

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

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Portland vigil for Aaron Bushnell

Veterans protest genocide, burn uniforms

By Lyn Neeley
Portland, Oregon

Aaron Bushnell, the 25-year-old U.S. Air Force soldier who self-immolated in front of the Israeli Consulate in Washington, D.C. to protest the U.S. military role in the Israeli genocide in Gaza, has inspired millions of people around the world for his sacrifice — from Yemen to Malaysia to Palestine to right here in the U.S.

Despite rain, a crowd of Portlanders holding candles gathered to hear anti-war speakers and cheer as U.S. veterans burned their military uniforms on Feb. 28. The protest was to honor Aaron Bushnell and to oppose the U.S.-Israeli imperialist war on Gaza. There was international coverage of the uniform-burning, which was organized by About Face Veterans Against the War.

Johnnie Lewis, a member of Workers World Party and a Vietnam war resister, got a passionate response from the crowd of nearly all young people, while



Johnnie Lewis addresses the Aaron Bushnell memorial demonstration in Portland, Oregon, where veterans burned their military uniforms, Feb. 28, 2024.

addressing them: “In 1967 I was 22. I was drafted into the U.S. army but refused to go. The FBI arrested me and threatened to send me to jail for three years. At the time, there were hundreds of thousands of young men who were resisting the

draft, many of whom went to prison.

“While at an anti-war conference at the University of Kentucky, I met members of the American Servicemen’s Union. They were in their military uniforms talking about organizing against the war within

the army. And I thought, ‘what the hell, I’m going to do that too instead of going to prison!’

“There was a huge anti-war movement, and military prisons during that time were full of soldiers. Anti-war service members who were put into the Fort Dix stockade in New Jersey burned the jail down in June of 1969. While at Fort Dix, I wrote for and helped distribute the ASU newspaper, ‘The Bond.’ It was read by military men at Fort Dix and circulated around the world wherever there was a base or Navy ship, including inside Vietnam.”

Lewis asked the crowd: “Millions upon millions of young men were drafted. Can you imagine a draft today?” There was a resounding, unanimous “No!”

Concluded Lewis: “Young people today want the U.S. out of Gaza. We in the military in the late 1960s and early 1970s were a factor in ending the Vietnam war. The undying Vietnamese resistance was the main factor resisting U.S. imperialism, just like the Palestinians are today.”

Long live the Palestinian resistance! □

Pressured by union drive, BDS campaign, Starbucks agrees to negotiations

By Arjae Red
Buffalo, New York

Starbucks Workers United, which represents workers in 380 Starbucks stores, announced a major victory on Feb. 27. The gains include a series of benefits that the

company formerly withheld from unionized stores, namely the implementation of credit card tipping and wage increases. To allow benefits in non-union stores while withholding them from union locations is an illegal Unfair Labor Practice.

The union also announced the

company’s agreement to a framework for bargaining a contract. Up until now, the company had refused to negotiate, opting instead to stonewall talks and increase pressure against the union.

Credit card tipping was a very popular demand among workers who were fighting for the union. The pressure the union was able to exert against the company caused Starbucks to implement credit card tipping for non-union stores in the first place. It is an example of the tangible benefits gained, even before bargaining, because the workers exercised their collective power.

Whether Starbucks begins bargaining in good faith, or if this is just another delay tactic, remains to be seen. But these victories over raises and credit card tipping are substantial by themselves, and the company knows the workers are willing to keep fighting to ensure contract negotiations commence as promised.

First organized in 2021

Starbucks Workers United (SBWU) organized its first stores in Buffalo, New York, in 2021 and has continued growing since. The union has won elections at nearly 400 stores across the country, with many more still fighting for recognition.

SBWU has been able to lead successful large-scale strikes encompassing hundreds of stores, including on Red Cup Day, which is one of the biggest days each year for in-store sales, and the Pride strike, when workers shut stores down in support of trans workers who faced retaliation for their union organizing.

It wasn’t a change of heart among management that brought these gains, nor the National Labor Relations Board rulings on thousands of Unfair Labor Practice charges workers brought. The credit lies in the determined effort of the workers to organize and to muster support from sympathetic customers. This is only the beginning of what workers can achieve by banding together in their common working-class interests.

Impact of genocidal war

These developments take place amid a massive worldwide boycott of Starbucks, protesting the company’s role supporting genocide against Palestine. Starbucks lost billions of dollars from reduced sales, partly due to the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which names Starbucks on its list of companies complicit in Zionist apartheid.

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PHOTO: STARBUCKS WORKERS UNITED

National Day of Action Feb. 22, across 25 college campuses, supports Starbucks Workers United. Workers and community members made the connection between the struggle of the Starbucks baristas and Palestinian liberation.

Gen. Austin threatens war with Russia

The Biden administration faces two big problems regarding the war it provoked in Ukraine by expanding NATO to Russia's border.

