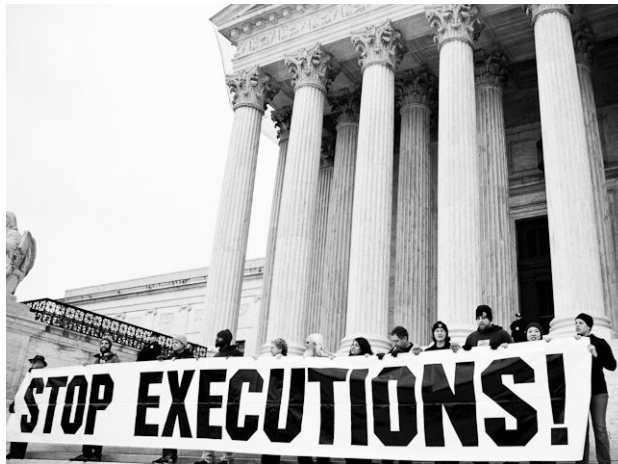
High profile innocence cases in several states have recently received intense media attention but found little relief in the courts. Otherwise, there would not be one person found innocent for every eight that are executed.

The Trump appointees to the Supreme Court, the court of last resort, are ruling against almost every death row appeal or are just refusing to even hear the appeals.

Oklahoma is the state with the highest per capita number of executions. Recently, the case of Richard Glossip has garnered national attention. Glossip has spent 26 years on Oklahoma death row, had two trials,

nine execution dates and three last meals. His ninth execution was stayed by the courts last May as Glossip was saying his last goodbyes to his loved ones, and now Glossip is asking the Supreme Court to throw out his 2004 murder conviction.

The New York-based Innocence Project said that Richard Glossip’s case is “a harrowing example of how the justice system can fail an innocent person. Glossip’s



Activists protesting the death penalty in front of the United States Supreme Court in 2017.

trial was tainted by prosecutorial misconduct, a leading cause of wrongful convictions.”

Two Texas cases of innocence received widespread media attention this past year.

On Jan. 11, 2023, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals issued a three-page decision denying relief to Robert Roberson despite copious new evidence of his innocence, which was presented during Roberson’s nine-day evidentiary hearing in Anderson County.

Roberson, who was convicted and sentenced to death in 2003 for the death of his two-year-old daughter, Nikki, has consistently maintained his innocence. The evidence proves that Nikki’s death was a tragic accident exacerbated by her chronic illness, not a homicide.

In May, Roberson filed a cert [certiorari] petition with the U.S. Supreme Court asking the justices to reverse the lower court decision denying him a new trial. The justices declined to even consider his case. Roberson may be the only person on death row in the U.S. who was convicted under the “Shaken Baby” hypothesis, which is no longer considered a scientifically sound theory.

On June 28, 2023, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals rejected Rodney Reed’s petition for relief despite significant evidence of his innocence and claims of prosecutorial misconduct that were well-documented during a weeks-long evidentiary hearing the year before. This is still being appealed.

Earlier, on April 19, 2023, the Supreme Court ruled in a 6-3 decision that the time limit had not run out on Reed’s request for DNA testing of key crime scene evidence, including the belt that was used to strangle the victim. Reed will now be able to pursue his quest for DNA testing in federal court.

## “Painful, humiliating death” from nitrogen hypoxia

A recent court ruling in Alabama in January 2024 was shocking. A federal judge ruled that Alabama can execute using nitrogen hypoxia, which suffocates people by forcing them to breathe pure nitrogen.

Unless an appeals court intervenes, Kenneth Smith will be the first human being executed using nitrogen gas. The consequences of using this protocol are completely unknown, even to Alabama officials. The nitrogen is planned to be administered through a gas mask placed over Smith’s nose and mouth.

Alabama tried for four hours and failed to execute Smith in November 2022 using lethal injections, but abandoned its efforts when staff were unable to access a vein.

Last week, four United Nations experts expressed alarm over Smith’s upcoming execution. In their joint statement released on Jan. 3, the four independent U.N. monitors called on the U.S. government and Alabama to halt the execution. “We are concerned that nitrogen hypoxia would result in a painful and humiliating death,” the experts wrote.

The Rev. Jeff Hood, a spiritual advisor, plans to minister to Kenneth Smith in the death chamber. Hood said the Alabama Department of Corrections asked him to sign a form acknowledging the risks and agreeing to stay 3 feet away from Smith’s gas mask. Hood, a death penalty opponent, said that shows there is a risk to witnesses attending the execution.

“They’ve asked me to sign a waiver, which to me speaks to the fact that they’re already concerned that things could go wrong,” Hood said in an interview with NBC News after he filed a lawsuit against the Alabama Department of Corrections.

## Mental illness and the death penalty

In a particularly sad case, Terence Andrus took his own life on Jan. 21, 2023, after struggling with mental illness while on Texas death row. On June 13, 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court denied Andrus’s petition for certiorari and summary reversal. Andrus was sentenced to death in 2012 after receiving abysmal legal representation at trial. His case went back and forth in several courts as Andrus kept trying to win a new trial but never succeeded. His suicide was the result of the system’s failure.

Syed Rabbani was resentenced to life in prison on Nov. 14, 2023, after spending 35 years under an unconstitutional death sentence in Texas. Since his conviction, his mental and physical health has significantly deteriorated. He is now bedridden, blinded by cataracts, and rendered nearly immobile and uncommunicative by a stroke.

On March 7, 2023, Andre Thomas’s April 5 Texas execution date was withdrawn. Thomas lives at the prison’s psychiatric facility, where he suffers from schizophrenia. He permanently blinded himself by gouging out both of his eyes in separate incidents — first while awaiting trial, and then again soon after arriving on death row. After he took out his second eye, he ate it. Why Thomas wasn’t determined to be mentally unfit for execution is a question never answered.

Before the crime, Thomas sought treatment for the symptoms of his severe mental illness, but no one responded to his increasingly desperate pleas for help over the course of many years. In 2004, he attempted suicide because he could no longer tolerate the voices in his head.

There are enough sad stories to fill a book. But the main thing is that this country, which was founded on genocide of the Indigenous peoples, and whose wealth is built on the unpaid labor and racist treatment of enslaved African people, has no right to imprison or execute any working person. Period.

The death penalty may be on its way out. But incarcerated people and their families and supporters must continue to struggle to dismantle the prisons and execution chambers brick by brick and wall by wall until the day comes when we have created a society that rules with justice for all.

*Gloria Rubac is a leader of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.*



# Fighting for disability rights behind bars

By Billy Rinick and Joe Piette

*“The disproportionate incarceration of people with disabilities in the United States is a serious and growing problem. As the prison population ages, more inmates are reporting physical disabilities. The U.S. has also seen a rise in the number of people with mental illness and developmental and cognitive disabilities in prison. National surveys now indicate that as many as 31% of inmates in state prisons report having at least one disability.” (Disabilityrightsca.org)*

*Accessing adequate health care and other needs for people with disabilities in prison is a significant challenge. William “Billy” Rinick (FN9690), disabled and incarcerated at SCI Coal Township in Pennsylvania, refuses to accept discrimination based on his disabilities, believing that if you don’t fight, you can’t win your rights. He wrote this letter to WW which has been lightly edited.*

I’d like to start off by taking the opportunity to thank Workers World and Bryant Arroyo for providing me with this platform to highlight and expose the Medical Health Care Bureau and Pennsylvania Department of Corrections’ Wellpath contractor. They put the almighty dollar over humane care of prisoners, in violation of the Hippocratic Oath and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

On May 17, 2022, I filed grievance #982323 due to my arbitrarily and capriciously being transferred from SCI Mahanoy out of the Eastern Region to SCI Fayette. Fortunately, the PADOCS smelled a lawsuit coming down the pike and granted my grievance, transferring me back to the

eastern region to SCI Coal Township. Since then, I’ve continuously been blackballed and discriminated against with impunity, against ADA regulations.

I had to file grievance #983964 against SCI Fayette just to get my personal property shipped to SCI Coal Township.

On May 12, 2023, I filed grievance #103310 against the Administration and the Activities Department for being discriminated against in violation of the American with Disabilities Act for their failure to provide disability gym sessions for disabled incarcerated.

## Lack of accessible fire exits

On July 12, I filed grievance #1041548 against SCI Coal Township Administration for violating the American with Disabilities Act. This facility was built between 1990-93 and failed to include disability ramps in fire exits throughout the entire facility. It’s gross negligence for the entire DOC to not include disability ramps in all their fire exits in each facility, in violation of ADA regulations.

On July 12, there was a fire drill, and I was ordered by Fire/Safety [official] Mr. Ferrair to go out the fire exit. I had to hop out on one leg, placing a severe strain on my atrophied foot and toes, which have been diagnosed with arthritis. Another prisoner had to carry my wheelchair down the steps, because there isn’t a wheelchair ramp or rails. SCI Coal Township has failed to update fire exits with wheelchair ramps, in violation of fire/safety codes and ADA rules — clearly ableism.

On July 12, I filed grievance #1042632 for violating the ADA when Activities Manager Mr. Randell and Activity Specialist Kolovich unequivocally stated

that they don’t hire disabled people to work in the gym, even though I specifically informed them I worked in a gym prior to being transferred here. I included affidavits from other prisoners who witnessed the conversation.

