

History will record

Israel committed a holocaust

By Susan Abulhawa

The following article first appeared in the Electronic Intifada, March 6, 2023.

It's 8 p.m. in Gaza, Palestine, right now, the end of my fourth day in Rafah and the first moment I've had to sit in a quiet place to reflect.

I've tried to take notes, photos, mental images, but this moment is too big for a notepad or my struggling memory. Nothing prepared me for what I would witness.

Before I made it across the Rafah-Egypt border, I read every bit of news coming out of Gaza or about Gaza. I did not look away from any video or image posted from the ground, no matter how gruesome, shocking or traumatizing.

I kept in touch with friends who reported on their situations in the north, middle and south of Gaza — each area suffering in different ways. I stayed current on the latest statistics, the latest political, military and economic maneuverings of Israel, the U.S. and the rest of the world.

I thought I understood the situation on the ground. But I didn't.



Protest against Israeli attack on Gaza. Melbourne, Australia, Jan. 4, 2009.

Nothing can truly prepare you for this dystopia. What reaches the rest of the world is a fraction of what I've seen so far, which is only a fraction of this horror's totality.

Gaza is hell. It is an inferno teeming with innocents gasping for air.

But even the air here is scorched. Every breath scratches and sticks to the throat and lungs.

What was once vibrant, colorful, full of beauty, potential and hope against all odds is draped in gray-colored misery and grime.

Barely any trees

Journalists and politicians call it war. The informed and honest call it genocide.

What I see is a holocaust — the incomprehensible culmination of 75 years of Israeli impunity for persistent war crimes.

Rafah is the southernmost part of Gaza, where Israel crammed 1.4 million people into a space the size of London's Heathrow Airport.

Water, food, electricity, fuel and supplies are scarce. Children are without school — their classrooms having been turned into makeshift shelters for tens of thousands of families.

Nearly every inch of previously empty space is now occupied by a flimsy tent sheltering a family.

There are barely any trees left, as people have been forced to cut them down for firewood.

I didn't register the absence of greenery until I happened upon a red bougainvillea. Its flowers were dusty and alone in a deflowered world, but still alive.

The incongruity struck me, and I stopped the car to photograph it.

Now I look for greenery and flowers wherever I go — so far in the southern and middle areas (though the middle increasingly becomes more difficult to enter). But there are only small patches of grass here and there and an occasional tree waiting to be burned to bake bread

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International Workers Day 2024

Make May Day 'Workers for Palestinian Resistance Day'!

In New York City gather at Union Square, E. 14th St & Broadway at 3:00 pm

May Day is everywhere.

Learn more • Sign the call • Add your city [www.workers.org/mayday](http://www.workers.org/mayday)

Why we should make May Day 'Workers for Palestinian Resistance Day'

By Larry Holmes

Workers World Party has issued a call which we invite activists and organizations everywhere to endorse and embrace. The call is to make May 1, International Workers Day, "Workers for Palestinian Resistance Day."

We have issued this call in order to distinguish the need to defend the Palestinian resistance (including their right to fight for liberation by any means necessary), which is at present reorganizing itself and uniting on a wider basis in preparation for raising the liberation struggle to an even higher level.

We are making this call at this decisive moment in the developing world revolt against U.S. imperialism to assert that the way for the working-class movement to reestablish itself on a world basis as the agent of revolutionary transformation is to boldly ally itself with the liberation struggles of the Global South and to mobilize workers toward this objective.

It is time for the working-class movement, especially the most radical and advanced sections of the movement, to consciously and openly take the lead in the struggle to overcome all of the contradictions that have tended to confuse, fragment and paralyze the working class, leaving it at the mercy of reaction and subservience to imperialism.

This call is not meant to counter the many basic demands that are vital to the survival of workers that millions of workers around the world will be marching for on International Workers Day, especially for the defense of migrant workers, who are being scapegoated to divide workers. The call is issued in the spirit of raising the level of May Day, so that its priorities in 2024 correspond to the struggles that are currently reshaping the world struggle.

Class consciousness and global class consciousness, which are the meanings of internationalism, are growing.

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# Honor Palestinian women Support Workers World

In the spirit of International Working Women’s Day, March 8, Workers World newspaper hails women workers and oppressed people in the U.S. and worldwide, especially those under the gun of imperialism. This year we honor our Palestinian comrades — those under siege from U.S.-backed Israeli militarism in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

WW admires their bravery and that of the Palestinian resistance forces. We support the women and girls who have been injured, lost families, housing, denied food, imprisoned, tortured and sexually assaulted by Israeli soldiers. Our newspaper tells the truth about this and exposes U.S. media and Israeli government lies.

WW doesn’t just show solidarity on March 8 or only in March, which Congress proclaimed “Women’s History Month” in 1987. Our articles side with women and LGBTQIA2S+ people within the multinational, multigender global working class and with all oppressed by imperialist war and capitalist exploitation.

WW views “every struggle as a woman’s struggle,” whether for affordable housing, livable-wage jobs, unionization, free medical care, guaranteed reproductive rights, voting rights, a clean environment — or opposing wars. Our paper allies with women whose children have been killed by racist police.

Reactionaries are fiercely attacking reproductive rights and health care. Their goal: a countrywide abortion ban. The unelected Supreme Court majority overturned abortion rights, won by a mass movement. Their dangerous ruling dealt a racist, misogynist and classist blow to



Palestinian women rally on 47th anniversary of Land Day in occupied Palestine, March 30, 2023.

millions. WW hails the struggles for reproductive justice, and calls for a militant, independent mass movement to win back this right.

WW’s articles show solidarity with exploited Black, Latine, Asian, Arab, Indigenous and immigrant women workers. We applaud young women, people of color and LGBTQIA2S+ people fighting to unionize against corporate behemoths.

Socialists have long recognized the only way to fundamentally improve women’s lives is through the anti-capitalist struggle, as propounded by IWW’s European socialist founders in 1910. WW espouses this view and boldly states that socialism is the only system that can ensure real liberation for women, workers and oppressed people here and worldwide.

### WW needs your support!

This pro-worker newspaper depends on our readers’ backing. The WW Supporter Program was launched 47 years ago to help print this socialist newspaper and later fund workers.org, where new articles are posted daily and the weekly paper’s PDF is displayed.

Workers.org contains news and analyses of global and U.S. struggles, bulletins from national liberation movements and articles translated by our staff. Our writer-organizers report on anti-capitalist struggles and people’s movements against racism and war and for the rights of women, workers, migrants, LGBTQIA2S+ and disabled people. The website is a resource for political activists.

While WW’s staff is voluntary, the 12 annually printed issues and the website incur expenses. Although many online publications require payments 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 a year? Contributing \$50 or more will entitle you to receive the 12 print issues a year, email links to articles posted online and, upon request, the book “What road to socialism?”

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

## 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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# 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.

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



PHOTO: STARBUCKS WORKERS UNITED

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

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 statements 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.*

# Make May Day ‘Workers for Palestinian Resistance Day’

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However, the relentless and desperate war waged by U.S. imperialism to divide the workers of the world still gives the capitalist ruling class the upper hand in the class struggle. This is why we need to help bring about a political turning point.

There's been a phenomenal breakthrough in organized labor regarding Palestine. But the leadership of the organized labor movement is not, and should not be, the sole voice of the working class.

In the U.S., at the latest count, nine national labor unions have publicly called for a ceasefire, along with many local and regional labor organizations. Even the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO, which has been fighting the groundswell of support in labor for a permanent ceasefire, finally had to concede to rank-and-file union pressure and issue a call for a ceasefire, albeit a comparatively weak call prefaced with support for genocide in Gaza.

### Consciously mobilizing as workers

At this moment, no one can deny the strategic importance of the unprecedented labor momentum in reaction to both Israel's and the U.S.'s genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza. The momentum in the labor movement needs to be supported and expanded.

However, while the call for a permanent

ceasefire is progressive and helpful, it does not go far enough. Ultimately it is mistaken to consider the pro-ceasefire movement in the labor movement the only way to engage and mobilize workers.

The top leadership of organized labor's ties to the Democratic Party, along with its long history of supporting Israel and U.S. imperialism, are obstacles to the trade union movement fully embracing the liberation struggle in the near future. We must fight to change that. But we must also have an alternative strategy.

The organized labor movement is the largest representative of the interests of

the working class. But at present only 10% of workers are members of labor unions. Growing that percentage is vital to a working-class resurgence. However, the 90% of workers who are not unionized are still workers. And many unorganized workers are the most militant supporters of the Palestinian resistance.

Over the past five months, millions of workers across the world have marched for Palestine. The problem is that with some exceptions, workers taking over the streets for Gaza are not openly and consciously mobilized as workers. While this is understandable for many reasons, it

tends to conceal that the struggle in solidarity with the liberation of Palestine is part of the class struggle.

It also obscures the reality that most of the support for Palestine comes from the working class. Today, and in the long run, it serves the broader interest of working-class internationalism, as well as being consistent with the realities of the modern global working class, to break with old traditions and organize workers on a class basis around critical political struggles.

The fight to organize workers in solidarity with liberation and self-determination should be waged both inside and outside organized labor. Groups such as Labor for Palestine and Health Workers Alliance for Palestine and many others have been doing this with greater and greater success. It is critical that this trend be expanded and draw in more and more workers.

The most oppressed workers in the Global South as well as in the imperialist centers of the West can only come to the realization that workers of the world are their allies in the struggle for liberation and self-determination if action is taken to make this revelation self-evident. Let's make International Workers Day this year help set that direction.

*The writer is First Secretary of Workers World Party.*



Pro-Palestine protest in New York City on March 8, 2024.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

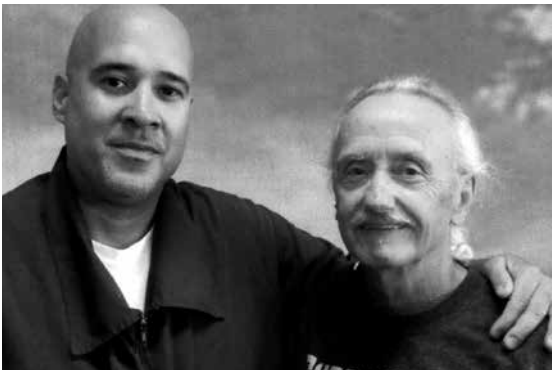


Pennsylvania

# Incarcerees file grievance to reverse illegal punishment

By Joe Piette

An article about the struggle for the rights of people with disabilities within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections system should never have led to punishment for two incarcerated people at the State Correctional Institution at Coal Township. But officials there retaliated for the article by taking its authors, William Rinnick, who is disabled, and jailhouse lawyer, Bryant Arroyo, out of general population and placing them in Administrative Custody (AC).