The first is the collapse of the Ukrainian military under the pressure of the Russian military. The second is its inability to get additional funding from the U.S. Congress for Ukraine based on internal conflict with the Republican Party. Behind this resistance is the hostility to this war from much of the U.S. population.

Defense Secretary Gen. Lloyd Austin voiced the administration's response to these problems as February ended, telling Congress: "If Ukraine falls, I really believe that NATO will be in a fight with Russia." (Newsweek, Feb. 29)

That is a war threat. In decades of fighting against imperialist war, we have often written editorials that made the point: "Imperialist officials talk peace, make war." When they threaten war, however, they don't make peace.

Even if Gen. Austin's sole objective was to pressure Congress into allocating another \$80 billion to arm Ukraine, his statement threatens Russia. He's telling Moscow: "You win the war with Kiev, and you'll be fighting NATO."

The U.S.-led military alliance, NATO, since 1999 has attacked and destroyed Yugoslavia and Libya. NATO helped occupy Iraq and Afghanistan. NATO recently added Sweden and Finland as members. Finland has an

832-mile border with Russia.

To increase the weight of this threat to Russia, French President Emmanuel Macron, speaking publicly, refused to rule out sending ground troops from NATO into Ukraine. Later, when pressed by reporters' questions, he defended this statement.

To show that he took the threat seriously, Russian President Vladimir Putin reminded his NATO adversaries that Russia possesses nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

So far U.S. strategists have sabotaged any attempts by the Russian and Ukrainian governments to end the war through negotiations. Washington has appeared satisfied with using Ukrainian youths as cannon fodder, sending tens of thousands of them to die in the hope of weakening Russia. But now the well of sacrifice in Ukraine has dried up.

Do Macron and Biden plan to send Romanian, Bulgarian, Latvian and Lithuanian troops to fight Russia? Or are they really considering sending Swedish, Finnish, French, German and Italian youths or U.S. youths? Does Gen. Austin believe he can order U.S. troops into a war with Russia without inciting a rebellion in the United States — including among those troops?

We remind Austin, Biden and Co. that hundreds of thousands of young people inside the U.S. consider the current administration complicit with Israel's genocidal war on Gaza. Young veterans have burned their medals and uniforms in solidarity with Aaron Bushnell, whose heroic sacrifice focused attention on the U.S. military's role in genocide.

We in Workers World can counter Gen. Austin's predictions. If Biden orders U.S. youths into a war with Russia, we predict widespread resistance among the working class will challenge these orders. The young people who already consider this administration criminal will lead that resistance, and it will spread to the U.S. military.

It is up to the anti-war movement in the U.S. to prepare for that challenge. □

WORKERS WORLD editorial



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

"By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity."

— Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009; Foreign Minister, Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

Free PDF download available at workers.org/books

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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FOTO: VENEZUELANALYSIS.COM
Manifestación en solidaridad con Palestina.
Caracas, Venezuela, 2 de marzo, 2024.

El sacrificio de Aaron Bushnell

Por Bronx Anti-War Coalition

Workers World/Mundo Obrero se solidariza plenamente con esta declaración.

1. “¡PALESTINA LIBRE!” fueron sus últimas palabras y su motivación – esto debe centrarse siempre.

Las últimas palabras de Aaron Bushnell, “¡Liberad Palestina!” encapsulan tanto su último aliento como su fuerza motriz. Es imperativo que este mensaje permanezca en primer plano. El hecho de que un soldado estadounidense tenga que recurrir a medidas tan extremas para arrojar luz sobre los crímenes del imperialismo estadounidense no debe normalizarse. Un acto así puede desencadenar una lucha de masas con objetivos revolucionarios.

Le debemos a Aaron Bushnell salvaguardar la integridad de su mensaje amplificando las voces de la resistencia palestina, que ya ha reconocido su contribución.

Cada vez más personas se verán afectadas por el acto de este soldado. La resistencia palestina -en todas sus formas y de todas las naciones- también debe ser abierta y vocalmente apoyada y abrazada de la misma manera y por las mismas personas que ahora están -o que estarán- asombradas por el acto de resistencia de Aaron Bushnell.

2. Dale a los luchadores de la resistencia la misma energía que le estás dando a Aaron Bushnell.

Lo que Bushnell se comprometió a hacer -el autosacrificio por una causa mayor- es lo que los combatientes de la resistencia palestinos, árabes e islámicos han hecho durante décadas para liberar a Palestina y al mundo del sionismo. Los combatientes de la resistencia palestina merecen el mismo honor y reconocimiento que Aaron Bushnell.

Cada día, los combatientes de la resistencia arriesgan sus vidas y mueren como mártires luchando contra la ocupación sionista. Los palestinos de la resistencia se enfrentan desinteresadamente a tanques sionistas, francotiradores y frentes de batalla, enfrentándose a un ejército mucho mejor equipado, esperando una escasa posibilidad de sobrevivir, pero haciéndolo para defender a sus familias, su pueblo y su tierra.