I’ve been excluded by both librarians, Ms. Bahner and Ms. Rosini, denying me employment at the Law Library as a disabled person. They told me I was on the list to be hired, then did an about face and hired another inmate who just came into the prison. Being placed at the back of the line for employment is discrimination. I’ve exhausted all roads, but they deny employment for those of us covered by ADA. On Aug. 3, I filed a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice.

## ADA grievance for prosthetic foot

On Sept. 11, I filed grievance #1041632 and an Inmate Disability Accommodation Request Form (Form 006 ) for violating the ADA in denying me a fiberglass foot with shock [absorption]. Previously, on May 8, at a sick call to get a consult written to replace my broken prosthetic foot, Specialist Mr. Dom recommended that particular device.

But for four months, the Correctional Health Care Administration at SCI Coal Township, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Health Care, and Wellpath went on an internal campaign to deny the specialist’s official recommendation.

On Oct. 19, I filed a civil rights complaint to the U.S. Justice Department (see Rinnick v. Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, 23-OCR-1833) in support of health care treatment, for a new fiberglass foot with shock [absorption] and a transfer to SCI Chester.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Screenshot taken during a zoom visit with William “Billy” Rinick, Dec. 11, 2023.

This is all I want — to have my foot — in order to be able to walk around again, and a transfer to SCI Chester, which is a wheelchair accessible prison.

On Oct. 30, I filed Grievance #1058926 and an 006 complaint against Unit Manager Mr. Dunn, who was making a round on my block with former Unit Manager Mr. Gatewood. Dunn told me, “Get away from me, you one-legged mother f\*\*\*\*r.” When I asked him for his name, Dunn stated, “Make sure you spell it right. I’m retiring. Your one-legged ass can’t do nothing to me.”

On Dec. 7, I filed a grievance due to my right foot and toes becoming infected, atrophied, coupled with hammertoe. I now need surgery to have my toes realigned and have a bunion removed. This is the result of deliberate delays in providing me with a fiberglass foot on my left leg, causing unnecessary stress and harm to my right leg over time.

I would like to thank my whole family for their love and support, my criminal attorney, my civil attorney, my doctors, state senators and reps, my Counselor Ms. Tom, jailhouse lawyer Mr. Arroyo and WW for giving me the platform. □

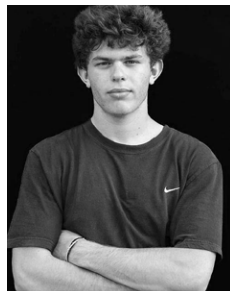
# Some Israeli youth say ‘No’ to military conscription

By Michael Kramer

Wars of aggression — particularly those that are racist and genocidal in character — will always result in opposition from those who are called on to carry out the war. During World War II, tens of thousands of German soldiers were executed for either desertion or refusing to follow military orders.

And now a small number of Israeli youth are refusing to take part in this most recent phase of the 75-year war against the Palestinian people and the occupation of their country. It began on October 7, 2023, with Palestinian fighters overrunning and capturing numerous Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF, what Israel calls Israeli Defense Forces) military bases.

The tradition of Israeli youth refusing to take part in the defense of the Zionist project is not new. In September 2023 over 200 high school students signed



Tal Mitnick



Sofia Orr

a statement and held a public meeting declaring their refusal to serve in the IOF.

On Dec. 26, the first of the signees, 18-year-old Tal Mitnick, refused mandatory military service and was jailed in a military prison for 30 days. To prevent any display of solidarity within the prison walls, with all its potential ramifications, he is

being kept separate from any Palestinian prisoners.

Mitnick issued a long statement before he was jailed in which he observed, “Before the war [the Israeli assault on Gaza], the army guarded settlements, maintained the murderous siege on the Gaza Strip and upheld the status quo of apartheid and Jewish supremacy in the land between the Jordan [River] and the sea.”

Sofia Orr is also 18 years old and has publicly stated that she will refuse to serve in the IOF beginning on her Feb. 25, 2024, scheduled military induction. She has

refused to apply for any exemption based on pacifism, ethics, medical conditions or mental health and has had lengthy interviews on both the Al Jazeera television network and the france24.com website.

When asked how the events of October 7 affected her decision, she replied that it “changed nothing in either direction. It should have been expected, because when you put people under extreme violence, extreme violence will rise back at you. It’s inevitable.” For her actions Orr has been labeled a “traitor” and threatened with murder and rape, according to the Jan. 6 report at france24.com.

Israeli youth who refuse military service should be supported and encouraged. They have opened an internal front against the Zionist project within a fascist-like political and social atmosphere.

*Michael Kramer served in the IOF and took part in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war as well as the illegal occupations of Palestine, Egypt and Syria. His experiences led him to become a supporter of Palestinian self-determination and liberation.*

# Cities, unions back Gaza ceasefire

By Dave Welsh

Every week, more U.S. cities are calling for a cease-fire in Gaza, where Palestinians face daily lethal assaults from the Israeli occupation army. According to a list compiled by Newsweek magazine, city council and other cease-fire resolutions have been passed in Oakland, Richmond and San Francisco, in California, as well as Ann Arbor, Detroit, Dearborn, Hamtramck, and Ypsilanti in Michigan; Akron, Ohio; Albany, New York, Atlanta, Georgia; Bridgeport, Connecticut; Providence, Rhode Island; Wilmington, Delaware; and others.

As of early January 2024, 179 labor organizations have also called for an end to

the slaughter in Gaza, where over 24,000 Palestinians have been killed and an estimated twice as many wounded, mostly civilians, including thousands of children.

Among the labor groups supporting a cease-fire or otherwise backing the besieged Palestinians are national unions including Alphabet Workers Union (Google employees), American Federation of Teachers, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, American Postal Workers Union, IUPAT (Painters), National Education Association, National Nurses United, Starbucks Workers United, United Auto Workers, and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE).

Labor-affiliated organizations backing a cease-fire include the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, Coalition of Labor Union Women and Jobs with Justice. Many state and local unions, as well as local and regional labor councils, have issued support for a cease-fire. Many are demanding that the Biden administration end its strong backing for the Israeli offensive.

Tariq Habash, a Palestinian-American and senior official in the Department of Education, resigned recently from his



Protesters celebrate after Oakland, California, City Council unanimously passes ceasefire resolution, Nov. 27, 2023.

position because the Biden administration “has put millions of innocent lives in danger, most immediately the 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza who remain under continuous assault and ethnic cleansing by the Israeli government.” (tinyurl.com/2s3mxsmy) □

# Western corporate media whiteout on hearing of Israeli genocide

By Otis Grotewohl

The South African government defended its powerful charges against the genocidal actions of Israel during their initial presentation in front of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, Jan. 11.

South Africa's legal team consists of a multinational and multigenerational group of advocates, including Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, Adila Hassim, John Dugard and Max du Plessis, plus other junior and external counsel members. Many members of the legal team staff wore Palestinian keffiyehs along with scarves featuring the colors of the South African flag.

Prominent South African lawyer Adila Hassim passionately told the court, "Israel has subjected Gaza to what has been described as one of the heaviest conventional bombing campaigns in the history of modern warfare." (BBC, Jan. 11)

In his closing remarks, South African counsel Tembeka Ngcukaitobi stated, "The evidence of genocidal intent is not only chilling, it is also overwhelming and

incontrovertible." (Timeslive, Jan. 11)

South Africa is a country that legally defeated a white-supremacist, apartheid system in 1994. It is also the first country to courageously bring charges of genocide against Israel before a world court.

More than 20 countries are publicly endorsing South Africa's case, including socialist Cuba and the pro-worker governments of Brazil, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Despite the strong global showing of solidarity, the Western corporate press has egregiously censored the proceedings as a strategic attempt to discredit South Africa's claims and to undermine the justified grievances of the people of Palestine.

## Corporate press displays empathy towards Israel

Much of the corporate media downplayed the arguments made by the South African attorneys, while at the same time presenting Israel as a "victim" simply "defending itself." Take for example the first sentence of a Reuters article: "Israel on Friday rejected as false and 'grossly

distorted' accusations brought by South Africa at the U.N.'s top court that its military operation in Gaza is a state-led genocide campaign against Palestinians." (Jan. 12) The author legitimizes Israel's deceitful response to the charges of genocide at the very beginning of the article, setting its tone.

Unlike South Africa's diverse legal team, the Israeli respondents are predominately white. In a sick twist of irony, Germany has decided to testify on Israel's behalf, which the bourgeois press has been happy to report. Numerous U.S. media headlines, have highlighted how Germany is calling South Africa's charges "baseless."

Israeli representatives peddled false claims about the Hamas Islamic Resistance Movement of Gaza and demonized its supporters. The U.S. corporate media has also been pushing misinformation about the Palestinian resistance movement in recent months. Neither the Israeli legal team nor the bourgeois press willingly admit that the people of Gaza overwhelmingly voted for Hamas as their legitimate representative during the 2006 legislative elections.



PHOTO: @SUMAYAMAMDOO

Palestinians in Nelson Mandela Square, in occupied Ramallah on the West Bank, Jan. 10, 2024.

