

"All the Consent  
That's Fit to Manufacture"

# The New York <sup>WAR</sup> Crimes

**May Day Edition**  
Today Boycott! Strike!  
Tomorrow Disclose! Divest!  
Always Free Palestine!

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FREE

## WORKERS OF THE WORLD, STRIKE FOR PALESTINE!



Workers, children, and Palestinians of all ages took to the streets of Ramallah last December 11 during a general strike for Gaza. Since October 7, worker action for Palestine has intensified worldwide, building on decades of labor solidarity.

### "The backbone of the struggle"

Riya Al-Sanah on Palestinian workers and the struggle against Zionism

Riya Al-Sanah is a researcher and organizer from the Naqab. Through the Workers in Palestine initiative she "strives to amplify the voices and demands of Palestinian workers internationally and build long-term solidarity with Palestine through worker-to-worker solidarity." This interview took place in Chicago at the 2024 Labor Notes conference, where she spoke during a panel called "Workers of the World for Palestine."

#### How does the occupation intensify the exploitation of Palestinian labor?

Palestinian workers bear the brunt of Israeli colonial violence. All of our working conditions are absolutely shaped by the reality of living under settler-colonial violence. Land expropriation, restrictions on movement and trade, military occupation, plunder of natural resources, and siege all shape the economy and working conditions of the occupied Palestinian territory.

So, you think about medical workers, you think about their access to work, moving through checkpoints, the roads they are using, the equipment and medicine they have access to. And you also think about the patients who these doctors and medical workers have to treat, with their injuries being inflicted daily.

Israel, since its inception, has strived to create a dependent and captive Palestinian labor market, unable to sustain itself in any meaningful and productive way, to decimate the capacities and resilience of the Palestinian communities themselves, and to create a cheap workforce for exploitation by the Israeli market. We have some of the highest levels of unemployment in the world. In Gaza particularly, over 50% of people were unemployed at the beginning of 2023, and even those in employment are working poor. People have to work more than one job, and even then 80% of the population in Gaza was aid-dependent, was unable to survive without the support of international aid.

Those who work in the public sector are all employed by the Palestinian Authority. Even those in Gaza, the majority are employed by the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority. And the budget of the Palestinian Authority is primarily and predominantly composed of international aid, but also what are called "clearance revenues." These are a tax that is collected on trade by Israel, and also from Palestinian workers

"All of our working conditions are absolutely shaped by the reality of living under settler-colonial violence."

employed by Israeli bosses in the settlements or in Israel itself. And those revenues are supposed to be transferred to the Palestinian Authority on a monthly basis, but in effect Israel uses that as a political bargaining chip. So Israel decides when Palestinian workers employed in the public sector get their wages and how much they actually get. This agreement was devised by Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization as part of Oslo. It's part of the Paris Protocol and the economic accords of the Oslo agreement. And it has been absolutely detrimental to the daily lives of Palestinian workers.

I was going to ask you about Palestinian trade unions as a locus of resistance. For example, the massacre that Land Day commemorates was the Israelis attempting to suppress a general strike.

Palestinian workers have long been the backbone of the struggle for liberation and justice, and they have been at the forefront of sustaining our communities.

We see that with healthcare workers putting themselves in service of our people in Gaza today. We see this with the commitment of teachers continuing to teach kids, even in schools that have become shelters, in makeshift tents, under the olive trees, on the beach in Gaza, wherever they're finding the space to continue doing that essential labor. Artists are doing the same thing. Community workers are doing similar things. Trade unionists are delivering food packages and caring for the communities. But there's often an orientation towards Palestine as a humanitarian question simply, and not a political question. And Palestinians are not seen as agents, and only become agents when arms become part of the strategies of resistance. But Palestinians are agents of struggle, and we're agents of our own liberation. And workers have

constantly been at the forefront of that. That has historically been the case, and it continues to be the case.

Coming from Palestine '48, I was wondering if you could talk about the particular challenges of organizing there, you know, at the heart of the Zionist regime.