Bryant Arroyo and Joe Piette at SCI Frackville in 2018.

The article, “Fighting for disability rights behind bars” (Workers World, Jan. 15, 2024), exposed disability rights violations. Following its publication, Arroyo was placed in the Restricted Housing Unit. Because the RHU doesn’t comply with Americans with Disabilities Act regulations, Rinnick was placed in the infirmary.

Under AC status, any rights to “radio, tablet/kiosk access, television, or telephone calls” (except emergency or legal telephone calls) are denied. The loss of tablet use means that the incarcerated person cannot communicate with anyone by email. Calls or video

meetings with friends or loved ones are severely limited. It amounts to isolation. ([tinyurl.com/29red648](https://tinyurl.com/29red648))

Although judges dismissed all three separate charges against Arroyo, he was still punished. Prison officials transferred him to the State Correctional Institute at Pine Grove in western Pennsylvania, hundreds of miles away from his family.

Locked up, shackled, in handcuffs

When Arroyo is allowed to have a Zoom call, he’s locked in a room where the equipment for the virtual call is set up, but he’s kept in handcuffs attached to a leather belt around his waist. He told Workers World, “I’m locked in a room. But I’m still shackled even though they have a wicket where they can take the shackles off. So it’s really kind of awkward that they have me here like this.

“A wicket is just a slit in the door that opens up and you put your hand in it,” Arroyo said. “They have the wicket where they can uncuff me in here, and they can recuff me when they take me back out. So it doesn’t really present a security risk. That’s how they do me when they take me out of my cell. They open up the wicket, they pull my hands out, they cuff me, and then they open up the door, and they put the belt around me. The same thing should apply here.”

Retaliation after winning grievances

Arroyo filed a grievance against his expedited transfer from SCI Coal Township to SCI Pine Grove. His grievance argues that the transfer was “the culmination of a series of retaliatory actions

that have been taken against me as a result of my actions as a whistleblower at SCI Coal Township and SCI Frackville. Those retaliatory actions include misconduct charges filed against me for asking for the recording of a virtual visitation, [which was requested] to make available to the public issues related to the elimination of in-person visitation, and misconduct charges filed against me for the circulation of prisoners’ rights publications and the denial of disability accommodation requests.”

All of these misconduct charges have since been dismissed by hearing examiners. Arroyo argued DOC Administration Regulations ([shorturl.at/bilOV](https://shorturl.at/bilOV)), specifically DOC ADM 009, page 47, number three, states that you cannot be punished for participating in media relations. Furthermore, DOC ADM 804, C, Section N, prohibits retaliation. Even though the misconduct charges were dismissed, he was still punished with a transfer.

Arroyo’s grievance against his improper transfer argues: “All of my misconduct charges were based on my exercise of constitutionally protected First Amendment rights. The transfer to SCI Pine Grove was a retaliatory action in itself, in that it was a transfer from a medium security institution to a maximum-security institution and that it was ordered 48 hours after a third misconduct.

“FO-24172 was filed by the same author who manufactured the first two charges, FO-24154 and FO-24162, on exactly the same grounds after the first two were dismissed without prejudice,” the grievance continues. “And the third charge was dismissed with prejudice. The transfer was intended to unequivocally punish and retaliate against me for

my constitutionally protected exercise of free speech rights.”

Arroyo’s grievance seeks the reimbursement of all fees and postage for his legal filings and for shipping up to five boxes of his papers to SCI Pine Grove and finally to “expedite my transfer back to an institution within the Eastern Region, specifically SCI Phoenix” in Montgomery County.

“Otherwise,” the grievance continued, “I will seek that remedy within the context of my federal lawsuit and seek damages against those that participated in my retaliatory expedited transfer to SCI Pine Grove. I will also include damages for the emotional injuries every waking day and night caused by the separation from my family members and inability to communicate with my family that this transfer has caused me.”

The law library in the RHU at SCI Pine Grove does not have a photocopier. This is an obstacle to filing legal challenges, Arroyo charges, especially for people who would want to contest why they’re being punished in the RHU.

“If someone wants to file a petition to the court, a brief or motion, or write to their lawyer for their legal case, instead of a computer, they are forced to use pen on paper. That alone should be fought, because they’re totally impeding access to their legal rights. and can you imagine elderly and infirm or somebody with arthritis writing with a pen that’s very thin? You could never finish it.”

Arroyo needs funds to continue his lawsuit against the Department of Corrections’ unconstitutional actions. Readers can contribute through JPay.com, entering Bryant Arroyo (CU-1126) when asked. □



# Prisoners sue Alabama, charging ‘modern day slavery’

By Zoe Johnson

A group of current and former inmates sued the state of Alabama on Dec. 12, 2023, challenging the prison convict labor program, which the lawsuit describes as a “modern-day form of slavery.” The Union of Southern Service Workers, a Service Employees Union (SEIU) affiliate, and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union signed on as co-plaintiffs. The lawsuit claims that incarcerated workers “have been entrapped in a system of ‘convict leasing’ in which incarcerated people are forced to work, often for little or no money.” The plaintiffs said their labor has generated massive profits for both private and government entities.

The complaint details the coercive nature of the prison labor programs. According to the prisoners, they “live in a constant danger of being murdered, stabbed, or raped...” Moreover, when inmates refuse to work due to health concerns, they are subjected to solitary confinement and ineligibility for parole. Gov. Kay Ivey, Attorney General Steve Marshall, the head of the Alabama Department of Transportation, and the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC), are all named in this lawsuit.

The lawsuit is seeking changes to the

parole system immediately for folks to be paroled. It asks for back pay for the workers affected and for an end to the system immediately.

Corporations profit from prison labor

The plaintiffs said they are regularly forced by the ADOC to work at McDonald’s, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Wendy’s, Burger King, Anheuser-Busch, auto manufacturers and meat processors. The inmates also work for the cities of Montgomery, Troy, and the Alabama Department of Transportation.

In 2023, the state of Alabama made an estimated \$450 million from the “convict leasing” system. The complaint discloses that most inmates are paid less than the minimum wage. The Department of Corrections takes 40% of the inmates’ total earnings, before taxes, child support, restitution, and other deductions. Furthermore, prisoners are responsible for personal expenses such as meals, transportation to the job and laundry for the job. A 40-hour work week yields less than \$90.

The complaint points out that the prison population in Alabama is disproportionately Black, and that while Black people make up only 26% of the state’s population, they account for 54% of the prison population.

Plaintiffs and local civil rights leaders understand these prison conditions as a continuation of post-Reconstruction era policies, including forced sharecropping. The complaint states that it is “no accident that the people caught in a labor-trafficking scheme are Black,” and that prisoners are “like individuals who were enslaved and forced to work Alabama’s cotton fields, and those forced to participate in the sharecropping and convict leasing schemes that followed the end of the Civil War.”

While the convict leasing system was banned by Alabama in 1928, the tenuous language of state and federal laws regarding the practice mean that prisons still engage in convict leasing. Perhaps the most egregious loophole that United States prisons and corporations utilize to sustain their labor-trafficking schemes is the 13th Amendment, which bans slavery and involuntary servitude “except as a punishment for a crime.”

In 2022, Alabamans voted to remove language in their state constitution that permits slavery as a criminal punishment. Jacob

Morrison and Adam Keller, union members and hosts of the Valley Labor Report, Alabama’s only union radio talk show, discussed the lawsuit as it relates to the larger U.S. labor movement.

Morrison and Keller explained that the state’s inmates have historically been used as a reserve army of laborers that replace free workers attempting to organize. Morrison and Keller revealed that bosses often threaten to displace workers by leasing out convicts for much cheaper. Morrison and Keller responded to criticisms about the workers’ felon status by reiterating that Marx said, “workers of the world unite,” not “some workers unite.”

The trial date has not been set. □



# People with disabilities suffer abuse in prison

By Gloria Rubac

Disabilities. Some people are born with them; others acquire them as they grow older. But if one is a disabled person, particularly a person of color, queer, or an immigrant, and is incarcerated, not only can life be hell behind the razor wire, but incarceration can be a death sentence.

The Prison Policy Initiative says: “People with disabilities are overrepresented at all stages of the criminal legal system, from arresting cops to jails and prisons to probation and parole.” (prisonpolicy.org/research/disability/)

Here are some facts from Prison Policy Initiative:

- 40% of state prisoners have a disability.
- 50% of women in state prisons are disabled.
- 23% of people on parole or probation have disabilities.
- Between 1/3 and 1/2 of people killed by law enforcement have a disability.
- Children with disabilities are 400% more likely to be arrested in elementary school.
- 25% of people in state prison took special education classes.
- Almost half of jails and prisons do not offer any special education classes.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2002, in *Atkins vs. Virginia*, that people with intellectual disabilities are constitutionally barred from receiving the death penalty. But the Supreme Court did not define intellectual disability and left it up to individual states to enforce its decision. The medical community has, in fact, established clinical criteria for intellectual disability, but a number of states have circumvented the court’s ruling by

adopting a more narrow definition.

Georgia has not executed anyone in over four years, but Willie James Pye is scheduled for execution on March 20. Pye has undisputed signs of intellectual disability, diagnosed with an IQ of 68 and a history of learning difficulties. His case is typical of many people incarcerated on death rows in the U.S.

The National Disability Rights Network studies have found that 65% to 70% of youth in the so-called justice system meet the criteria for a disability, a rate that is more than three times higher than that of the general population. At least 75% of youth in the juvenile justice system have experienced traumatic victimization, leaving them at risk for mental health disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder. (ndrn.org/resource/orphanages-now-this-updated/)

### People with mental health disabilities on death row

In 1988, Syed Rabbani, on death row in Texas, challenged the constitutionality of his death sentence. Somehow this appeal was lost for decades until 2022, when the District Clerk’s office in Harris County (Houston) discovered it and forwarded it to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. In November 2023, the district attorney dropped Rabbani’s death sentence, but he will still be confined, with a life sentence with the possibility of parole.

Rabbani is seriously mentally ill and has many other medical conditions that have left him in a vegetative state since early 2022 — conditions that attorneys say were ignored by the prison system staff for decades, including untreated seizures and diabetes.