The Palestinian people should be the only ones able to determine their own destiny — not the racist leaders of the U.S., Germany or Israel. The South African government, led by the African National Congress, is going out of its way to do what it can to show solidarity with its Palestinian siblings who are experiencing similar apartheid conditions. Their efforts must be defended and honorably recognized by those who support a "Free Palestine!" □

# Thousands shut down port to demand Gaza ceasefire

By Dave Welsh  
Oakland, California

Block-the-boat protesters, calling for a cease-fire in the 100-day-old Israeli military assault on Gaza, shut down the port of Oakland starting at 5 a.m. on Jan. 13. Mass picket lines were honored by members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Locals 10 and 34, who refused to cross the lines. Protesters said they were attempting to block the loading of a U.S. military ship ferrying weapons from West Coast ports to Israel, as well as to stop the genocide in Gaza.

On Jan. 11, in another act of solidarity with Palestine, the government of South Africa presented charges of genocide against Israel before the International Court of Justice. The Israeli regime has killed at least 24,000 Palestinians in Gaza since October 7 and wounded 60,000 people, two-thirds of them women and children. South Africa's charges were filed

in The Hague, Netherlands.

One of the key fighting organizations during the South African freedom struggle, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), has said multiple times that, as bad as apartheid had been in South Africa, it is worse for the Palestinians under Israeli apartheid domination.



Port of Oakland shutdown, Jan. 13, 2024.

PHOTO: BROOKE ANDERSON

In addition, the book "The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa" documents Israel's provision of arms, including nuclear weapons, to the racist South African government in the 1970s and 1980s to combat the rising South African freedom movement at that time.

Now South Africa is calling out the

Israeli regime for genocide against the people of Palestine.

As early as 1962, ILWU members staged a boycott of apartheid South African cargo, picketing on the docks of San Francisco. In the late 1970s, after the 1976 Soweto massacre by the racist government, the ILWU protested the docking of the Nedlloyd Kimberley, which was carrying South African cargo, in various ports.

Then in 1984, the ILWU refused to handle South African cargo for 11 days when the Nedlloyd Kimberley docked in San Francisco. With that dramatic act, the anti-apartheid movement spread like wildfire across the U.S., especially on college campuses.

The recent block-the-boat action continues the decades-long history of class solidarity between West Coast longshore workers and workers living under apartheid in both South Africa and occupied Palestine. □

# South Africa puts Israeli genocide on trial

Continued from page 1

wounded, for the brutal occupation forces.

Israeli cargo ships have been targeted and rerouted from using a direct route on the Red Sea thanks to the Yemeni Naval Forces demanding a permanent end to the bombing of Gaza to allow the flow of direly needed humanitarian aid.

There are reports from the Israeli media that there is growing internal strife within Netanyahu's cabinet, especially amongst defense ministers — some of whom have been barred from meetings by Netanyahu — due to the resilience and resolve of the resistance, despite all of the carnage in Gaza.

There is also growing discontent amongst Israeli citizens who have come out in the streets in larger and larger numbers to demand a ceasefire, an end to the apartheid occupation, and for Netanyahu to resign.

Hundreds of Israeli teenagers are risking jail time for refusing to serve in the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF).

## Palestinians thank South Africa

On Dec. 30, one day after the South Africa complaint was made public, an International Coalition to Stop Genocide in Palestine was formed, spearheaded by groups such as Black Alliance for Peace, Samidoun Palestinian Prisoners Solidarity Network, National Lawyers Guild and others. To date, over 1,200 groups have signed



Cape Town, South Africa, Oct. 22, 2023.

PHOTO: ASHRAF HENDRICKS

on to the coalition including Workers World Party, Bronx Antiwar Coalition and the International Action Center.

Ajamu Baraka, chair of the coordinating committee of the Black Alliance for Peace, stated in a Jan. 3 press release: "The action by the South African government is a courageous attempt to do no less than salvage the credibility of the international mechanisms that were meant to protect human rights and international law. The South African petition is a reminder that it is a legal and moral imperative for states

and international civil society to oppose impunity. Genocide has been identified as one of the most egregious international crimes. If the Israeli state and its backers are allowed to escape justice and international condemnation, it will strip the current international system of justice of any legitimacy." Go to [blackallianceforpeace.com/movement-news/israel2icj](https://blackallianceforpeace.com/movement-news/israel2icj) to read the entire statement.

On Jan. 11, the opening day of the ICJ hearing, hundreds of Palestinian residents living in Ramallah, in the Occupied West Bank, gathered around the statue of the legendary African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela to give praise to the South African government. A youth band played the national anthem of South Africa, while the rest of the crowd waved both the Palestinian and South African flags.

The South African and Palestinian struggles have three important things in common: Both have experienced the horrors of apartheid, both have organized armed resistance and both have shown solidarity with each other for many decades. In 1997, Mandela stated, "We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians." (aljazeera.com, Dec. 5, 2023)

This same South African government has vowed to bring the war crimes of the U.S. government to the ICJ to expose its complicity with the Israeli genocide against the Palestinian people. □

# 'Don't let Israel succeed in its aims'

By Frank Barat

The following article covers the first parts of an interview with Palestinian author and activist Susan Abulhawa by Frank Barat, a French activist and film producer on Dec. 29. Their full conversation can be found at [tinyurl.com/3e4bcu9y](https://tinyurl.com/3e4bcu9y).

**Frank Barat:** How do we build on the horrors that are happening [in Gaza], and how do we make sure this actually changes everything in terms of the way people think of Israel, of its supporters, of its backers? The numbers are horrifying — more than 29,000 Palestinian dead; at least 50,000 injured; over 100 journalists killed. Over 1.9 million people have been displaced; over 65,000 homes completely destroyed; 170,000 partially destroyed ... 305 schools partially damaged and destroyed; 1,500 industrial facilities, 183 mosques, three churches — we can go on and on.

And even though horrifying, these numbers don't reflect the true nature of what's happening. Through your work, through social media, through your books, you've been one of the best persons in reframing the way we see Palestine and humanizing the way we see Palestinians. So, when I give you these numbers, what do they mean to you?

**Susan Abulhawa:** Honestly, I feel very emotional hearing even the numbers, because every day I scroll through the videos and the images, and I know the profound despair that underpins all of that. I also imagine this sort of industrialized terrorism is still ongoing with no end in sight.

Those numbers also grossly underestimate the true harm that has been done. We know that there are thousands, if not tens of thousands, of people who remain trapped under the rubble. We know there are people who died or are dying alone in the dark and the cold. Nobody is able to get to them. Nobody knows they're there.



Susan Abulhawa speaking at a rally for Palestine in Philadelphia, November 2023.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

And when you imagine the way that people have died so far, you know it's not just killing people. It's death in the most gruesome ways — people literally being buried alive.

I think there's probably no more horrifying way to die than to be buried alive, to be crushed under the weight of walls and ceilings that once contained your memories and your family and your life. At some point, this will end. It must. But the extraordinary destruction puts a big question mark on the future. Where do people return to? What do they return to? What do they do in the meantime?

These are all things that we have to start thinking about and preparing for to ensure that Israel is not successful in its aims, even when its true aims are not what they declare officially.

We know this is not about Hamas. It's certainly not about the hostages.

This is about colonial conquest, as it has always been. That's the essence of designs as a colonial, European, racist, supremacist movement initiated to violently colonize Palestine and steal everything from the Indigenous population, and they have been doing that for decades. But they have often lamented how inefficient they

have been in this colonization for several reasons.

Number one, the Palestinians who remain, who they could not get rid of, continue to live and reproduce, and Israel has not been able to kill them off quickly enough or contain them or expel them. All along they talked about creating conditions — I think Shimon Peres said it — conditions that would invite the voluntary migration of Palestinians. That's what they hoped all along, that they could make the Palestinians' lives so miserable and desperate that people would just leave of their own accord.

Like all colonizers and all racists, they underestimate the humanity and the attachment of Indigenous people to their homes and their lands. And with that, they have often viewed Palestinian lives as demographic threats. You know, they have been, for the past 20 years or so, speaking openly about how worrisome it is that between the river and the sea, the number of Palestinians versus Israeli Jews could become equal or worse, even outnumber them. So, for years they have been planning genocidal actions like what we're seeing, and they found an opportunity now to execute that.

We're not surprised that it has reached this level, but it is shocking. It shocks the conscience. It shocks the mind and begs our belief. But it is not surprising, because with every massacre that Israel has committed with impunity, the next one was escalated. Every time it's like they just keep pushing the envelope to see how much they can get away with.

When you're able to act with such brutality and industrialized terrorism for so long, without any real consequences, of course you think you can get away with genocide, with outright genocide, and that's what they're doing.

This impunity has allowed Israelis to think that the things they're saying are normal. It is a truly pathological society. It really is, because what has been allowed to proliferate in the public sphere is so racist, so appalling and really grotesque to most of us in the world, but it's become normalized, I think for most Israelis.

[For them] there's absolutely nothing wrong with saying, "Yeah, we should kill all the babies. The babies aren't innocent" or "Yeah, we need to turn Gaza into a parking lot. And yes, we need to wipe everybody out, and we need to starve them to death."

These are all things that they have been saying — "We need to starve them; we need to make sure that there are conditions that would spread disease that would make our job easier." These are all things [said] in the public sphere.

Even countries that want to do things like that may know better than to say this out loud. But Israelis do say it out loud, and they say it a lot, because it's normal in that society.