It's been really difficult organizing in Palestine '48. And I think for a lot of people, including us Palestinians, we surprised ourselves with the silence around what is happening in Gaza now, in terms of mobilization on the street. A lot of us have family there. We have a connection with our colleagues and comrades in Gaza who that we engage with on a regular basis, but it has been surprising, the inability and the fear of people to come out on the street in resistance, in solidarity with Gaza. Joining that fight, joining that struggle, in the way that in 2021 there was a unity of struggle. That's been disheartening for many. But we have to understand, we have to really grapple with why that is the case. It is not because people don't care about Gaza, or don't feel an affinity with Gaza, or don't see Gaza as part of the question of Palestine, or themselves as part of the broader question of the Palestinian people. It is, first and foremost, a culmination of the repressive tactics used by the Israeli state. Since '48, Israel has pursued a strategy of violence and co-optation towards Palestinian communities in '48 [territories], to silence them. It has pursued a strategy of intentional intra-community fragmentation, through facilitating the presence of arms and drugs — communities here will be familiar with what that means in terms of the state coming into your house and into your community, and deliberately trying to fragment it from within in order to weaken your collective resolve. And that is very much the story in Palestine '48.

Added to that, our political leadership and our political class have, since Oslo, oriented themselves towards citizenship, towards the Israeli state, rather than a broader liberatory orientation towards '48 Palestinians being part of the broader Palestinian body. That orientation has really been detrimental to our political struggle. That capitulation around Oslo, and that harmful orientation that followed it, coupled with

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### A CALL FROM GAZA FOR SOLIDARITY WITH THE WORKERS OF PALESTINE

By THE PALESTINIAN GENERAL  
FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS – GAZA

This May Day and Nakba Day, we, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions – Gaza, urgently appeal to our brothers and sisters in the international trade union movement to take a stand in solidarity with Palestine by joining us in collective action to disrupt business as usual. We ask you to challenge the status quo in your workplaces and communities, refusing to support violence against Palestinians. Raise your voices and take action to disrupt the flow of commerce and trade that sustains Israel's military occupation and exploitation of Palestinian workers.

Our people, especially those in Gaza, are enduring unspeakable atrocities – Israel's relentless genocidal bombardment, starvation policies, forced displacement and land confiscation have been broadcast worldwide. These atrocities compound years of a brutal siege and military occupation that have decimated our working conditions. Israel's genocidal war against the Gaza Strip is not an exception, but a continuation of our ongoing 1948 Nakba and a feature of Israeli settler-colonialism. Palestinian workers have always been the backbone of the Palestinian struggle for freedom and justice. Israel's deliberate targeting of trade union facilities, including the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions headquarters in Gaza, along with all our offices, constitutes a flagrant assault on the very livelihoods of Palestinian workers. Despite this unrelenting onslaught, we persist in safeguarding our communities, educating children in makeshift tents, getting the news out, tending to the wounded, and organizing food distribution. As Palestinian workers, we make a commitment to stand strong for our communities.

This May Day and Nakba Day, as governments continue to turn a blind eye, we draw on the long tradition of trade union internationalism and speak directly to you: we urge you to stand in solidarity with our struggle and take decisive action to honor the countless martyrs lost and the families torn apart, and build pressure for a free Palestine. Fellow workers, particularly those in the arms and transport sectors, we implore you to consider that your livelihoods should not be based on the destruction of our

homeland and lives. While we know too well the importance of decent jobs, we urge you to think about the products you manufacture and transport and where they are ultimately deployed. Decent employment should never come at the expense of countless Palestinian lives. As the ones directly affected by arms manufactured and moved internationally, we simply ask you to embrace the principle that an injury to one is truly an injury to all.

Throughout history, workers have bravely opposed oppressive regimes. We have refused to handle goods from apartheid South Africa, and factory workers have rejected the production of arms for dictators like Chile's Pinochet. As the Palestinian death toll continues to climb, this May Day and as we mark 76 years since the colonization of Palestine and the uprooting of over 750,000 Palestinians from their lands during the Nakba (Catastrophe) of 1948, we ask you to stand with us – and let us strive together to construct economies rooted in justice not destruction. Stand with us as we demand an end to Israel's genocide and siege in Gaza. Stand with us as we demand our rights as workers for a decent living, free from settler colonialism and military occupation. Here are some actions you can take this May Day (May 1, 2024) and Nakba Day (May 15, 2024):

Refuse to handle goods coming from or destined to Israel.

Organize a work stoppage or slowdown.

Hold educational meetings within your trade union branch to discuss the Palestinian struggle.

Distribute informational flyers, pamphlets, or newsletters in your workplace to educate colleagues and provide resources for action.

Circulate a workplace petition among co-workers calling for specific actions or policy changes, such as divesting pension funds from companies complicit in the occupation or implementing boycott measures against complicit companies.

Now is the time for courageous worker-led solidarity!

Long live international solidarity with Palestinian workers in their struggle for return and liberation!