In September 2023, a federal court ruled that Texas cannot execute Scott

Panetti, who has been repeatedly diagnosed with schizophrenia and paranoid delusions. Panetti has been on death row since 1995. He represented himself at his 1995 trial, wearing a purple cowboy suit, giving rambling presentations and attempting to subpoena former President John F. Kennedy, Jesus Christ and hundreds of other “witnesses.” It is unexplainable how the judge allowed this kind of a trial in his courtroom.

Before allegedly killing his in-laws in 1992, Panetti had been hospitalized 14 times for psychotic behavior. It took decades for the courts to find that this disabled man was so mentally ill that he should not be executed.

Andre Thomas was set to be executed on April 5, 2023, in Texas, despite suffering from mental illness so acute that he cut out both of his eyes and ate one, claiming that it was necessary to prevent the government from hearing his thoughts. He received a stay of execution.

On March 7, 2023, the same day that Thomas’s execution date was withdrawn, Texas executed Gary Green. Green’s attorneys had argued that he was intellectually disabled and that he had schizoaffective disorder.

According to the Death Penalty Information Center: 79% of the people executed last year in 2023 “had at least one of the following impairments: serious mental illness, brain injury, developmental brain damage or an IQ in the range considered intellectually disabled, and/or chronic serious childhood trauma, neglect and/or abuse.” (deathpenaltyinfo.org)

**No accommodations for disabled people**

In Texas, when male death row prisoners need to be transported off the prison unit for medical appointments or court

appearances, they go by van. But the van is not disability accessible. Guards tell the prisoners to get inside any way they can. So those with mobility issues are left behind!

Incarcerated people that this reporter visits and corresponds with have reported horrible cruelty. One friend has been without shoes for seven years, because the ones he was given will not go on his feet, and those sold in the commissary do not fit his wide feet. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), because he is diabetic, he is supposed to be given special shoes. Another person who has been without teeth for years is worried that pushing for false teeth might result in a scheduled execution date.

With every interaction between the criminal legal system and disabled people, it is obvious that this system does not respect the needs or rights of people with disabilities. Disabled people must not be treated by courts and prisons as people in a criminal crisis. They should be viewed with a community health approach and treated with dignity and respect.

Until prisons are abolished and all people can live a life with all their needs met, revolutionaries and activists must fight for prisoner rights, including for disabled people as required by the American with Disabilities Act.

Nothing less than dignity and respect for all!

*Gloria Rubac is an organizer with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.*



# Gazan women face enforced disappearance

*The following statement was released by Palestinian Prisoners Institutions on March 7, 2024, on Resistance News Network.*

This year has been the bloodiest for Palestinian women throughout the history of the years of occupation, in light of the comprehensive aggression and ongoing genocide against our people in Gaza, alongside war crimes and severe violations they have faced, including field executions, systematic arrests, and accompanying heinous violations, including sexual assaults.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, occurring annually on March 8, prisoner institutions (the Commission of Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners Affairs, the Palestinian Club Society, and Addameer Association for Human Rights) reported that targeting

Palestinian women has been one of the most prominent and systematic policies since the early years of the occupation.

The crimes witnessed today against Palestinian women have been ongoing for decades of occupation. The period following October 7 was not exceptional in terms of the horrific level of crimes witnessed and heard through many testimonies, but the difference lies in the unprecedented intensity and escalation of these crimes compared to periods of Palestinian intifadas and popular outbursts.

Arrest operations of women, including minors, became an unprecedented policy of the occupation after October 7, with about 240 cases of arrests among women from the West Bank, including Al-Quds, and the lands occupied in 1948. There is no clear estimate for the number of women arrested from Gaza, though some

were later released.

It is certain that there are women still detained in "israeli" occupation camps subjected to enforced disappearance. As of this report, the number of female prisoners languishing in occupation prisons, most of whom are detained in "Damon" Prison, reached 60, including two from Gaza, while we confirm once again that there is no information regarding the number of female prisoners from Gaza in "israeli" occupation camps.

The report highlights key data on female prisoners in "israeli" prisons up to the date of this report. There are 60 female prisoners, including two from Gaza, among them minors, 24 mothers, 12 under administrative detention, including a lawyer, a journalist, 12 students, and 11 facing health issues, among them two injured women, in addition to wives and mothers of pris-

# Mumia’s health improving

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

The power of the people is greater than the power of the state, and together we can have an impact.

In September 2023, Pam Africa and other visitors to Pennsylvania political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal began sounding the alarm over his health noticeably declining. He had lost weight, was anemic, had high blood pressure, an extreme flare-up of his psoriasis and his hair had fallen out.

An innocent man, imprisoned since

1982, Mumia has experienced serious health problems, including hepatitis C, diabetes and COVID-19. In April 2021, he underwent open heart surgery but has since been denied cardiac rehabilitative care, including a healthy diet and exercise.

Upon hearing this news, the movement swung into action, putting pressure on Pennsylvania Department of Corrections officials through phone calls, faxes, postcards and letters and events educating about Mumia’s case and demanding his release. This work paid off.

Noelle Hanrahan with Prison Radio, who visits Mumia regularly, reported in

early March: “Mumia looked the best I have seen him since August. He is stable, his health is slowly improving. And the advocacy that you have engaged in for a healthy diet is making an impact. He is getting his prescribed medicines and advocating for alternatives as well! Yesterday he said, “In the last week, they served wheat bread three times! Usually, it is a rare Sunday, maybe once a month when I see anything but white bread. ... This week there was a heaping pile of salad in the middle of my tray, I was shocked.”

It is welcome news that Mumia’s health is improving, but 42 years of false



imprisonment, including 29 on death row, are taking a toll. Mumia will be 70 on April 24, 2024.

Join us in demanding his freedom! ☐



# In the spirit of global solidarity

## Workers World hails Int’l Working Women’s Day!

By Kathy Durkin

*This is partially based on articles published in Workers World newspaper to commemorate International Working Women’s Day beginning in 2010. Newer information has been added which covers many current struggles globally and in the U.S.*

March 8, International Working Women’s Day, is a day of solidarity with women and people of all genders worldwide who face U.S. militarism, as well as with the world’s workers who are super-exploited and abused by imperialist corporations.

Our first obligation this year is to show utmost solidarity with the Palestinian people, those losing families, homes, hospitals, everything, in the genocidal war being waged by Zionist Israel — armed with U.S. weapons — in Gaza, and those facing brutal attacks and round-ups on the West Bank. We have compassion for our Palestinian sisters locked up and tortured in Israeli prisons. We support Palestinian women who participate in all forms of resistance, including armed struggle, to win back their stolen land.

Capitalism, with class society, private property ownership and patriarchal relations, is at the root of women’s, gender and national oppression. Global corporations, in their drive for megaprofits, superexploit the world’s workforce, intensify inequality and poverty, and spew racism, bigotry and misogyny.

Transnational companies and their local bosses abuse women with physical and sexual violence, as they mistreat and disregard all workers. The quest for profits drives the horrible crimes of sex and human trafficking of women, children and people of all genders.

All this cries out for a socialist solution: public ownership of industries; production for human needs, not profits; guaranteed jobs, health care, housing and all necessities; sharing of wealth and resources, and living in peace.

Cuba has shown that socialism can provide the basis for women’s equality. Led by the Federation of Cuban Women, women there have made great political, economic and social strides since the revolution triumphed in 1959.

### True character of Women's Day

The pro-socialist and working-class essence of IWWD remains, despite capitalist and media cover-ups of its real meaning. Its history is rife with struggle and solidarity. This special day has been celebrated by socialist countries and parties, national liberation movements, anti-imperialist, anti-corporate, women’s and workers’ organizations on many continents.

This historic day’s founder was Clara Zetkin, a leader of the left wing of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and head of their International Women’s Secretariat. The SPD, which had 82,000 women members in 1910, promoted women’s rights, including the right to organize politically and vote. Zetkin agitated for 21 years to establish International Working Women’s Day.

Women in Europe were pouring into factories as expanding industries needed their labor. They were hired at low pay to do unsafe, horrific jobs without legal rights. Determined to fight for political and economic rights, they joined labor unions and socialist parties. It was a time of great fer-

ment and burgeoning socialist ideas.

German socialist Luise Zeitz, in collaboration with Zetkin, proposed at the Second International Socialist Women’s Conference in August 1910, held at the Workers Assembly Hall in Copenhagen, Denmark, that a special day be set aside annually to recognize the worldwide struggles of women workers and to build global solidarity. Participants agreed to fight for the 8-hour workday, maternity leave and health benefits.

Another impetus for Women’s Day, Zetkin recognized, was the demonstration in New York by thousands of garment workers, mainly im/migrants and many socialists, demanding their rights, on March 8, 1908. So was the three-month garment workers’ strike a year later — the “Uprising of the 20,000” — led by 23-year-old Clara Lemlich, a Russian-Jewish immigrant.



International Working Women's Day Coalition protest, New York City

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Over 100 women from 17 countries, representing labor unions, women’s organizations and European socialist parties, voted unanimously for the proposal. It declared: “In agreement with the class-conscious political and trade union organizations of the [working class] in each country, socialist women in all countries shall organize a Women’s Day each year.” (leftwrite.wordpress.com)

Zetkin, a political strategist, calculated that organizing for IWWD was a crucial step in building an anti-capitalist movement. She aimed to foster cooperation among women in labor unions, women’s organizations and socialist parties so they would fight jointly. This would raise class and socialist consciousness and push the class struggle forward. In her estimation, the most political women workers would be won over to opposing capitalism — the source of women’s oppression — and would embrace a socialist perspective.

An internationalist, Zetkin deduced that a yearly, coordinated multicountry protest on the same day for the same demands would empower women’s struggles and also break down national chauvinism, strengthening ties between women in different countries and building anti-war sentiment.

One year later, Zetkin’s strategy took hold. More than one million people, mostly women, poured into the streets of four European countries on March 19, 1911, to demand jobs and an end to gender discrimination. Russian revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai said that the first “Working Women’s Day was one seething sea of women, certainly the first show of militancy [in Europe] by working women.”

### IWWD started a revolution!

In 1913 and 1914, European women protested the looming world war on Women’s Day. On March 8, 1917, striking women textile workers joined women attacking bakeries over high bread prices

in Petrograd, Russia. They asked soldiers to put down their rifles.