I think when this is over — and when I say over, I mean when Israel is over, because this kind of profoundly racist regime cannot continue to thrive in the world — I think we will spend generations unpacking this. This pathology was allowed to continue, was nurtured by so-called Western "democracies" that love to preach to the rest of us about human rights and democracy and whatnot. □

## The Bronx is united with Yemen

Statement of the Bronx Antiwar Coalition, Jan. 12, 2024

The Bronx Antiwar Coalition strongly condemns the U.S.- and British-led bombing of Yemen, a nation that fulfilled its duty under Article 1 of the Genocide Convention to defend Palestine and penalize Israel for committing genocide in Gaza.

Yemen exercised its authority over its territorial waters, including the Red Sea and Bab El Mandeb Strait, having the right to control the passage of ships.

The U.S.-British bombing is an illegal act of terror and a gross violation of Yemen's sovereignty. The U.S.-British aggression against Yemen lacks any justification, as there was no threat to international navigation in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea.

Yemen's targeting was solely focused on "Israeli" ships or those destined for the ports of occupied Palestine. Yet, Yemen's nonviolent efforts to impede genocide have been met with predictable Western violence.

Yemen has not caused harm to anyone; it is simply making it challenging for Israel to obtain the war supplies required to continue their genocidal acts. Biden's bombing of Yemen took place after the first day of proceedings in the International Court

of Justice, in which Israel was exposed as a genocidal, colonial, settler state created by Britain and adopted by the U.S.

With the recent bombing, the U.S. and Britain have targeted Yemen, an already oppressed Arab nation whose people they have waged war against for years due to their opposition to the Zionist genocide in Gaza. The Yemeni people have suffered hundreds of thousands of deaths between 2015 and 2022, defending themselves from an unsuccessful attempt to prevent Ansar Allah from gaining power.

The U.S. has a long history of bombing Yemen, and the Saudi-United Arab Emirates-led and U.S.-backed war on Yemen has resulted in one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises.

The U.S. has made a grave error in bombing Yemen, as Washington has underestimated Yemen's unwavering support for Palestine and Gaza. Yemen will persist in its religious and humanitarian stance, standing firmly with Gaza and utilizing all available means to support its people. The U.S. aggression will only strengthen the Yemeni people's resolve and determination, bolstering their ability to defend themselves and to continue advocating for the legitimate and just cause of the Palestinian people.

The U.S. and Britain are instigating a

regional war to protect "Israel's" ability to carry out a months-long massacre of Palestinian children in Gaza and to safeguard the financial interests of the apartheid state and its corporate backers. The fearless Yemeni people, with nothing to lose and all to gain, have the potential to ignite the entire region.

### Masses protest U.S.-British air strikes

Mass demonstrations in Sana'a, Yemen, have erupted in response to the bombings. It has become open season for U.S. and British military bases in the region. Yemen's strike capacity extends far beyond Yemen, and their deep alliances with other resistance groups should not be underestimated.

Today, the defenders of justice, soldiers of righteousness and keepers of honor are Yemeni. We witness a people engaged in a war solely to defend human dignity, without any ulterior or profit motives. The anti-imperialist people of the world resisting Western hegemony stand with Yemen. We demand the U.S. and Britain remove its presence from the Red Sea, the Gulf of Oman and all of West Asia.

We salute Yemen — its people, leadership and army — for their unwavering stance in upholding the cause of Palestine and supporting Gaza, regardless of the



Jan. 13, 2024 march.

WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

consequences. We declare our unwavering support for our Yemeni siblings in the face of this brutal and immoral aggression.

The heroic people of Yemen will teach the U.S. empire a lesson in humility. Yemen will be the graveyard of invaders, and history will forever remember Yemen's heroism.

Victory for Yemen is a victory for all of us. The Bronx stands united with Yemen.

**Death to U.S.-British-Western imperialism!**

**Long live resistance, from Palestine to Yemen!** □

## On the centennial of Lenin's death

# A strong class orientation is

*Continued from page 1*

abstract. It's better to break things down in order to clarify the relevance to today.

When we look at the world situation, right now, the factor that combines, subsumes and transcends all of the overlapping developments that impact the global class struggle is the relationship of class forces on a global level.

It's important to isolate and analyze each crisis, be it war, the geo-political struggle between nations, the danger of fascism, the erosion of U.S. imperialism, climate crisis, the capitalist economic crises combined with the irreversible crisis of late stage capitalism, etc.

However, in examining each crisis, we have to make sure that we are not missing the forest for the trees. This is the importance of understanding the relationship of class forces. What is this relationship? When everything is taken into consideration, which class — the capitalist class or the workers and the oppressed — is generally stronger and prevailing in the global class war?

At present, the capitalist class, with all of its contradictions, prevails over the world relationship of class forces. We say this with the utmost confidence that however long and uneven the process may be, the working class will gain the upper hand in the global relationship of class forces.

However, the fact that such is not the case at the moment constitutes the greatest crisis for the working class. This crisis might be less worrisome if the capitalist world was not rapidly descending into an ever worsening phase of turmoil, destabilization and violence brought on by its disintegration. The disintegration phase is a good thing, but it's also a very dangerous thing.

Until the relationship of class forces changes in favor of the working class, the workers and oppressed to a very great degree will suffer the pain and trauma of a world falling apart, without having the means to turn a nightmare to their advantage; to turn it even into a revolutionary situation.

Knowing this should make it easier to understand the necessity to strengthen our class orientation. But this understanding will not have any effect if it feels less urgent and less consequential. It demands our attention not later, but now.

### Is unity between the workers and oppressed peoples possible?

It should come as no surprise that some, especially among the oppressed, but also other radicals, feel that internationalism — meaning class solidarity and united working-class struggle on a worldwide basis — is not possible, because workers the imperialist centers are relatively more privileged and considered loyal to imperialism and that this dichotomy is based on the history of imperialist conquest and colonialism that can't be undone.

From our perspective we understand more than anyone else that inequality between workers is a serious obstacle to internationalism. But we also understand that the social positions within the working class, driven by changes in the world capitalist economy, are also not fixed but constantly changing. This is why we understand that the necessary degree of internationalism required to change the relationship of class forces is as possible as it is critical. But changing the relationship of forces can't be left up to external forces; it must be struggled for.

The very existence of bourgeois nation states is a barrier to working-class internationalism that must be overcome. Very few countries developed through natural means alone. Rather, they came into being to serve imperialism. However, this fact alone does not negate the existence of class society, the working class and the inevitability of class struggle in the U.S. and everywhere else.

What's more, with very few exceptions, the working class at the centers of world imperialism tends to be more multinational, with the most oppressed, including women and LGBTQ2S+ workers, occupying the leading role in the class struggle.

There are some instances where class becomes extremely complicated.

In my view, to a large extent Israel at present is an exception. Israel is an extreme version of a relatively small and completely artificial settler-colonial state being imposed on the region by imperialism and displacing and subjugating the Indigenous population.

There's a working class in Israel. But that class is not only divided, it is hostage to the reality of colonial occupation. In Israel, the struggle to free Palestine is the key to the class struggle.

Most of the population in Israel that is not native to Palestine was not forced to migrate there out of economic need but many migrated there to be part of the Zionist project. This suspends its development as a class. The



Workers protest Google's and Amazon's support for Israel, San Francisco, Sept. 8, 2022.

most vital, politically healthy part of the working class there are Palestinian Arab workers who are 20% to 25% of the population and also 25% of the working class.

They are the social and political link between the class struggle and the liberation struggle until something changes in the remaining part of the working class. If we were there, part of our work would be to push workers to save themselves, break with Zionism and help unite the world's working class. How much time and effort communist and advanced workers should devote to this task would depend on the needs of the Palestinian resistance.

### Class and the struggle against racism

For communists with a class orientation, our participation in the struggle against racism and all other forms of oppression has a distinct political objective. Our goal is not only to be in solidarity with the oppressed, it is to educate and call on the working class to take the lead in this struggle.

The end goal for us is to maximize class unity, without which it will be impossible to make a revolution and establish socialism. The struggle against all forms of oppression is central to our existence and work, because we communists understand or should understand that the greatest obstacle to our class is fragmentation.

### The connection between class orientation and internationalism

There are many good developments that tend to strengthen working-class solidarity. As we have talked and written about for a considerable time, changes in technology have enabled the working class to interact and coordinate the class struggle on a global and immediate level in a way that did not exist before.

The worldwide protests sparked by the genocidal war against Gaza are only the most recent examples of how material conditions have advanced the potential for real internationalism in heretofore unimaginable ways. The main problem that's holding back the ability of the working class to take full advantage of the new technological level is its political and ideological weaknesses. The capitalist class is determined to do everything possible to sustain these weaknesses.

This is the reason why, if we want to change the relationship of class forces in favor of the working class, it is absolutely vital for us to do whatever it takes to strengthen our class orientation. We should consider this objective essential to our relevance and even for our very existence. The best attitude for us to have about this is to pretend as if we only recently discovered the

weaknesses that are hampering the working class's ability to assert itself as an independent force, and now we are trying with all of our might to respond to our new revelation.

Radical and revolutionary forces in the working-class movement cannot impact the consciousness of the working class overnight. Events and the course of the class struggle are decisive factors in this process. But such forces do not have the luxury of thinking that they are too weak to take on this struggle, or pretend as though the struggle is not necessary.

When this happens, the left cuts itself off from the working class. Political forces and movements, even forces that are revolutionary that deprioritize a class orientation, render themselves weak and ultimately irrelevant.