### Disclose! Divest! We Will Not Stop, We Will Not Rest

Long live the student intifada

Encampments have appeared at the following universities! Hopefully by the time you read this, the list will be longer. Get out and support one near you!

Subscribe to the Popular University Telegram channel for the latest news at [t.me/popularuniversity](https://t.me/popularuniversity)

**Boston**  
Emerson, Harvard, MIT, Northeastern, Tufts

**NorCal**  
Berkeley, Cal Poly Humboldt, Sonoma State, Stanford

**SoCal**  
Claremont Colleges, UC Santa Barbara, UCLA, USC

**Chicago**  
UChicago, Northwestern

**Northeast**  
Brown, Cornell, Middlebury, Rochester, UConn, UMass Amherst, UVM, Wesleyan, Yale

**Mid-Atlantic**  
Bryn Mawr, Dickinson College, GWU, Mary Washington, UPenn, Pitt, Swarthmore, Virginia Tech

**Midwest**  
Hamline, IU Bloomington, IU Indianapolis, Miami U Ohio, Michigan State, Oberlin, Ohio State, UMichigan Ann Arbor, UMinnesota Twin Cities, Wash U St. Louis

**NYC Area**  
City College/CUNY, Columbia/Barnard, FIT, Fordham, New School, NYU, Pace, Princeton, Rutgers New Brunswick, Stony Brook

**South**  
Emory, Triangle Area (Duke/UNC/NC State), Rice, UNC Charlotte, UT Austin, Vanderbilt

**Southwest**  
Arizona State, U of New Mexico

Don't see one near you? Start your own!



Cal Poly, Humboldt CA



City College of New York, NYC



Northwestern University, Evanston

Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

WANT TO AGITATE FOR PACBI AT WORK?  
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ALREADY RECOGNIZED?  
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# A History of Solidarity...

The American labor movement has seen actions of solidarity with the Palestinian cause since as early as the 1948 Nakba. Below we highlight three key moments linking the past and present of U.S. workers organizing for Palestine.

## 1949 GARMENT WORKERS SUPPORT REFUGEES



April 19, 1949

Mr. David Dubinsky, President of International Ladies Garment Workers Union

Dear Sir: As loyal union members we have wholeheartedly contributed to our International Ladies Garment Workers Union appeal for relief purposes among needy peoples throughout the world.

While we do not question the wisdom of such humanitarian action we believe, however, that since our union membership is composed of a great number of people descendents of different nationalities, that such funds might be more widely distributed so that other people who are in dire need of help would not be denied the benefits and blessings of such an aid.

There is no doubt in our minds but that thousands of people in Israel and Italy do need all the help we can offer. We would like to draw your attention, however, to the plight of hundreds of thousands of other refugees and displaced persons; namely the Arab refugees of Palestine who fled their homes into the desert and neighboring countries. They number around 750,000. They are destitute, homeless suffering human beings threatened by hunger and disease. Their problem is another test for human conscience.

We, the undersigned, members of a community descendent of Arabic-speaking people respectfully lay this problem before you and earnestly hope that you will respond to the call of suffering humanity. Disregarding the political issues at stake, we are fully aware of the widespread suffering of our people in our homeland, most of whom are innocent bystanders in the present strife.

As a man of noble character and high integrity, as a leader of our Union, would you not see to it that part of the funds raised be diverted to the aid of those people—particularly the displaced persons.

Thank you for your sympathetic and kind consideration. Yours truly, 29 signatures

Dear Sir We started to limit our signers to people of our [Arab] race. Yet others having heard of our plea have gladly attached their names to our petition. Please excuse me for sending the sheet that has the names on it the way it is. It has been handled so many times and I can't copy it to send you a clean one. I know you will understand. Thank you.

Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation & Archives at Cornell University

On April 19, 1949, in the immediate wake of the Nakba, rank-and-file members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) wrote a letter to the union's president, David Dubinsky, requesting the ILGWU donate money to help Palestinian refugees. This extraordinary document represents one of the earliest examples of U.S. union members sympathizing with Palestinians and requesting action from their union leadership. Initially organized by Arab workers, the list of signatories was later expanded after enthusiasm was voiced from across the union membership. Dubinsky responded by having the ILGWU donate \$5,000 to the American Friends Service Committee, which was overseeing humanitarian relief for refugees in Gaza.