Soon, 90,000 protesters were in the streets, calling for “peace, land and bread.” This earthshaking action led to the Russian czar’s ouster, which opened the gates to a workers’ revolution later that year. In 1921, the socialist Soviet Union was the first government in the world to codify women’s equality.

Zetkin, fervently anti-war, was jailed repeatedly for agitating against World War I. Demonstrations won her release. She left the SPD in 1916 because of its pro-war position and, with Rosa Luxemburg and others, established the precursor to the Communist Party of Germany.

An anti-racist, Zetkin opposed U.S. Jim Crow laws. She wrote an impassioned plea in 1932 calling for the release of the Scottsboro Brothers, nine young African Americans who were being railroaded to prison, and possible execution, on false charges of sexually assaulting two white women. One of the women later refuted the charges and then joined the mass movement that saved their lives.

As German fascism menaced, Zetkin agitated for all workers, women and men, to join the fight against war and fascism in the Parliament (Reichstag) on Aug. 30, 1932. At the age of 75, ailing and nearly blind, Zetkin bravely spoke for an hour as Nazis yelled death threats at her.

### Rallies, marches, strikes, sit-ins on Women's Day

IWWD actions around the globe in recent decades have included the freeing of political prisoners in Uruguay, sit-ins in Argentina of agricultural workers and uprisings in the Philippines. Coordinated actions have protested the U.S.-led war in Iraq and the U.S.-backed Israeli sieges of Gaza.

A multinational march of 20,000 women marched in a historic action to government buildings in Pretoria, South



Solidarity with Palestine, Seoul, South Korea, March 8, 2024.

Africa, to demand an end to the heinous apartheid pass system on Aug. 9, 1956. That date became a national holiday in the country and is commemorated every year. It is called “National Women’s Day.”

In 2010, there were worldwide commemorations of IWWD on its centennial, as well as a determined post-earthquake march in Haiti.

Indigenous peoples have protested corporate destruction of the planet. South Korean workers have demanded gender equality at work. Bangladeshi garment workers have rallied, and domestic workers in Indonesia have marched. Sex workers have insisted on their rights. Migrant workers have demonstrated in Australia,



Dhaka, Bangladesh, March 8, 2024.

Asia and Europe for legal protection and rights.

Beginning in early 2010, demonstrations were held in the Middle East and North Africa during the Arab Spring. Events hailing women workers have been held in South Africa. Throughout Latin America, marches for reproductive rights, especially safe legal abortion, and against anti-woman violence have been held yearly.

Independence has been demanded for Puerto Rico. In 2018, winning LGBTQIA+ rights was hailed in India. Legal abortion was won in 2018 in Ireland by a mass multinational, multigender movement, and two years later, in Argentina. Cubans have celebrated gains made in over 60 years of socialist revolution.

In the U.S., the women of Youth Against War & Fascism and Workers World Party revived IWWD’s revolutionary legacy in 1970, marching from a rally in historic Union Square to the Women’s House of Detention in New York. They expressed solidarity with their imprisoned sisters, including two of the New York Panther 21.

The Women’s Fightback Network began to commemorate IWWD in New York in 2004. Out of that grouping was born the International Working Women’s Day Coalition, which has annually marked this special day since 2009 with demonstrations, rallies and meetings.

On several occasions, the coalition has memorialized the 146 victims of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of March 25, 1911, at the building’s site in New York. This coalition raises the struggles of women workers, im/migrants, people of color and gender nonconforming people in the U.S., while promoting global solidarity.

Today, we fight the ultraright’s racist attacks on oppressed communities and the teaching of their true history, the life-threatening assaults on migrants at the border, dangerous federal and state attacks on reproductive freedom, especially on low-income and oppressed women — from abortion bans to restrictions on contraception and assisted reproduction. We oppose all attacks on voting rights, affirmative action, worker organizing and call for ending discrimination against LGBTQIA2S+ people

### A socialist women's conference today

Many of Zetkin’s demands resonate today, including the need to improve conditions for women workers, with labor unions, legal protections, jobs at a living wage, health care, and all the necessities of life — and to build worldwide class unity and solidarity.

But imperialism and its endless wars raise other issues than those Zetkin addressed. Colonialism, capitalist globalization and national oppression — with underdevelopment of continents, theft of land and resources, superexploitation of



COMMENTARY

# Palestinian women against bourgeois feminism

By Saher Al Khamash

*The writer is a Palestinian organizer with the Bronx Anti-war Coalition in Bronx, New York.*

Bourgeois feminism is a political perspective that overlooks the material realities of oppressed women of color in favor of upholding a capitalist, imperialist system. Bourgeois feminism splinters feminist liberation movements, often by co-opting progressive ideas about women’s rights while using racist tactics to justify colonization. Western colonizers and imperialists have used bourgeois feminism as a longstanding tool for manufacturing consent for invasions of much of the Arab world, including Palestine, and for abhorrent levels of catastrophe in these places.

It is crucial that we reject bourgeois feminism, not only for the insidious ways it justifies the colonizer’s violence, but also because it obstructs our path towards true liberation. We must recognize that women’s liberation in Palestine is intertwined with national liberation. Palestinian women are the experts of their struggles, and therefore they will be the leaders of their own liberation, not any white savior.

For those of us in the imperial core, it is our responsibility to recognize the strategy of co-opting women’s rights to advance imperialist and colonialist agendas. The fact of the matter is if U.S. political leaders genuinely cared about women’s rights, they would not be orchestrating this

genocide. If the well-being of women in West Asia were truly a priority in Western corporate newsrooms, headlines would focus on U.N. reports of sexual violence by “Israeli” officials against Palestinian women political prisoners and the pregnant women giving birth under constant “Israeli” bombardment. They would report on how the Zionist blockade deprives pregnant women of proper medical care, like anesthesia, mothers of food for their newborns, and feminine hygiene products for Palestinian girls starting their menstruation. However, upholding such journalistic integrity by reporting these injustices would expose the horrific realities of Western imperialism.

While Palestinian women suffer tragedies daily as the genocide continues, the imperialist media leans on racist and Islamophobic stereotypes to justify their crimes. Unsubstantiated claims accus-

reclaim their lands. Never has it been more apparent that the media is an arm of the imperialist apparatus. We must be wary of falling for and perpetuating its lies. We who believe in truth and freedom must continuously expose these narratives and develop our own news outlets.

### Colonial objectification of women in Algeria and Palestine

Throughout history, colonial powers have strategically utilized the concept of women’s liberation and portrayed Islam as an adversary to further their own agendas. Reflecting on the period of French occupation in Algeria spanning from 1830 to 1962, it is evident that the media played a role in legitimizing their settler colonial project by promoting the narrative that Algerian women required intervention from the French to protect them from Islamic beliefs.

When postcards were first introduced in the early 20th century, France emerged as the leading global producer. Many of the cards featured images of Algeria, with half showcasing landscapes and the other half depicting Algerian women, often nude. The portrayal of nude Algerian women as individuals, contrasted with the depiction of Muslim women in hijabs and burkas as faceless masses, implied a biased viewpoint.

This binary presentation suggested that Algerians who adopted more Western customs were seen as individuals, while those adhering to traditional Muslim attire were not. The images of nude women were used to promote the idea that French intervention was liberating Algerian women from oppressive cultural norms. In reality, French photographers did not persuade Muslim women to undress for them; instead, they paid Algerian sex workers to pose in these photos. This manipulation of media was not only used to support French colonialism ideologically, but also served as a practical and economic strategy to attract French men to relocate to Algeria by offering them the opportunity for exotic interactions with Algerian women.

These postcards provide insights into the colonial mindset and the objectification of Indigenous women, highlighting the deep connection between women and land. The posture of these women on the postcards suggests a desire for sexual conquest, mirroring the colonial belief that they were eager to embrace French ideals.

This narrative parallels the justification used by colonizers, claiming that the colonized territories were in need of liberation from their own societies. In reality, colonialism and imperialism mimic the dynamics of rape, exploitation and abuse, with the colonizer exploiting the natural resources of the colonized without acknowledgment of the harm inflicted.

### Seize the means of knowledge production

Bourgeois feminism’s portrayal of Palestinian women as victims of Islamic values and Palestinian men as villains hinders liberation for all genders. This narrative overlooks the patriotic roles that Palestinian women play in the national liberation movement as



“Jamila, the Algerian” is a movie based on the true story of Djamilah Bouhired, a revolutionary woman fighter arrested and tortured by the French occupation forces in Algeria.



Women fighters with Omar Al-Qasim Forces in Gaza.

ing resistance groups of sexual violence are repeated by Western journalists to support imperialist goals. In reality, it is these resistance movements that are fighting against Western imperialism to

care and other necessities in the U.S. Everyone’s grievances would be heard and incorporated into demands.

Clara Zetkin was right in saying that international solidarity is essential. She stressed that it is urgent that women and all workers organize to get rid of capitalism and fight for socialism. That is the legacy of 114 years of International Working Women’s Day.

*The writer’s grandmother, Sophie Stoller, an immigrant garment worker, was employed at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. She was ill and didn’t go to work on the day of the fire. A socialist, she joined the 1908 garment workers’ march and the “Uprising of the 20,000.”*



Sit-in protest for Palestine. Istanbul, Turkey, October, 2023.

## Workers World hails Int’l Working Women’s Day!

*Continued from page 6*

workers, and the propagation of racism and all forms of bigotry — greatly broaden the demands from those raised in 1910 in Copenhagen.

A global socialist women’s conference today would first extend invitations to women in Africa, the Middle East and the rest of Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean — whose countries have been oppressed by imperialism. Such a gathering would promote reparations for countries ravaged and impoverished by global capitalists and demand an end to all imperialist militarism.

Also invited would be women workers and people of all nationalities — Black, Latine, Arab, Asian, Native American — individuals of all genders, migrants, single parents, the unemployed, Starbucks and other union organizers, homeless, seniors, youth, survivors of sexual abuse and domestic violence, low-wage and low-income individuals, LGBTQIA2S+ and gender nonbinary and disabled people, incarcerated workers, sex workers, and those lacking health



# Queers4Palestine Philadelphia mobilizes for Gaza

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

A march led by Queers4Palestine PHL started at Philadelphia City Hall on March 16, with militant chants, including, “When Palestine is under attack, get up gays, its time to fight back!” and “Hell no, we won’t be quiet, Stonewall was a riot!”

Q4P organizer Indigo explained that this was the group’s first action noting: “We cannot advocate for queer autonomy while remaining silent about Palestine, which is a queer struggle. There is no liberation without Palestinian resistance.”