If the struggle to raise and spread class consciousness is forfeited, it only helps the capitalist class. This is a struggle that should be prioritized, deliberate, bold, creative and constant.

Generally, and especially at this moment, there is no more important struggle. It would be an enormous step forward if like-minded forces could launch a new campaign that, apart from that campaign's tactics, has the objective of concretely strengthening class consciousness and internationalism, especially among workers who are already in the process of being radicalized.

### The BRICS alliance: Its significance and its limitations

A contradictory development that working-class organizations, leftist, revolutionary and progressive forces everywhere, including ourselves, are struggling over is how to view the alliance between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa referred to as BRICS.

A considerable number of other countries, including Iran, as well as Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, have joined this alliance. For the moment, in practical terms, this is the main opposition to U.S. imperialist hegemony. It poses an enormous problem for U.S. imperialism.

The bases for this alliance are complex and fluid, but most essentially this alliance reflects a worldwide geo-political sea change. That change is the crumbling of the U.S. imperialist empire and the rise of China. Obviously, the social and political characters of the countries in this alliance are different. Therefore, the BRICS alliance must not be considered an example of working-class internationalism.

The existence of this alliance impacts the global class struggle, but it is not based on class unity or class struggle.

BRICS is based on curtailing U.S. imperialist hegemony, especially in relationship to the Global South, but also China, Russia and other countries. In a sense, this alliance is temporarily filling that vacuum created by the inability of the world's working class, as of yet, to be strong enough to occupy the position of the main opposition to U.S. imperialism and capitalism in general.

BRICS is important to countries like Iran and Venezuela, etc., because it partially shields them from being isolated in relation to U.S. imperialism. This is of particular importance to China as the danger of war grows.

### Is the role of the working class in the United States unique?

The relationship between the working class in the U.S. and the workers and the oppressed in every other part of the world is dialectical. The struggle all over the world has the effect of weakening U.S. imperialism, which in turn creates the basis for greater revolutionary consciousness and ultimately revolutionary class struggle at the center.

In this context, it becomes important for the working class and the politically advanced forces in the U.S. to understand their responsibility to the workers and oppressed everywhere.

A century ago, Lenin believed that ultimately the

*Continued on page 9*





# needed in 2024

Continued from page 8

development and struggle emanating from the working class in the U.S. would decide the fate of the world revolution. The world has changed over the past century, and Lenin's view may be debatable. We would still argue that Lenin's assessment remains essentially correct.

## Why trade unionism cannot be the only form of class organization

From a revolutionary Marxist perspective, one of the biggest misconceptions about the working class is that the trade union movement is not only the main and preferred form of working class organization, but the ONLY form of worker organization.

Most socialist groups and forces, including relatively revolutionary forces, have succumbed to this misconception. This misconception fortifies the idea that the best that the working class can hope for is the ability to negotiate the conditions of its exploitation with the capitalist class.

It presupposes that since revolutionary class consciousness, internationalism and the struggle for socialist revolution are beyond the aims of trade unionism, then these goals are more or less permanently off the table of the class struggle.

It also promotes the false idea that there are finite limitations to the political development of the working class, including the right and the necessity for the working class to engage in political struggle independent of the capitalist ruling class. The class struggle is not only a struggle for economic demands; it is a political struggle and ultimately a political struggle for power. The trade unions are part of the political struggle, but they are not capable of manifesting its full potential.

The contradictions of the trade unions do not in any way alter the need to support them.

And help build them. Without them, the working class would be left defenseless. Still, it is important to raise the limitations of trade unions because — especially now in the wake of the heightened magnitude of the world capitalist crisis — any barriers to the political development of the working class must be identified and overcome. But this does not mean that it's time to turn away from the union movement.

To the contrary, sharpening a class orientation would require turning even more towards the labor movement, with a refined political strategy for influencing union workers' labor struggles and the internal union struggles. It's important for communists to be in the union movement as strongly as possible. However, many changes have to significantly diminish the barriers that labor bureaucrats have erected in order to keep radical ideas out.

Actually, in some instances, it may even be easier to influence rank-and-file workers as well as union leadership structures from the outside where one's politics and initiatives can't be suppressed by those in the trade unions who might be inclined to do that.

Again, the struggle for class consciousness is more critical now than ever. The last few years have opened the road forward for the working class. The intervention of radical young workers into the organizing drives at Amazon, Starbucks and many other companies marks the beginning of a sea change in the transformation of the workers' movement. The big workers strikes and the changes in the leadership of several big trade unions are also evidence of transformation.

There was an anticipation and hope that the initiatives of Amazon, Starbucks and many other workers would be decisive to the formation of a big, radical wing of the workers' movement that in turn would accelerate the radical transformation of the workers' movement.

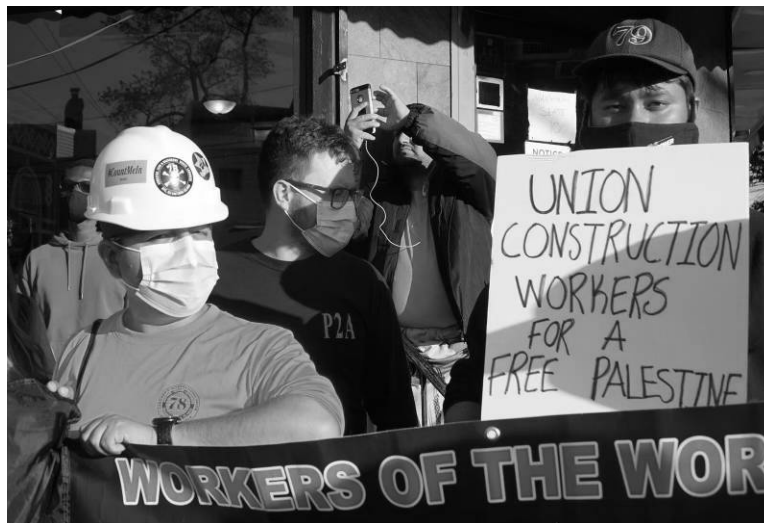
The full scope of my expectations may have been a bit premature; however, the transformation is underway, and it's going to reach a level that will raise the class consciousness of tens of millions of workers. But the struggle for class consciousness is still going to require the most advanced forces in the working class, like us, actively leading the way.

There's a reason why Starbucks and Trader Joe's and more and more companies call the workers they exploit "associates." It is part of the war against class consciousness. There's a reason why workers are not only thrown

into competition for jobs but also constantly reminded that they must compete with workers somewhere else, either in another country or in a nearby town or city.

There's a reason why women in general are paid between 20% to 25% less than men. Women workers of color are paid even less due to national oppression along with sexism. In actuality, there are a number of reasons for this. Apart from maximizing exploitation and profits, it is to divide the working class and suppress class consciousness.

Historically, with some notable exceptions, the prevailing tendency in the trade union movement has been to play into the divisive machinations of the ruling class. Unless something is missing, it seems as though most of the labor movement has all but abandoned migrant workers at a time when the war against migrant workers is the most dangerous threat to class solidarity.



Construction workers at a protest for Palestine in the Bronx, New York City, organized by Within Our Lifetime.

This has a devastating impact on classwide consciousness. Of course, this is not to ignore that unions are changing. Union workers are pushing back against the ingrained culture in unions to compete with each other and limit their obligations to their own members and even more so to the Democratic Party.

Today, unions are more inclined to actively support the struggles of workers in different unions, different industries and different locations. This tendency is vital, and it must expand; otherwise, capitalism will continue to benefit from the fragmentation of the working class.

The tendency towards wider concrete workers' solidarity has not yet reached the level of a sea change. But it is another symptom of how the working-class movement is undergoing a transformation to a more inclusive and radical stage.

## Labor and Palestine: The transformation of the working class is underway

It seems that the level of trade union response to the genocide in Gaza is impressive and unprecedented, considering not so long ago, trade unionists might hesitate before saying anything at a union meeting in solidarity with the Palestinian freedom struggle.

The unions, with perhaps a few exceptions, are not announcing support for the Palestinian resistance. They are responding to the genocide, destruction and ethnic cleansing that the U.S. government and Israel are perpetrating on Gaza. Their demand is for a cease-fire, which while hardly revolutionary, objectively helps the Palestinian resistance. But the response from labor is a big breakthrough.

Labor's response reflects the social character of the global outpouring against Zionism and genocide, which is generally young workers of all nationalities. This is a sign that underneath there is a powerful yearning in the working class to break with U.S. imperialism, move in the direction of internationalism.

Organic developments are strengthening class consciousness and internationalism in the trade union movement. It may be that some of the radical movement needs to catch up with this tremendously consequential process.

If the working-class orientation of the movement is not as strong as it needs to be, there are other ideas that can fill the void left by such a weakness, ideas that



tend not to strengthen class consciousness.

The transformation of the working-class movement will pave the way for new developments. What could be a major reflection of this transformation is that it's somewhere between likely and inevitable that in the near future another attempt to form a labor party will be launched that will be more meaningful than prior failed attempts to form a labor party in this country.

The presidential elections this year may postpone this development, but it also may speed it up. The political character of such a party will fall in the general category of social democracy. Critical to the political character of such a development, and of great importance to us, will be the relationship of a new labor party to the Democratic Party. In addition, the degree to which such a party is connected to real workers' struggles and to a section of the working class, especially the most oppressed workers, will be of the utmost importance.