Bushnell se quemó vivo para llamar la atención



sobre el martirio y la lucha del pueblo palestino. Está inmortalizado como defensor de los valores humanitarios y de la difícil situación del pueblo palestino oprimido, pero reconozcamos también a los mártires que le precedieron. Ahora continuamos la lucha y volvemos nuestros ojos a la resistencia con renovado vigor y claridad de objetivos.

3. Un soldado estadounidense prendiéndose fuego para protestar por un genocidio que Estados Unidos está perpetrando es un golpe duro para el imperialismo.

La declaración de Aaron Bushnell de que “ya no será cómplice del genocidio” subraya un punto crucial: no estaba protestando por “la guerra de otro país”, sino por el papel directo de Estados Unidos no sólo en la financiación del genocidio, sino en su orquestación activa.

El mes pasado, se reveló que la administración Biden envió oficiales de la Fuerza Aérea de Estados Unidos para ayudar a la Fuerza de Ocupación israelí a atacar en Gaza, implicando directamente al Pentágono en las acciones de la IOF. Las órdenes para que miembros de la Fuerza Aérea como Bushnell se desplegaran en la Palestina ocupada fueron calificadas de “obligatorias”.

Al obligar a Bushnell y a otros a participar, el ejército estadounidense lo mató de hecho, redirigiendo su juramento de “defender” hacia la ayuda al genocidio. Cada miembro en servicio activo del ejército estadounidense está siendo forzado a la complicidad en el genocidio, como los soldados de un ejército nazi.

Deben aprender que este crimen sólo sirve a la clase imperialista multimillonaria a la que sirve el Pentágono. El movimiento debe explicar esto.

Los actos de abnegación a menudo encienden movimientos mayores que implican la acción de masas y pueden desbaratar directamente la máquina de matanza militar. Que el sacrificio de Bushnell sea una llamada a la acción para que más personal estadounidense en servicio activo rechace el imperialismo, y que su memoria y los crímenes estadounidenses persigan a todos los que permanecen en silencio o son cómplices del genocidio en Gaza.

4. Aaron Bushnell hizo el último sacrificio para combatir el último crimen.

La autoinmolación no es un suicidio ni una manifestación de enfermedad mental. Por el contrario, es el reflejo de una sociedad profundamente enferma arraigada en políticas profundamente defectuosas, no el reflejo del estado mental de un individuo. Los mismos individuos que aprueban la inanición y el bombardeo de niños en Gaza pretenden presentar a quienes se oponen a tales atrocidades como mentalmente inestables.

Aaron Bushnell hizo el último sacrificio para combatir el último crimen. En contra de la idea de que la enfermedad mental implica un distanciamiento de la realidad, el último mensaje de Bushnell en Facebook y su vídeo introductorio demuestran una aguda conciencia de las sombrías realidades que a menudo ocultan las narrativas dominantes. La instrumentalización de una supuesta enfermedad mental es otra táctica deplorable empleada por los sionistas y los medios de comunicación corporativos para perpetuar sus propios delirios.

Lamentamos la pérdida de Aaron Bushnell porque el mundo no puede permitirse perder a personas con tanta conciencia moral.

Aaron Bushnell, estás en el corazón de todas las personas libres del mundo.

Este es un buen momento para recordar a todos los que hablan sobre Aaron Bushnell y el genocidio en curso en Gaza que la mejor fuente de información es directamente de la resistencia palestina sobre el terreno y del campo más amplio de la resistencia.

Sigue a Resistance News Network en Telegram: <https://t.me/palestineresist>.

¡Viva la resistencia! ¡Viva Palestina! □

Pressured by union drive, BDS campaign, Starbucks agrees to negotiations

Continued from page 1

Some countries, like Morocco, have experienced mass closures of Starbucks stores. While Starbucks denies that the boycott propelled the closures, it has undoubtedly reduced the company's profits, especially in Africa and the Middle East.

Management is now fighting a class war on two fronts. On the home front, it attempts to crush the union movement and curtail the expansion of the workers' organizing. On the international front, it

tries to ride out the storm brought on by the boycott.

Organizing works!

Starbucks corporate managers are making their own calculations about where they can relieve pressure. It is possible that the decision to work out an agreement with the union is partially motivated by a desire to close the war on the domestic front and focus its resources elsewhere.

One thing is absolutely clear: Both the militant grassroots organizing of U.S.

Starbucks workers and the mass boycott initiated by the global Palestinian solidarity movement have impacted Starbucks. Organizing works!

Working-class and oppressed people hold the true power, and when they come together to realize this in collective action, they can win benefits that would otherwise be impossible.

Starbucks Workers United came out strongly in support of Palestine immediately after October 7 and has subsequently issued some of the most principled state-

ments in solidarity with Palestine of all U.S. labor unions. The union movement and the Palestine solidarity movement are two manifestations of the global class struggle, and both movements have everything to gain from their united actions.

The author is a former Starbucks worker and helped organize the first unionized Starbucks in Buffalo, New York, and has also been active in the Buffalo movement to support the liberation of Palestine.