Gabe Bryant with the Black Philly Radical Collective spoke on meeting LGBTQIA+ people when he visited Palestine. “Historically it has always been our queer family who have shown us how to be more militant, more uncompromising, and in the streets to shut it down. Their message for us was ‘Join us.’”

Many of the over 200 attendees carried noise makers, from pots and pans to whistles and drums. They marched around City Hall, down South Broad Street to Locust Street, ending near 12th and Locust outside Tabu, a gay sports bar that regularly hosts drag and

burlesque performances. Tabu had advertised burlesque dancer Leila Delicious, a Palestinian performer currently based in Philadelphia, as one of the featured acts for Dec. 8, 2023, but abruptly canceled the performance just prior to her show.

**‘Our generation will free Palestine!’**

Delicious, who began performing burlesque in Philadelphia over a year ago, often used the stage to express Palestinian queerness. She planned to include a sign in her act that read: “Our generation will free Palestine!” Tabu told her that the bar did not want political commentary or

performances about events in Gaza. They then compounded the problem by issuing a social media post, later deleted, that said the bar “strongly condemns all forms of hate speech, including the display of a sign promoting genocide against Jews.”

After receiving broad condemnation from other performers, including a Jewish drag queen, who all expressed solidarity with Delicious and said they would boycott Tabu, the bar issued a weak apology that they “may have misinterpreted the intention” of the sign. However, criticism towards Tabu has continued, resulting in several performers canceling scheduled acts. Last night’s action was one of many demonstrations against the bar since then.

Outside the bar, queer Palestinian burlesque performer Mewikki addressed the crowd. Angel, from Q4P, commenting on Tabu’s false claim about Leila’s sign, noted: “You cannot conflate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. Out here on the streets it will always be anti-Zionism.” They ended by reading a statement from Leila Delicious thanking the protesters.

The demonstration marched to Rittenhouse Square where they concluded the rally with a speaker who read Queers4Palestine’s principles of unity. More on Q4P can be found on Instagram: @Queers4PalPHL.

Throughout the entire march, protesters received applause from hundreds of young people outside Center City restaurants and bars celebrating Saint Patrick’s Day. There was no open hostility. □



Queers4Palestine protest, Philadelphia, March 16, 2024.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

## History will record Israel committed a holocaust

Continued from page 1

for a family subsisting on U.N. rations of canned beans, canned meat and canned cheese.

A proud people with rich culinary traditions and habits of fresh foods have been reduced and accustomed to a handful of pastes and mush that have been sitting on shelves for so long that all you can taste is the metallic rancidity of the cans.

It’s worse in the north.

My friend Ahmad (not his real name) is one of a handful of people who have internet. It’s sporadic and weak, but we can still message each other.

He sent me a photo of himself that looked to me like a shadow of the young man I knew. He has lost over 25 kg (55 lbs).

People first resorted to eating horse and donkey feed, but that’s gone. Now they’re eating the donkeys and horses.

Some are eating stray cats and dogs, which are themselves starving and sometimes feeding on human remains that litter streets where Israeli snipers picked off people who dared to venture within the sight of their scopes. The old and weak have already died of hunger and thirst.

Flour is scarce and more valuable than gold.

I heard a story about a man in the north who managed to get his hands on a bag of flour recently (normally costing \$8) and was offered jewelry, electronics and cash worth \$2,500 for it. He refused.

**Feeling small**

People in Rafah feel privileged to have flour and rice reaching them. They will tell you this, and you will feel humbled, because they offer to share what little they have.

And you will feel ashamed, because you know you can leave Gaza and eat whatever you want. You will feel small here, because you are unable to make a real dent to assuage the catastrophic need and loss, and because you will understand that they are better than you are, as they have somehow remained generous and hospitable in a world that has been most ungenerous and inhospitable to them for so very long.

I brought as much as I could, paying for extra luggage and weight for six pieces of luggage and filling 12 more in Egypt. What I brought for myself fit into the backpack I carried.

I had the foresight to bring five big bags of coffee, which turned out to be the most popular gift for my friends here. Making and serving coffee to the staff where I’m staying is my favorite thing to do, for the sheer joy each sip seems to bring.

But that will soon run out too.

**Hard to breathe**

I hired a driver to deliver seven heavy suitcases of supplies to Nuseirat, which he ferried down a few flights of stairs. He told me that carrying those bags made him feel human again, because it was the first time in four months that he had been up and down stairs.

It reminded him of living in a home instead of the tent where he now resides.

It is hard to breathe here, literally and metaphorically. An immovable haze of dust, decay and desperation coats the air.

The destruction is so massive and persistent that the fine particles of pulverized life don’t have time to settle. The lack of petrol made people resort to filling their cars with stearate — used cooking oil that burns dirty.

It emits a peculiar foul smell and film

that stick to the air, the hair, clothes, throat and lungs. It took me a while to figure out the source of that pervasive odor, but it’s easy to discern others.

The scarcity of running or clean water degrades the best of us. Everyone does their best with themselves and their children, but at some point, you stop caring.

At some point, the indignity of filth is inescapable. At some point, you just wait for death, even as you also wait for a ceasefire.

But people don’t know what they will do after a ceasefire.

They’ve seen pictures of their neighborhoods. When new images are posted from the northern region, people will gather to try to figure out which neighborhood it is, or whose house that mound of rubble used to be. Often those videos come from Israeli soldiers occupying or blowing up their homes.

**Erasure**

I’ve spoken to many survivors pulled from the rubble of their homes. They recount what happened to them with a deadpan countenance, as if it didn’t happen to them; as if it was someone else’s family buried alive; as if their own torn bodies belong to others.

Psychologists say it’s a defense mechanism, a kind of numbing of the mind for the sake of survival. The reckoning will come later — if they survive.

But how does one reckon with losing your entire family, watching and smelling their bodies disintegrate around you in the rubble, as you wait for rescue or death? How does one reckon with total erasure of your existence in the world — your home, family, friends, health, whole neighborhood and country?

No photos of your family, wedding, children, parents left; even the graves of your loved ones and ancestors bulldozed. All this while the most powerful forces and voices vilify and blame you for your wretched fate.

Genocide isn’t just mass murder. It is intentional erasure.

Of histories. Of memories, books and culture.

Erasure of potential in a land. Erasure of hope in and for a place.

Erasure is the impetus for destroying homes, schools, places of worship, hospitals, libraries, cultural centers, recreational centers and universities.

Genocide is intentional dismantling of another’s humanity. It is the reduction of a proud, educated, high-functioning ancient society into penniless objects of charity, forced to eat the unspeakable to survive; to live in filth and disease with nothing to hope for except an end to bombs and bullets raining on and through their bodies, their lives, their histories and futures.

No one can think or hope for what might come after a ceasefire. The ceiling of their hope at this hour is for the bombing to stop.

It is a minimal ask. A minimal recognition of Palestinian humanity.

Despite Israel cutting power and internet, Palestinians have managed to livestream a picture of their own genocide to a world that allows it to continue.

But history will not lie. It will record that Israel perpetrated a holocaust in the 21st century.

*Susan Abulhawa is a writer and activist. This piece was written during her visit to Gaza in February and early March.*



# Aaron Bushnell’s act sparks memories of mass resistance in U.S. military

By Joe Piette

*The author, a veteran of the U.S. military who was sent to fight in Vietnam in the late 1960s, spoke at a March 3 vigil in Philadelphia organized following the sacrifice by active-duty Air Force member Aaron Bushnell a few days earlier. This article is based on Piette’s talk.*

Aaron Bushnell was a member of the U.S. Air Force. So was I over 50 years ago. I was drafted in 1966 and eventually sent to Vietnam to help make blood money for the U.S. imperialists from the deaths of millions of people in Southeast Asia.

Aaron Bushnell, rather than participate in the U.S./Israeli genocide in Gaza, took the extreme act of self-immolating last Sunday, Feb. 25 at 1 p.m. before the Washington, D.C., embassy of the U.S./British settler-colonial project in Palestine.

Bushnell was one of a small number of members of the U.S. military in the last decade who I’m aware of who publicly conducted an act of opposition to a U.S. imperialist war. As an isolated individual deeply opposed to what he was being told to do, Bushnell did what he felt he had to do to oppose the U.S./Israeli genocidal war in Gaza.

We hope his act will persuade more people to follow him, not to commit self-immolation, but follow him in rejecting the status quo and finding powerful ways to oppose U.S. imperialist wars of terror.

It was different when I was in the Air Force. By the late 1960s, at a time when the U.S. was still drafting men into the armed forces, a majority of active duty people were opposed to the U.S. war in Vietnam and acted in many ways to put a stop to it.

Some went over to the Vietnamese side. Some deserted to Europe or Canada. Many joined antiwar GI groups, such as the American Servicemen’s Union, which alone had tens of thousands of members. Many simply refused to fight, and if an officer was stupid enough to threaten someone for refusing, he might be fragged. That a commissioned or non-commissioned officer was fragged meant he was killed or wounded when a GI rolled a fragmentation grenade in their tent while they slept. Between 1969 and 1972, the Pentagon recorded nearly 1,000 fraggings.

Read John Catalinotto’s book “Turn the Guns Around” or watch David Zeiger’s

“Sir, No Sir” film on Netflix if you want to know more about opposition within the military.

## Vietnamese won in 1975

The Pentagon reacted to the threatened collapse of its chain of command in Vietnam and the growing resistance in the U.S. by withdrawing troops down from its 1969 maximum of 550,000 and turning the fighting over to a puppet army of Vietnamese recruits. This was called “Vietnamization” of the war. In early 1973, the U.S. government ended the draft.



Veteran Joe Piette speaking at Clark Park, Philadelphia, vigil for Aaron Bushnell, March 3, 2024.

PHOTO: SAMANTHA RISE

The puppet army collapsed in 1975, and the Vietnamese people won the war against the U.S. imperialists in 1975 when Saigon was liberated. Yes — applaud!

After that loss, the U.S. war department known as the Pentagon replaced the draft with an all-volunteer armed forces.

How is the U.S. able to wage its constant wars and occupations around the world in over 750 military bases in over 80 countries through a voluntary armed forces?