Depending on the political character of such a party, it may be very important for revolutionary forces to enter it in order to fight for revolutionary, anti-imperialist and pro-struggle positions. Such a strategy will be more possible if there is a marked shift in the working-class orientation of the mass movement.

Regarding solidarity with the Palestinian resistance and the working class, many of us were excited to support the organizing drives at Amazon, Starbucks, among migrant workers and elsewhere. That understood, is it any less legitimate or important to organize workers as workers to mobilize in solidarity with Palestine, especially against the imperialist power that makes Israeli genocide possible?

## Fascism and the 2024 elections – What is the main danger?

The prospect of Trump becoming president again, the scary things that he says he will do if elected, the prospect for another Jan. 6, and what will be the reaction to the Trump court cases is going to make discussion of the danger of fascism in 2024 perhaps wider and more serious than it was in 2016.

A section of the ruling class is either deeply concerned that a Trump win will harm their democracy, or they are whipping up that idea in order to frighten people into voting for Biden.

This will require reopening the discussion of all questions related to the development of fascism, such as what is fascism, is a Marxist view of this question still relevant and what should be the response of the movement to this danger?

There are many factors that play into the rise of Trump and the concentration of neo-fascist forces. Among these factors are the social impact on sections of the population of the decline of U.S. imperialism; the Democratic Party's abandonment of the working class; and the decomposition and unraveling of the U.S. ruling class's political establishment and of capitalist society in general.

The main danger facing the workers and the oppressed at this time is that whatever is happening in the ruling class, the petty bourgeoisie, the economy and the world, the workers and oppressed are at the mercy of enemy class interests, because they don't have sufficient vehicles for our class to harness and fight for our own class interests.

The struggle against war and the danger of fascism is a political struggle that is clearly international in scope. For some, even some who consider themselves socialist, the struggle against war and fascism is separate from the working-class struggle. We know that that is not so. But it's not good to merely understand this.

The time has come to develop a strategy that openly makes the struggle against war and fascism a workers' struggle. How do we do that? In 2024, history and the global working class is calling upon all of us to be ready to hear the call to rise to the occasion. □

# U.S., Britain, out of the Red Sea!

U.S. Armed Forces are waging war on Yemen, escalating a conflict in West Asia. However far it may spread, the fire they set can wreak destruction, and invite payback, as these forces did in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria from 2001-2021.

These actions risk a world war. The people of the world, including the working class in the United States, must mobilize to stop it.

The Ansarallah forces in Yemen (called Houthis) have stated publicly that they refuse to submit to U.S. and British intimidation. Millions of people have joined public demonstrations in solidarity with Palestine all over Yemen and the rest of the world. Still, the Pentagon continues bombing Yemen.

To its credit, the South African government has charged Israel with genocide at the International Court of Justice. By presenting those charges, the South African prosecutors have exposed Israel's crimes.

Now, for the majority of the world's people, the Yemeni government, the Ansarallah, has the legal right under international law to block shipping to Israel through the Red Sea. More than that, Ansarallah and any government has a duty

to prevent Israel and its U.S. backers from committing genocide against Gazans.

Those who yearn to halt that slaughter applaud the Yemenis for their courage. Just as they applaud South Africa for bringing the charges, the Malaysian government for barring Israeli shipping from Malaysia's ports and the government of Oman – which borders Yemen – for closing its airspace to U.S. and British planes.

We applaud those in the U.S. who have demonstrated in the streets, rallied at universities, and blocked highways, bridges and tunnels to stop business as usual until the Israelis stop killing Palestinians and Washington stops arming the Zionist regime.

The U.S. government is the executive committee of the U.S. imperialist ruling class. Its decision to expand the war not only inflicts misery on the people of West and Central Asia, but also threatens the working class in the United States.

By bringing the message of this threat to workers in the U.S., we can expose the crimes of

the rulers. We can then expand the anti-war and anti-genocide actions beyond the current movement to broader sections of U.S. workers.

Expanding the movement is necessary, and it is possible. Many people in the U.S. still remember the cost of those wars against Afghanistan and Iraq. The 20 years of grinding occupation. The hundreds of thousands of people dying. Millions of people displaced.

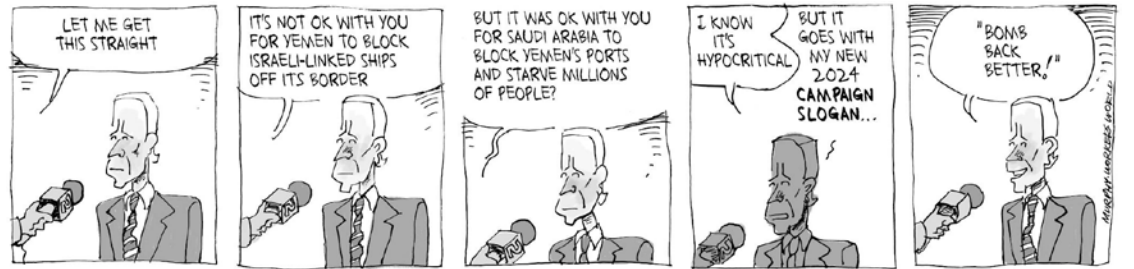
And when the war boomeranged, thousands of U.S. troops were counted among those killed, with tens of thousands wounded. Some \$3 trillion in tax dollars, stolen from the working class, was either spent ravaging West and Central Asia or used to fill the bank vaults of the capitalist merchants of death who own the U.S. weapons corporations.

It is an optimistic sign that unions demand a permanent ceasefire in Gaza. When working people of the Bronx in New York City protest Israel's war against Gaza. When workers at a job action wear keffiyehs in symbolic solidarity with Palestine.

Something is in motion, and we should push it as far as it can go.

To sum up: The U.S. and Israel are the oppressor states and the aggressors in the Red Sea. The Yemenis have every right to shell shipping to stop genocide. And all U.S. workers suffer from Washington's expansion of the war. Yemen is not the enemy of the U.S. working class.

We must reach out to these workers so they join in the demands: Stop bombing Yemen! Stop the genocide in Gaza! Down with the imperialist ruling class! □



# Delegation to Honduras condemns U.S./Canada-backed dictatorship's crimes

*This news release was issued January 10 in Honduras.*

Members of a 10-day U.S./Canada delegation, hosted by the Cross Border Network of Kansas City and the Honduras Solidarity Network of North America, have investigated how their two nations prioritize protecting the political, economic and military interests of their governments and corporations over the rights and interests of the Honduran people.

The delegation visited communities affected by mining and land grabbing, met with labor movement activists and spoke with U.S., Canadian and Honduran officials and found that the continuing poverty, inequality and dispossession of the Honduran people result from the crimes of the narco-dictatorship that ruled Honduras since the U.S.- and Canadian-supported coup in June 2009. Since then, both the U.S. and Canada have covered up and lied about their "democratic" ally [former Honduran President] Juan Orlando Hernandez, who they knew was trafficking drugs for years.

Since the restoration of democracy with the election of Xiomara Castro as

Honduras' first woman president [who took office in January 2022], both countries continue to interfere in the attempts of the Castro government to undo the damage done by the narco-dictatorship or to pass reforms that help to ameliorate the spirit-killing poverty of the majority of the population. Instead, they [U.S and Canada] exacerbate problems.

The delegation found that extractive industries like mining in Guapinol; the loss of sovereignty, as in the CAFTA [Central America Free Trade Agreement]-imposed ISDS [Investor-State Dispute Settlement] tribunal on the \$10.7 billion ZEDE [Employment and Economic Development Zone] Próspera suit against Honduras; the dispossession of campesinos in the Aguan Valley and Garifuna communities along the north coast; and Canada's praise for textile company Gildan, which has closed a factory, violating injured workers' rights, all benefit multinational corporations while failing to solve the deep issues of inequality in Honduras.

These companies benefited economically from the coup and continued doing business to their own profit and benefit under the narco-state.

The U.S. is now seizing the opportunity of the trial of Juan Orlando Hernández (JOH) and his cronies, including the former head of the national police and a family member of Hernandez, to whitewash its own complicity in the narco-dictatorship from 2009 to 2022. It is obvious that those being tried could never have committed the dreadful crimes they are accused of without being enabled by the U.S. and Canada in exchange for favorable treatment for the U.S. military, its drug war and for North American corporations.

For all these reasons, the Honduras Solidarity Network and its members are launching a campaign and will present evidence of the complicity of the two nations during the trial. The campaign will take place before, during and after JOH's trial in New York that begins on February 5.

The campaign demands:

1. The declassification of documents pertaining to U.S. and Canadian involvement in the 2009 Honduran coup and subsequent administrations of Porfirio Lobo and JOH. This includes detailed information about DEA [Drug Enforcement Agency] operations in Honduras and the full extent of U.S. and Canadian support, training and

funding for the Honduran military and police forces.

2. Congressional and Parliamentary investigations or inquiries of U.S. and Canadian support for the 2009 coup and post-coup governments, including human rights violations committed by Honduran state forces and whether U.S. and Canadian officials acted negligently and/or lied to cover-up electoral fraud, violence and other abuses during and following the coup.

3. Reparations for the Indigenous victims of the DEA-led Ahuas massacre, in consultation with the victims and their representatives.

4. An immediate end to U.S. opposition to progressive reforms that address the root causes of migrations and that roll back the post-coup policies in Honduras.

5. Drop support for ISDS clauses in trade agreements with Honduras that allow U.S. and foreign companies to sue the Honduran state. This includes claims that arise from odious investments made by U.S. companies under the JOH dictatorship.

Tegucigalpa, MDC, Honduras. □

# Israeli murder of Hamas leader in Lebanon

Workers World Party condemns the heinous assassination of Sheikh Saleh Al-Aroui, deputy head of the Political Bureau of Hamas and founder of the Martyr Izz El-Din Al-Qassam Brigades. Those in the Israeli government and military who ordered the drone strike and those in the U.S. government who have colluded with and armed the Israeli settler state are equally guilty of this latest war crime.

## WWP STATEMENT

Workers World Party urges working-class organizations worldwide to join the protests called by the Palestinian resistance organizations to protest and condemn the assassination.

Resistance News Network described the 57-year-old Aroui's contributions:

"A freed prisoner who spent 18 years in Zionist prisons, Aroui, from Arara in Ramallah, was instrumental in uniting the fields, galvanizing the escalating resistance in the West Bank, and establishing the Shalit prisoner exchange deal in 2011. He leaves behind a legacy of defiance and resilience, and an indelible influence on the regional resistance."

This assassination is first and foremost a tremendous loss for the Palestinian people, including the resistance that he helped found. It is also a loss for revolutionaries around the world and for all whose lives are guided by working-class internationalism. An injury to one is an injury to all. Nevertheless, we are certain Aroui's

martyrdom will deepen the resolve and determination of the Palestinian people's heroic struggle since 1948 to free themselves from the shackles of Zionist apartheid. The Palestinian people must and will win back their ancestral lands, an integral component of self-determination. Reparations must be paid to the Palestinian people.

Aroui's martyrdom will plant more seeds for the resistance to grow, both now and in the future, against all forms of imperialist plunder and occupation.

A free and sovereign Palestine will be a victory not only for the Palestinian people but also for workers and oppressed peo-



Sheikh Saleh Al-Aroui

ples on the entire planet because it will strike an unprecedented blow against imperialism.

As the dynamic Black Panther Party leader, Fred Hampton, martyred in December 1969 by a police murder, once said, "You can kill a revolutionary but you can't kill the revolution." That quote applies to all those who, like Aroui, have been martyred in the struggle for the liberation of the Palestinian people.

Sheikh Saleh Al-Aroui, rest in power!

With revolutionary solidarity and deep respect,

Larry Holmes  
Workers World Party First Secretary  
United States □

# Dismantling Western hypocrisy on Xinjiang and Gaza

By Arjae Red

*Arjae Red, a union activist and Workers World Party leader, traveled in May 2023 to The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in China's far northwest as part of a WWP delegation along with Workers World contributing editor Sara Flounders, organized by the China – U.S. Solidarity Network*

The movement in the U.S. supporting Palestinian national liberation has drawn truly massive numbers of people in action. On Jan. 13, for example, a reported 400,000 people marched on the White House, marking the largest pro-Palestine demonstration in U.S. history.

To counter this growing outpouring of support for Palestine in the center of world imperialism, Western propagandists are trying to misdirect the popular outrage towards People's China. They are trying to revive the discredited "Uyghur genocide" narrative, making bogus comparisons between the Israeli settler regime's treatment of Palestinians and the treatment of Uyghur people by the Chinese government and Communist Party. A closer look at each situation reveals enormous differences.

## Who do we believe?

The intense propaganda charging "Uyghur genocide," starting in 2016, saturated the U.S. corporate media, quoting statements by U.S.-funded NGOs and U.S. politicians. The statements aimed to slam through heavy sanctions against China.

Following a fact-finding trip to the region, however, a 2019 delegation from the Council of Foreign Ministers — a key decision-making body of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) — endorsed and commended China's treatment of its Muslim citizens ([hongkongfp.com](http://hongkongfp.com), March 3, 2019). With 57 member states, the OIC is one of the largest intergovernmental bodies in the world.

A week after our trip to Xinjiang last year, a large delegation from the League of Arab States, including top official representatives from more than 16 Arab/Muslim countries, visited Xinjiang. In a June 2023 press statement, the delegation praised "the social harmony, economic development, people of all ethnic groups living in harmony in Xinjiang and accelerated progress." They urged caution toward "international forces who smear and even demonize Xinjiang."

No governments in majority-Muslim countries support the U.S. charge of "genocide" of a Muslim minority population in Xinjiang. Meanwhile, these governments publicly criticize U.S.-supported Israeli genocide in Gaza.

## Multinational workers' state vs. Zionist settler colony

Central to the comparison is a class analysis of the social foundation of the states of Israel and the People's Republic of China. Like the United States, Israel was founded as a settler colony, built upon the slaughter and forced removal of Indigenous peoples, theft of their lands and the settlement of a majority European population.

U.S. strategists viewed the Israeli state on Palestine's land mainly as a strategic staging ground for U.S. military and economic domination of West Asia, and thus as a major contributor to the profits of the world imperialist ruling class. They saw Palestinians as an obstacle in the way of their accumulation of these superprofits. To accomplish this conquest, the Israeli state has threatened to appropriate or erase every vestige of Palestinian culture,

including Palestine's history and food.

Israel as a state is thoroughly exploitative, extractive, and oppressive to the core. The state and the settler population, if it subscribes to Zionist ideology, serve the ends of the global imperialist ruling class.

The People's Republic of China, on the other hand, was founded as a multinational workers' state, forged through the overthrow of feudal and capitalist ruling classes and by ousting parasitic forces, such as Japanese and British imperialism. The Chinese Revolution established a state based on the political rule of an alliance between the workers, peasants and other progressive classes, led by the Communist Party.

The Chinese People's Republic inscribed into its political framework regional autonomy for formerly oppressed nationalities, like the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Historic Uyghur cities, such as Ürümqi, which had been renamed "Dihua" (meaning "to civilize") following a 1755 Qing Dynasty invasion, regained their original Uyghur names.

Uyghur culture is widespread and celebrated in today's China, which includes teaching the Uyghur language, as well as the languages of other ethnic populations in the region, in public schools. Before the Chinese Revolution, these languages were suppressed.

The People's Republic is thoroughly multinational, based on the political rule of the working class and guided by the Communist Party. Its public goals involve developing a socialist economy and maintaining social harmony between ethnicities.

## Israel destroys, China builds

Videos abound of the unmitigated destruction of Gaza by Israeli Occupation Forces. The IOF have bombed and bulldozed entire city blocks to dirt and rubble, razing homes, hospitals and schools.

Over decades, Israel has kept Gaza under a brutal blockade and crushed Palestinian businesses. Now the attacks have left the population without food, water, medicine and electricity.

Rather than destruction and extraction in Xinjiang, Beijing's policies promote development. Major infrastructure projects have built housing, schools, hospitals and high-speed public transport. These projects outdo anything U.S. business or government projects have done on U.S. territory.

Uyghur and other ethnic minorities enjoy government grants and other affirmative action programs in education and job opportunities, which enable them to establish their own thriving businesses and fully participate in the vibrant Chinese economy. All of this has gradually reduced the wealth and development gap between the Western Xinjiang region and the eastern coastal region of China, where, historically, all of the heavy industry was concentrated.

Xinjiang experiences no economic blockade except what U.S. policies impose. The Chinese government ensures that the basic needs of the people are met. During the COVID-19 outbreak, for example, Communist Party organizations delivered food and other supplies to Uyghur communities.

## BDS against Israel vs. U.S. sanctions on Xinjiang

A global movement calling for boycotts, divestments, and sanctions against Israeli businesses complicit in the genocide of Palestinians emerged as a way to pressure

Israel to stop. The BDS movement appeals to progressives around the world to cease financial support for the Zionist colonial project.

Washington has appropriated some of the progressive rhetoric used by the BDS campaign and weaponized it against China. U.S. officials claim its sanctions against Xinjiang punish China for the alleged genocide of the Uyghur people.

Yet the U.S. sanctions are based on the false assumption that all products exported from Xinjiang may be made with slave labor. This means that businesses in Xinjiang need to jump through hoops to prove they aren't using slave labor. Only then can they bypass the sanctions and access the international market. The U.S. sanctions thus harm Xinjiang's local econ-

omachete attacks at bus stops, marketplaces and airports.

Anti-imperialist forces can be in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for sovereignty, while at the same time remaining skeptical of U.S. attempts to destabilize China with something that masquerades as a popular movement for self-determination. Anyone who still has questions, however, can compare the contrasting responses of the Israeli and Chinese governments to their respective situations.

## Israel's anti-popular response

In its announced efforts to destroy Hamas, Israel has made no attempt to differentiate between combatants and civilians. Every adult, every child in Gaza, is a target of Israel's so-called "anti terror" massacres. Israel's disregard for all Palestinian life is well known worldwide and deeply understood by Palestinians.

China's approach to eliminating attacks by separatist forces that harm (mostly Uyghur) civilians has been different. It's true that, during a period of time, increased police presence was necessary to prevent unpredictable public attacks. However, the government knows that people who have access to good education, job opportunities and have their basic needs met are less likely to commit crimes and less susceptible to being recruited by separatist extremist organizations.