## Outsourcing the war

There’s an economic draft, which explains why Aaron Bushnell joined the U.S. Air Force. In addition, many military chores and skills are now done by private contractors instead of troops. Besides the approximately 1.4 million active-duty servicemembers and 813,000 reservists, there are 762,000 federal civilian full-time equivalent employees and approximately 600,000 full-time contractors. This makes a total of almost 4 million people, all under the direction of the Department of Defense of war at a cost of close to \$1 trillion — over \$1 trillion if you

count the costs of past wars, interest and foreign military assistance.

But I want to talk about how U.S. troops are motivated to kill people.

Killing another human being is not natural. It’s just not normal. Killing someone messes up your mind — that’s why it often leads to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) — a common affliction for war veterans — and many addictions and suicides.

The generals and capitalist politicians don’t give a f\*\*k though about the suffering of the GIs. They only care about having an effective, aggressive armed forces capable of defeating and occupying any

country unwilling to be exploited for big business profits.

The Pentagon relies on racism, sexism, classism and other discriminatory practices to create a contrast between us, the GI from the U.S., and them (the people of whatever country is being targeted) to get its troops to follow orders to kill. Heavy propaganda, constant repetitive instructions and other mind-manipulating training methods create soldiers willing to follow orders and kill.

This indoctrination aims to create the reaction of “just tell me who the enemy is, and I’ll go after him with any weapons you provide.” But indoctrination only goes so far. That’s what the generals learned in Vietnam that persuaded them to change to a professional military.

## Armed bodies of oppressors

Esprit de corps is very important for leaders in a professional military. Esprit de corps is a phrase from the French that literally translates to “spirit of the body.” The dictionary defines it as “the common spirit existing in the members of a group,

inspiring enthusiasm, devotion and strong regard for the honor of the group.”

These bodies are what Karl Marx, V. I. Lenin and other communists and revolutionaries referred to when they talked about the bourgeois state and its police and standing army — the special bodies of armed men (or of any gender today) placed above society and alienating themselves from it as required to protect and fight for the wealthy rulers at the top of capitalist society.

Once you’re in uniform, esprit de corps means your fellow troops are people (Black, Brown or white) you spend every day with, train with, go out drinking with. They’re your family, your comrades, people you’re willing to protect and die for. If the group feels threatened, the group as a whole, heavily armed, will defend itself.

That extreme group dynamic, as a tool of the rich and powerful, creates a lean and mean fighting machine that when dropped in hostile locations can lead to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people (most often people of color) and calamities like at Wounded Knee in the United States, the My Lai massacre in Vietnam and the Flour Massacre a few days ago in Gaza.

Esprit de corps leads to the idea that if troops (or cops) feel threatened, they can strike back at the enemy in their defense at will. How many people of color have been killed by cops — the cops backed by the U.S. Supreme Court — with the excuse that “I was justified, because I felt threatened.”

That’s also what the Israeli Occupation Forces stormtroopers said — “We felt threatened” — about why they massacred the starving crowd of Palestinians Feb. 29.

The U.S. military loves to give out awards — medals of honor, Purple Hearts, Bronze stars and so on. Almost all of them are awarded to soldiers for protecting each other. Countless movies have been made about how so-called brave soldiers defended their outnumbered fellow troops against the evil enemy. Every one of those movies is imperialist propaganda.

The people we should feel solidarity with are not the media-created innocent U.S. troops defending themselves but the people defending their countries against U.S. imperialism.

## Oppressed peoples have the right to resist

Don’t the Vietnamese, Iraqis, Cubans, Palestinians, Africans — in Sudan, in the Congo, in Niger — people in Korea, the Philippines, people all over the world have a right to defend themselves against imperialist occupation and exploitation?

I hope Bushnell’s act reverberates within the military and makes other soldiers, sailors, marines and air force members start to question their deployment orders. I hope it breaks down some of the esprit de corps.

The U.S. government is the enemy of the world’s people. The U.S. never, never, never, never sends its military anywhere for the good of the workers in any country. The troops are sent there for the benefit of the corporations who rule the U.S. It is never a force for good.

As Aaron Bushnell said — before he couldn’t say anything anymore — “Free Palestine!” To that, I would like to add: Free the workers anywhere in the world where capitalism and imperialism exploit and oppress them.

Power to the People, from Palestine to Philadelphia! □

## Gaza media office on aid

# ‘Efforts to relieve our people are weak’

*The following statement, released on Resistance News Network, was issued by Salama Marouf from the Government Media Office in Gaza on March 13, 2024.*

In light of the talk about a ship loaded with aid departing from the port of Larnaca in Cyprus heading to Gaza, we confirm that, up to this moment, the efforts to relieve our people are weak and remain below the minimum required in face of the humanitarian disaster that is befalling our people, especially in northern Gaza, where more than 700,000 citizens are suffering a clear starvation war.

As announced, the load of the ship does not exceed the load of one or two trucks and will take days. It is still unknown where it will dock and how it will reach the shores of Gaza, in addition to it being subject to inspection by the occupation army.

Therefore, the relevance of this mechanism is questionable, and it would be more appropriate for everyone to pressure the occupation to allow the entry of aid convoys by land and through known crossings, such as Rafah, Karam Abu Salem, or to activate the Mintar, Shuja'iyya, and Beit Hanoun crossings.

The international community must urgently convene before it is too late to save those who are dying of hunger. The best way to do this is to operate the land crossings in a manner that allows the rapid entry of thousands of aid and relief trucks that are lined up on the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing, which the occupation refuses to allow entry, disregarding the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the International Court of Justice, without any regard for the disastrous humanitarian reality in the northern part of the Strip. □



# Bipartisanship at its best (or worst)

## The ban and the blather

As much as Democrats and Republicans try to appear different from one another, sometimes they can't help sounding alike.

This was obvious in the 352-65 vote in the House of Representatives to compel Chinese internet company ByteDance to sell the social media platform TikTok — or be banned in the U.S.

"The best-case scenario is that TikTok continues to operate but is no longer owned — and potentially controlled — by an adversarial government," said North Carolina Democrat Jeff Jackson.

"The Chinese Communist Party's ability to exploit private user data and to manipulate public opinion through TikTok present serious national security concerns," Rep. Adam Schiff, candidate for senator who recently won the California Democratic primary election, chimed in. (cnn.com, March 17)

Not to be outdone, Republican

representatives made similar comments. "The House just passed a bipartisan bill to force TikTok to sever their ties with the Chinese Communist Party," House Majority Leader Steve Scalise posted on X. Bill sponsor Rep. Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin celebrated the bill's passing with a cookie cake.

Numerous House representatives on both sides of the aisle made similar statements. President Joe Biden says he will sign the bill if it passes in the Senate.

But the facts don't square with the anti-communist rhetoric of these sound-alike capitalist politicians. TikTok is not owned, in whole or in part, by the Communist Party of China. The Chinese government only recently acquired a 1% stake in the company.

The founder of ByteDance is Chinese entrepreneur Zhang Yiming, whose wealth is an estimated \$43.4 billion. Only 20%

of the company belongs to him, another 20% to ByteDance employees, with the remaining 60% share held by foreign institutional investors like BlackRock, the Carlyle Group and Susquehanna International Group. TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew is a citizen of Singapore, not the People's Republic of China.

**Why the vote to ban?**

Moreover, all this fear-mongering bluster represents sheer hypocrisy, as many of these politicians, including Jackson and Schiff, have been using TikTok to promote their own election campaigns. But their statements and votes serve to counter any accusations that they're "soft on China."

Getting ByteDance to sell TikTok, with its 170 million users in the U.S., is easier said than done. According to the March 14 Financial Times, "Its price could, on paper, exceed \$180 billion." On the other hand, cutting off access to all those who use TikTok would be hugely unpopular. The politicians have been trying to rationalize their vote to their supporters on TikTok, saying they aren't really for a ban, just a sale that takes the company out of

Chinese hands.

The real beneficiaries of a ban would be TikTok's U.S.-based competitors like Elon Musk's X and Mark Zuckerberg's Meta, parent company of Facebook and Instagram.

What might have been a hidden motive behind the House vote became not so hidden when Rep. Ted Cruz blurted out that TikTok was "promoting to kids self-harm videos and anti-Israel propaganda." The platform has been used to further solidarity with Palestine and build pro-Palestine demonstrations. Meta has blocked hundreds of pro-Palestine postings, according to Human Rights Watch — hardly an anti-imperialist organization. (aljazeera.com Dec. 21)

Whatever the true motive for this purportedly anti-communist crusade, it's clear that working-class and oppressed people should not be bamboozled into getting behind it. Not that that's likely to happen. More and more of us are realizing that our fight is against capitalist exploitation, imperialism and Zionism, struggling alongside the heroic people of Palestine. □

## Stop NATO moves into Ukraine



Stiscione, Italy protest, Oct. 27, 2018. 'No to NATO, no to war!'

back his threat to send ground troops. He started muttering about brokering a ceasefire in Ukraine during the Olympic Games, which begin in Paris July 26.

It may seem absurd that the governments of the Western imperialist powers would risk such a devastating war. A war to continue the aggressive expansion of NATO eastward, using a corrupt regime in Kiev built with the support of fascist elements. This would certainly be abhorrent to any worker in those same NATO countries, who would have nothing to gain and everything to lose.

But remember that only 30 years ago Washington was exploiting a subservient post-Soviet Russian regime under Boris Yeltsin, was moving U.S. industry to Peoples China to increase profits, was plotting a war to destroy Yugoslavia and planning for a 21st century in which U.S. capital ruled a world empire.

**Dream of empire fading**

What is driving the U.S. imperialist ruling class and its servile allies into a war frenzy is that reality is shattering their dream of empire. Worse, their profit margins have been steadily shrinking, especially since the 2008 capitalist financial crisis.

The imperialists' superiority in technology, industry and finance is eroding. Their propaganda, contradicted by the genocide in Gaza — in which they are complicit — convinces fewer and fewer of the world's 8 billion people of their superiority. They remain ahead only in weapons, and even that is declining. A growing section of the imperialist ruling class has begun to doubt the future of their ability to exploit — and that fear makes capitalists dangerous.

These privileges and wealth they would lose benefit only a small portion of the world's people, even in the imperialist countries themselves. There is no reason for working people — for the working class in its broadest sense — to accept that the rich rulers, that the governments, put their lives at risk of nuclear war to protect a system that exploits us all.

No more weapons to Ukraine! Down with NATO! □

With the Ukrainian regime in Kiev apparently on the verge of collapse, some of the governments in the U.S.-led NATO are discussing a new escalation. Working-class forces in these imperialist countries must mobilize to stop the drive to escalate.

First, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin told Congress that if Russia defeats Ukraine, it means NATO and Russia will be at war.

Then French President Emmanuel Macron signaled that France might send ground troops into Ukraine. As recently as March 14, he added on prime-time television, "If Russia were to win, ... we would no longer have security in Europe." (politico.eu)

The next day German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Macron and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk met in Berlin for a photo op to demonstrate their common hostility to Russia.

There is pressure on Scholz to send long-range TAURUS cruise missiles to Ukraine, missiles that could reach Moscow. So far, Scholz has refused. But recall that Scholz caved to pressure to join U.S. sanctions on Russian energy sources in 2022, despite the cost to German industry.

Russian intelligence reports an intercepted discussion among German officers about how the TAURUS missiles could be used to destroy the long bridge connecting Crimea, which is part of Russia, with Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin then reminded the imperialist governments in the West that Russia is also a nuclear power and that Russian strategy allows for the use of these weapons if its existence and sovereignty are threatened.

Perhaps Macron finally heard Putin. Perhaps he heard the workers and farmers of France. On March 16 he walked

OK, CHINA'S BALLOON WAS JUST A BALLOON

ALL THAT HYPE WAS SILLY OF US

SHOOTING THINGS OUT OF THE SKY—

BOOM!

WE ALL GOT A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY

NOW THE ENEMY IS TIKTOK! AAAAAIEEE! TIKTOK IS EVIL!!



This cartoon was first published on workers.org on April 4, 2023.

## Regardless of legal decisions, immigrants vow to fight SB4

By Gloria Rubac Houston

*A federal appeals court blocked SB 4 from implementation following the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on March 19.*

The Supreme Court of the U.S. has decided to allow Texas' latest anti-immigrant law, Senate Bill 4, to go into effect on March 19, 5:00 p.m. EST.

SB4 will give any Texas law enforcement officer the authority to stop and deport anyone anywhere in the state if they perceive them to be in the U.S. illegally. SB4 was passed in a special Texas legislative session last November, and court challenges have gone back and forth since Governor Greg Abbott signed it in December.

The power to enforce immigration laws has historically fallen to the federal government and federal agents. Last week, SCOTUS extended a pause on the law from taking effect after the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Texas. They could have issued another order extending the stay of the law or could have told Texas to go ahead with it.

Earlier in March, the Texas Civil Rights Project explained that the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals issued an administrative

stay that suspended a lower court decision to block SB4 from going into effect while the case is being litigated. In response, civil rights groups filed an application to the Supreme Court to vacate the stay. The Fifth Circuit has stated that it will expedite consideration of the appeal, and oral arguments have been set for April 3 in New Orleans. (tinyurl.com/4sxuhcz6)

**The people are fighting back**

Regardless of the court outcomes, immigrant activists as well as civil rights organizations have vowed to continue the struggle both politically and legally against this racist and polarizing border law.

The Border Network for Human Rights, based in El Paso, Texas, organized people from El Paso to the Rio Grande Valley, from Odessa to Houston, and over 1,000 Texans marched and rallied in Austin to demand the repeal of the unconstitutional SB4 and the end of Operation Lone

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WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

March 9, 2024, march and rally in Austin, Texas.



# Palestinian resistance 10 point program

*The following statement was issued by Palestinian resistance factions who met in Moscow, Russia, on Feb. 29, 2024, and released by the Resistance News Network on March 1, 2024.*

The Palestinian factions gathered in the city of Moscow express their gratitude and appreciation to the Russian leadership for hosting their meetings and for its supportive stance on the Palestinian cause.

Amidst the Zionist criminal aggression our people are facing, the factions highlighted the constructive and positive spirit that prevailed during the meeting. They agreed that their meetings would continue in future dialogue rounds to achieve comprehensive national unity that encompasses all Palestinian forces and factions within the framework of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The factions affirmed their agreement on the urgent tasks facing the Palestinian people and their united efforts to achieve them, including:

1. Confronting the criminal "israeli" aggression and the genocide war waged against our people in the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Al-Quds, with the support, backing and participation of the United States.
2. Resisting and stopping the attempts to displace our people from their home-

land, Palestine, especially in the Gaza Strip or in the West Bank and Al-Quds, and affirming the illegitimacy of settlement and settlement expansion according to the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations.

3. Working to lift the brutal siege on our people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and ensuring the delivery of humanitarian, vital and medical aid without restrictions or conditions.

4. Forcing the occupation army to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, preventing attempts to consolidate its occupation or control over any part of the Gaza Strip under the pretext of buffer zones and adhering to the unity of all Palestinian lands in accordance with the Basic Law.

5. Rejecting any attempts to separate the Gaza Strip from the West Bank, including Al-Quds, as part of efforts to deprive the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination and to establish their free, independent and fully sovereign state on all occupied Palestinian lands with Al-Quds as its capital, in accordance with international resolutions.

6. Supporting and backing the heroic steadfastness of our struggling people and their resistance in Palestine and their keenness to support our people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, especially in Al-Quds, and their brave resistance to

overcome the wounds and destruction caused by the criminal aggression, to rebuild what the occupation has destroyed and to support the families of martyrs and the injured and those who have lost their homes, properties and livelihoods.

7. Confronting the occupation's conspiracies and its continuous violations against the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, its attacks on freedom of worship during the holy month of Ramadan, preventing worshippers from reaching it, and insisting on resisting any harm to Al-Aqsa Mosque, the city of Al-Quds and its Islamic and Christian sanctities.

8. Fully supporting the valiant male and female prisoners in the jails who are

subjected to various forms of torture and oppression and the determination to prioritize every possible effort to liberate them from the occupation's captivity.

9. Emphasizing the protection of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and its vital role in caring for Palestinian refugees until their return and the implementation of United Nations Resolution 194.

10. The Palestinian factions salute South Africa for its support of the Palestinian people and its fundamental role in bringing a case before the International Court of Justice to hold the "israeli" occupation accountable for the crime of genocide. □



Palestinian factions meet in Moscow, Russia, Feb. 29, 2024.

## Gaza pier: pretext for U.S. intervention

By Monica Moorehead

The heinous genocide of the people of Gaza by U.S.-backed Israel has lasted five months as of March 7, resulting in the massacre killing over 31,000 Palestinians and wounding nearly 80,000.

Presently, hundreds of thousands of people face a slow, agonizing death by starvation. The Israeli Occupation Forces continue to block Gaza's Rafah border with Egypt. There some 1,500 trucks wait, ready to bring food, water, medical supplies and other humanitarian needs to besieged Gaza, stopped by the IOF.

In response to the roadblocks by the Israelis, some countries, including the U.S., have been making air drops of food to Gaza. The amounts are a mere pittance compared to what is really needed. Some drops ended up in the sea, out of reach of the people. Some contained expired food. Five Gazans, including children, were

recently killed when these heavy crates fell on them and crushed them.

The Palestinian resistance has stated on multiple occasions that these air drops are insufficient and ineffective in meeting the humanitarian needs of the people — and they are also humiliating.

The Biden administration, which has been complicit since day one in this genocide, announced last week its plans to build a floating pier, allegedly to bring humanitarian aid to Gaza. This pier reportedly will take up to two months to build. The Pentagon also announced plans to send 1,000 U.S. troops to help build the pier.

At the same time the administration made this announcement, it was revealed that the U.S. has continued to send more weapons to the Zionist regime.

In a March 10 statement, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, emphasized that, "The behavior of the

American administration in the previous days and its suspicious movements, such as its announcement of establishing a floating sea port on the shores of the Gaza Strip that takes time to build, and its continuation in supplying the occupation with huge and unprecedented amounts of ammunition and weapons by air bridge non-stop as revealed by American media, does not indicate a change in the American stance from the war on the Strip. Rather it indicates insistence on prolonging the duration of the battle and besieging the Strip security and field under humanitarian justifications." (Resistance News Network)

### UNRWA staff members tortured

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has provided aid for displaced Palestinians since 1950. In February UNRWA issued a report stating that some of their staff members were

illegally detained and then coerced by Israeli authorities, who used torture, into falsely stating that the agency worked in concert with Hamas in carrying out the Oct. 7 uprising.

These accusations led to the firing of some of the UNRWA staff and the defunding of hundreds of millions of dollars from the agency. The Belgian government accused Israel of bombing the Belgian Agency for Development Cooperation in the Gaza Strip when officials in Brussels refused to rescind their funding from the UNRWA.

At least 150 UNRWA staff members have been killed by the Israelis since Oct. 7.

Despite UNRWA coming under attack, the agency announced efforts to use an Israeli military road bordering Gaza to test its suitability for delivering humanitarian aid to northern parts of the enclave, according to a U.N. official. □

## Regardless of legal decisions, immigrants vow to fight SB4

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Star. (facebook.com/hashtag/sb4)

"We will resist Gov. Abbott's ongoing crusade against immigrants, people of color, asylum seekers, and refugees. Texans are more united than ever to resist hate, racism, and white supremacy," a BNHR spokesperson told the rally in front of the state capitol.

American Gateways, El Paso County, American Civil Liberties Union, American Civil Liberties Union of Texas and Texas Civil Rights Project sued the state of Texas immediately after Gov. Greg Abbott signed the bill.

Jennifer Babaie, Director of Advocacy and Legal Services of Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, said: "The people and communities that this law targets are strong, resilient and will defend themselves and their rights. We are proud to represent them in court. We

urge the federal government to join us in suing Texas to defend our communities, our civil rights and the constitution. We demand the Department of Justice intervene quickly. Any delay abdicates our immigration laws, encourages lawlessness and subjects our communities to racism and our wellbeing to cowardice."

La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE), based in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and founded by labor activist César Chávez, has been organizing against SB4. They have over 8,000 members in many of the small towns along the South Texas border with Mexico. On March 8 they filed a lawsuit against SB4 citing its detrimental impact on immigrant communities and its promotion of racial profiling.

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund is representing LUPE in the lawsuit. Fátima Menéndez, the lead counsel, told Border Report that they are suing because LUPE believes Texas is interfering with the federal

immigration system, and they allege it violates the Constitution. (tinyurl.com/yc4cwekz)

A March press conference was held in Houston by one of the most active immigrant rights organizations, Immigrant Families and Students in Struggle or FIEL (Familias Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en Lucha). Director Cesar Espinosa announced that whatever the courts decide, FIEL will continue to educate immigrant communities on their rights and organize opposition to racist laws. Speakers included a state representative, a religious leader, a community activist and FIEL's attorney.