Thus, the Chinese government took steps to create jobs, vocational training centers, and to develop the region through infrastructure projects and assis-

tance for small businesses. Poverty alleviation is the number one method for solving violence in Xinjiang — and it has worked. Over the last two decades, political and religious violence in Xinjiang has now been nearly eliminated, and Xinjiang is well on its way to being economically caught up with the rest of the country.

## Drawing a line for the anti-imperialist movement

It is critical that organizers against imperialism and supporters of decolonial movements around the world have a clear and sober assessment of developments in each country and the forces behind them. We have a responsibility to engage with these struggles in a deeper way and not just take the narratives at face value.

The forces that accuse China of genocide against Uyghur people are the same that arm and fund Israel's actual genocide of the Palestinian people, and who profit from it. We cannot separate this fact from reality, no matter how the corporate media and CIA/NED-funded "human rights" groups try to conflate the situations.

The U.S. empire, which, in its development, massacred and forcibly removed Indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans, and currently arms the Israeli genocide of Palestine, has absolutely no credibility to charge China with human rights abuses against Uyghurs. Washington has never been on the right side of history in an anti-colonial struggle.

We must continue to say: Free Palestine from the river to the sea! U.S. hands off China!

*For the author's June 9, 2023, article about the trip to Xinjiang, see: [workers.org/2023/06/71505](http://workers.org/2023/06/71505).*



Statue of Chairman Mao Zedong in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Red banner reads: 'Forge ahead on a new journey and build a new era.'

WW PHOTO: ARJAE RED

omy, of which a large portion is Uyghur-owned businesses and farms, many of them small family businesses.

BDS targets the oppressor nation's corporations. U.S. sanctions harm the Uyghur people themselves, with a two-fold intent:

1. Disrupt the development of China's Belt and Road Initiative. The BRI would integrate Xinjiang's economy as a key region into the national and international market;
2. Cause economic hardship for the local population, which would further exacerbate inequality, ethnic and cultural divisions, and create political instability and lack of trust in the Chinese government to effectively develop the region.

## Palestinian self-determination vs U.S.-promoted Uyghur separatism

The Palestinian movement for self-determination is a mass movement with broad support from people within historic Palestine and from the diaspora, originating organically as a response to Israeli colonial occupation.

The Uyghur separatist movement, on the other hand, is primarily pushed by U.S.-based anti-China think tanks and NGOs, usually with millions of dollars of U.S. funding and full support from the State Department and corporate media.

There is no evidence that the Uyghur separatist forces, represented mostly in the diaspora and many based in Washington D.C., represent the views of the millions of Uyghurs living in Xinjiang. Only a small minority of Uyghur people in Xinjiang have fought for separatism. And this has often manifested as a reactionary religious sect that utilizes tactics such as bombings in crowded public places and

**WW COMMENTARIO**

# Acusaciones de violación utilizadas como arma para justificar el genocidio

Por Martha Grevatt

Para justificar linchamientos, el KKK y otros grupos terroristas de supremacía blanca han invocado durante mucho tiempo el estereotipo racista de que los hombres negros como violadores. Esto incluye a Emmett Till, de 14 años, en 1955, cuyo supuesto delito fue silbar a una mujer blanca en Money, Mississippi. El Estado capitalista ha hecho lo mismo. Los acusados de Scottsboro, nueve adolescentes afroamericanos de Alabama falsamente acusados de violar a una mujer blanca en 1931, languidecieron en prisión durante años hasta que un movimiento mundial los liberó.

La instrumentalización de estereotipos racistas no es sólo cosa del pasado. En múltiples ocasiones, incluso durante su campaña presidencial en 2015 y más recientemente en 2021, el ex presidente Donald Trump calumnió a los inmigrantes mexicanos indocumentados como “asesinos y violadores.”

Ahora estamos viendo la misma táctica empleada contra la resistencia palestina, más concretamente contra Hamás, Movimiento de Resistencia Islámica. Esta vez el llamado “liberal” New York Times ha puesto las acusaciones, publicadas por primera vez el 28 de diciembre, en la portada de su edición dominical del 31 de diciembre. El Times afirma haber “investigado” afirmaciones que se hicieron a principios de este año - afirmaciones que Electronic Intifada desacreditó en un video publicado el 4 de diciembre.

Estableciendo un paralelismo con el uso histórico de estereotipos racistas en Estados Unidos, Electronic Intifada afirma: “Existe una dinámica similar e igualmente siniestra en la propaganda israelí dirigida ahora contra los palestinos. Su propósito es demonizarlos y ablandar a la opinión pública para que tolere o apoye el genocidio en curso que comete Israel en Gaza”.

Las acusaciones de violación ya fueron ampliamente promovidas por los medios de comunicación estadounidenses e israelíes, entre ellos CNN y Haaretz, antes de la falsa investigación del Times. Ninguna de las fuentes contaba con testimonios de primera mano de supervivientes de las supuestas violaciones masivas y no había ninguna prueba forense.

Sólo unos pocos individuos afirman haber observado agresiones sexuales después de que las Fuerzas de Ocupación israelíes supuestamente recopilaban más de 1.000

testimonios y 60.000 videos. Esto pone en duda la acusación de que las violaciones masivas eran de algún modo una política oficial de la resistencia.

## El supuesto experto

CNN y Haaretz, y ahora el Times, han promocionado a la Dra. Cochav Elkayam-Levy, a quien el diario israelí describe como académica feminista y experta internacional en derechos humanos que dirige una “comisión independiente” que investiga las supuestas violaciones masivas del 7 de octubre. Aparece en un artículo del 1 de diciembre con un titular que afirma que ha recogido “testimonio tras testimonio” de tales atrocidades. Sin embargo, Haaretz no cita ni un solo testimonio real de supervivientes.

En Haaretz, Elkayam-Levy cita como prueba el testimonio coaccionado de dos combatientes de la resistencia capturados, proporcionado por la fuerza policial israelí Shin Bet, que emplea habitualmente la tortura, incluida la violación, para obtener confesiones. Elkayam-Levy incluso ofreció como “prueba” fotográfica una foto que en realidad fue tomada en mayo de 2023 de una niña kurda fuera de Palestina.

Elkayam-Levy no es quien CNN, Haaretz y The Times afirman que es. Como señaló Mondoweiss tras el reportaje de la CNN, “es de hecho una experta, pero no en derecho de los derechos humanos”. En sus cargos anteriores, incluido un puesto para la Oficina del Fiscal General del gobierno israelí en el Departamento de Derecho Internacional, proporcionó la justificación legal para que los funcionarios israelíes cometieran violaciones de los

derechos humanos contra los palestinos.

“Anteriormente había publicado una ‘Guía para la elaboración de políticas, funcionarios gubernamentales y asesores jurídicos en la gestión de huelgas de hambre’. Allí, ella proveyó un manual legal detallado para la ‘estandarización a través de la legislación y regulación’ para la alimentación forzada - un brutal acto de tortura usado para quebrar prisioneros políticos.”

Además, Elkayam-Levy es ex miembro de la Unidad de Portavoces de las Fuerzas de Ocupación de Israel. (mondoweiss.net 1 de diciembre de 2023)

No hay nada sustancialmente nuevo en el último artículo de 3.500 palabras del New York Times. Las mentiras denunciadas anteriormente son básicamente regurgitadas y presentadas como una “investigación”. El prominente artículo no es más que propaganda unilateral destinada a justificar el genocidio estadounidense/israelí.

## Israel condona la violencia sexual contra los palestinos

En contraste con las fabricaciones de Israel está su práctica -que se remonta a su creación- de permitir la violación de palestinos. Las mujeres palestinas fueron violadas y asesinadas durante múltiples masacres, y el miedo a ser violadas fue una de las tácticas utilizadas para desplazar a 750.000 palestinos en 1948.

En las cárceles israelíes se cometen violaciones y otras formas de violencia sexual y tortura, a veces con el objetivo de forzar una confesión. Se calcula que hay 8.000 presos palestinos entre rejas, la mayoría de ellos no acusados de ningún delito. Los hombres capturados por las IOF desde el 7 de octubre han sido obligados a desnudarse y ser fotografiados, un acto de extrema humillación y degradación.

En 2002, el rabino Eyal Karim hizo la escandalosa declaración de que era permisible para los soldados “satisfacer la inclinación al mal acostándose con atractivas mujeres gentiles [es decir, palestinas] en contra de su voluntad, por consideración a las dificultades a las que se enfrentan los soldados y por el éxito general.” (Mondoweiss.net 8 de agosto de 2022)

En 2016, fue nombrado rabino coronel del Rabinato Militar israelí, o rabino jefe de las IOF, cargo que sigue ocupando en la actualidad. Opiniones similares fueron expresadas por el destacado rabino Shmuel Elyahu y el destacado profesor Mordechai Kedar de la Universidad Bar-Ilan en 2002.

La tasa de violaciones denunciadas dentro de Israel ha aumentado un 30% desde 2015, y la gran mayoría de los casos se cierran sin cargos. El porcentaje de mujeres que denuncian violaciones en Gaza, en cambio, es extremadamente bajo.



**La mayoría de las sobrevivientes de violación no tienen testigos presenciales de su sufrimiento, pero la gran mayoría de los acusadores dicen la verdad. ... Sin embargo, es necesario reconocer que hay situaciones reales en las que los racistas y los propagandistas de la guerra inventan acusaciones.**



Marcha de mujeres por Palestina, Yakarta, Indonesia, 15 de octubre de 2023.