"We know we have a long road ahead of us, but with knowledge and unity, we will prevail," Espinosa said.

While Republicans praise SB4 as an answer to the failures of the Joe Biden Administration to address immigration and border security, Democrats say the law will contribute to racial profiling.

What neither bourgeois party admits is that the reason so many migrants are coming across the border is because they are fleeing the instability and violence U.S. policies under both parties have introduced into their home countries.

Civil rights groups fear that asylum seekers who are already in immigration proceedings, but might be encountered without their papers, could still be caught in the net of SB4, arrested and deported. Know Your Rights workshops are being held around Texas by activists as well as state representatives. Organizers have advised residents that if SB4 is implemented, they have the right, if stopped, to not answer any questions and to ask for a lawyer.

What all activists must understand is that every worker, regardless of status, has rights, including the right to work for livable wages without fear. Workers united will never be defeated! □





Retrato de Susan Abulhawa por @artist\_amiral, 14 años, Gaza

# La historia recordará que Israel cometió un holocausto

Por Susan Abulhawa

*Este artículo, publicado en Electronic Intifada el 6 de marzo de 2024, fue traducido por Fausto Giudice.*

Son las 8 de la tarde en Gaza, Palestina, al final de mi cuarto día en Rafah, y es la primera vez que he podido sentarme en un lugar tranquilo y pensar.

He intentado tomar notas, fotos, imágenes mentales, pero este momento es demasiado grande para un bloc de notas o para mi fallida memoria. Nada me había preparado para lo que estaba a punto de presenciar.

Antes de cruzar la frontera entre Rafah y Egipto, leí todas las noticias de y sobre Gaza. No aparté la vista de ningún vídeo o imagen publicados desde el terreno, por horribles, impactantes o traumáticos que fueran.

Me mantuve en contacto con amigos que me contaban su situación en el norte, el centro y el sur de la Franja de Gaza, cada región sufriendo de forma diferente. Me mantuve al corriente de las últimas estadísticas, de las últimas maniobras políticas, militares y económicas de Israel, USA y el resto del mundo.

Creía entender la situación en el terreno. Pero no era así. Nada puede prepararte realmente para esta distopía. Lo que llega al resto del mundo es sólo una fracción de lo que he visto hasta ahora, que es sólo una fracción del horror total.

Gaza es el infierno. Es un infierno repleto de gente inocente boqueando por aire.

Pero incluso el aire está quemado. Cada bocanada de aire araña y se clava en la garganta y los pulmones.

Lo que antes era vibrante, colorido, lleno de belleza, potencial y esperanza, contra todo pronóstico, ahora está cubierto de miseria gris y suciedad.

## Apenas quedan árboles

Los periodistas y los políticos hablan de guerra. La gente informada y honesta habla de genocidio.

Lo que yo veo es un holocausto, la incomprensible culminación de 75 años de impunidad israelí por persistentes crímenes de guerra.

Rafah es la zona más meridional de Gaza, donde Israel ha hacinado a 1,4 millones de personas en un espacio del tamaño del aeropuerto londinense de Heathrow.

Escasean el agua, los alimentos, la electricidad, el combustible y los suministros. Los niños no van a la escuela, ya que sus aulas se han convertido en refugios improvisados para decenas de miles de familias.

Casi cada centímetro cuadrado de espacio vacío está ahora ocupado por una precaria tienda de campaña que alberga a una familia.

Apenas quedan árboles, ya que la gente se ha visto obligada a talarlos para obtener leña.

No me di cuenta de la falta de vegetación hasta que me topé con una buganvilla roja. Sus flores estaban polvorientas y solitarias en un mundo desflorado, pero aún vivas.

La incongruencia me impactó y paré el coche para fotografiarla.

Ahora busco verdor y flores allá donde voy, hasta ahora en las zonas sur y centro (aunque la zona centro es cada vez de más difícil acceso). Pero sólo hay pequeñas parcelas de hierba aquí y allá y algún que otro árbol esperando a ser quemado para hacer pan para una familia que subsiste con las raciones de la ONU de alubias en lata, carne en lata y queso en lata.

Un pueblo orgulloso, con ricas tradiciones culinarias y hábitos de comer alimentos frescos, se ha visto reducido y acostumbrado a un puñado de pastas y papillas que llevan tanto tiempo en las estanterías que lo único que se puede saborear es el rancio metálico de las latas.

La situación es peor en el norte.

Mi amigo Ahmad (nombre ficticio) es una de las pocas personas con acceso a Internet. Es esporádico y débil, pero aún podemos enviarnos mensajes.

Me ha enviado una foto suya que parece la sombra del joven que conocí. Ha perdido más de 25 kg.

Al principio, la gente empezó a comer comida de caballo y burro, pero eso ya no existe. Ahora comen burros y caballos.

Algunos comen perros y gatos callejeros, que a su vez se mueren de hambre y a veces se alimentan de los restos humanos que ensucian las calles donde los francotiradores israelíes han disparado a personas que se atrevían a aventurarse en el campo de visión de sus visores. Los ancianos y los débiles ya han muerto de hambre y sed.

La harina es rara y más preciosa que el oro.

He oído la historia de un hombre del norte que consiguió hacerse recientemente con un saco de harina (que normalmente cuesta 8 dólares) y a cambio le ofrecieron joyas, aparatos electrónicos y dinero en efectivo por valor de 2.500 dólares. Se negó.

## Sentirse pequeña

Los habitantes de Rafah se sienten privilegiados por recibir harina y arroz. Te lo contarán y te sentirás humillada, porque te ofrecerán compartir lo poco que tienen.

Y tú te sentirás avergonzada, porque sabes que puedes irte de Gaza y comer lo que quieras. Te sentirás pequeña, porque no estás en condiciones de contribuir realmente a paliar las necesidades y las pérdidas catastróficas, y porque comprenderás que ellos son mejores que tú, porque han seguido siendo generosos y hospitalarios en un mundo que ha sido muy poco generoso e inhóspito con ellos durante tanto tiempo.



Gaza

Traje todo lo que pude, pagando equipaje y peso extra por seis piezas de equipaje y llenando otras 12 en Egipto. Lo que traje para mí cabía en la mochila que llevaba.

Tuve la previsión de traer cinco bolsas grandes de café, que resultaron ser el regalo más popular para mis amigos aquí. Preparar y servir café al personal que me alojó es lo que más me gusta hacer, por la alegría que me produce cada sorbo.

Pero pronto no habrá más.

## Cuesta respirar

Contraté a un conductor para que llevara siete pesadas maletas de suministros a Nuseirat, que bajó por unas escaleras. Me dijo que llevar las maletas le había dado una sensación de humanidad, ya que era la primera vez en cuatro meses que subía y bajaba escaleras.

Le recordaba que vivía en una casa y no en la tienda de campaña donde reside actualmente.

Es difícil respirar aquí, literal y metafóricamente. Una bruma inalterable de polvo, decadencia y desesperación llena el aire.

La destrucción es tan masiva y persistente que las finas partículas de vida pulverizada no tienen tiempo de asentarse. La escasez de gasolina ha llevado a la gente a llenar sus coches con estearato, un aceite de cocina usado que arde mal.

Desprende un hedor característico y una bruma que se pega al aire, el pelo, la ropa, la garganta y los pulmones. Tardé en encontrar el origen de este olor penetrante, pero es fácil distinguir otros.

La escasez de agua corriente o limpia degrada lo mejor de nosotros. Cada uno hace lo que puede consigo mismo y con sus hijos, pero llega un momento en que deja de importarle.

En algún momento, la indignidad de la suciedad es ineludible. En algún momento, se espera la muerte, aunque también se espere el alto el fuego.

Pero la gente no sabe lo que hará después de un alto el fuego.

Han visto imágenes de sus barrios. Cuando se emiten nuevas imágenes de la región norte, la gente se reúne para intentar averiguar de qué barrio se trata, o de quién era la casa sobre la que está el montón de escombros. A menudo, estos vídeos proceden de soldados israelíes que ocupan o vuelan sus casas.

## Borrado

He hablado con muchos supervivientes que fueron sacados de entre los escombros de sus casas. Cuentan lo que les ocurrió con aire impasible, como si no les hubiera pasado a ellos, como si fuera la familia de otro la que hubiera sido enterrada viva, como si sus propios cuerpos destrozados pertenecieran a otros.

Los psicólogos dicen que es un mecanismo de defensa, una especie de adormecimiento de la mente para sobrevivir. El ajuste de cuentas vendrá después, si sobreviven.

Pero, ¿cómo afrontar la pérdida de toda una familia, la visión y el olor de sus cuerpos desintegrándose a tu alrededor entre los escombros, a la espera de ayuda o de la muerte? ¿Cómo sobrellevar el borrado total de tu existencia en el mundo: tu casa, tu familia, tus amigos, tu salud, tu barrio y tu país?

No quedan fotografías de tu familia, de tu boda, de tus hijos, de tus padres; incluso las tumbas de tus parientes y antepasados han sido arrasadas. Todo ello mientras las fuerzas y voces más poderosas te vilipendian y te acusan de ser responsable de tu miserable destino.

El genocidio no es sólo un asesinato en masa. Es un borrado intencionado.

De la historia. De los recuerdos, los libros y la cultura.

El borrado del potencial de una tierra. El borrado de la esperanza en y para un lugar.

El borrado es la fuerza que impulsa la destrucción de hogares, escuelas, lugares de culto, hospitales, bibliotecas, centros culturales, centros de ocio y universidades.

## El desmantelamiento intencionado

El genocidio es el desmantelamiento intencionado de la humanidad de otros. Es la reducción de una sociedad antigua, orgullosa, culta y próspera a casos de caridad sin dinero, obligada a comer lo indecible para sobrevivir, a vivir en la inmundicia y la enfermedad sin nada que esperar salvo el fin de las bombas y las balas que llueven sobre y a través de sus cuerpos, sus vidas, sus historias y sus futuros.

Nadie puede pensar ni esperar lo que pueda ocurrir tras el alto el fuego. El techo de su esperanza, en este momento, es que cesen los bombardeos.

Se trata de una exigencia mínima. Un reconocimiento mínimo de la humanidad palestina.

Aunque Israel ha cortado la electricidad e Internet, los palestinos han conseguido transmitir una imagen en directo de su propio genocidio a un mundo que permite que continúe.

Pero la historia no mentirá. Dirá que Israel perpetró un holocausto en el siglo XXI.

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