## 1973 AUTO WORKERS STRIKE FOR PALESTINE

In November 1973, in the aftermath of the October war in which Zionist forces retained control over the territories seized in 1967, autoworkers in Detroit held a wildcat strike in protest over the union's complicity in the Zionist occupation of Palestine, Syria and Egypt — specifically to demand that the United Auto Workers divest from bonds issued by the Israeli state.

The walkout involved over 2,000 workers at the Chrysler plant outside Detroit, led by Arab union members. The Detroit Metro area had become a center for Arab life in the United States since the mid-1960s. At the same time, the Black Power movement had established revolutionary organizing efforts in the auto

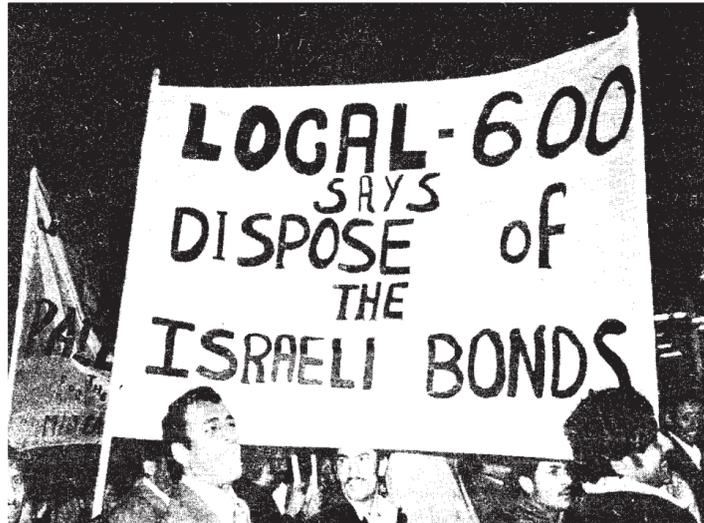
industry in opposition to the recalcitrance and conservatism of the UAW leadership, including the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM). These developments laid the groundwork for an unprecedented show of unity.

In addition to bringing the Palestinian cause to the forefront of American labor activism, the strike was a milestone in fighting back against the auto companies' use of racial divisions, pitting recent Arab immigrants against longtime Black auto workers. The strike saw alliances forged across these divisions, as well as with Black Power and student groups who were organizing in the Detroit metro area.

### As Woodcock Accepts Zionist Award...

## Arab Workers Shut Down Dodge Main

A headline from Workers Vanguard announcing the November 1973 wildcat strike.



Workers Vanguard, 7 December 1973

The walkout at the Chrysler plant was timed to coincide with a protest in downtown Detroit against UAW president Leonard Woodcocks receiving the "Humanitarian of the Year" (!) award from the Zionist B'nai Brith organization.

## 2015 UE ENDORSES BDS

In 2015, the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) became the first national union in the US to endorse the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement. The New York War Crimes spoke with UE president Carl Rosen about the role of American labor in opposing apartheid, occupation and genocide.

Why has UE been so decisively outspoken about Israel-Palestine, not just by helping initiate a letter about Israel's war on Gaza that so many other unions have since signed onto, but endorsing BDS all the way back in 2015?

CR: UE's position on the situation in the Middle East for decades has been rooted in our analysis of international affairs in general, and that was arguably at the root of the split in the labor movement in the McCarthy era. If you go back to 1949, there's no doubt that part of the sharp disagreement and the purging of the left from mainstream labor was over whether labor would have an independent position on foreign policy or would serve to carry water for the bipartisan consensus, which was to have a foreign policy that served the interests of America's biggest corporations.

That's what created American foreign policy after World War II. It was about making the rest of the world safe for American corporations to make their investments there and disinvest from the U.S., moving millions of jobs overseas and in the course of it, impoverishing people in those countries as well as in the U.S. In the Middle East, Israel for decades has played a major role in helping enforce that regime and making sure other countries in that area don't challenge the U.S. too much, especially when oil is involved. So we, for a long time, have had resolutions that were critical of the situation in the Middle East, and as the repressive treatment of Palestinians became more clear, and with calls for support from Palestinian trade unions, we answered those calls and over the years developed a policy that eventually got to the point in the mid-2010s in which we couldn't see that but answer their calls for the BDS movement, which we saw then and see now as very similar to the calls of those looking for liberation and equality in South Africa, pushing for divestment from South Africa, which ended up being critical to their being able to win and overthrow the apartheid regime.

As part of that, we've also called for de-escalation of the arming of Israel. We think that all of the conflicts around the world should be de-armed. The U.S. is the number one purveyor of weaponry around the world, and the world would be a much safer place if the U.S. wasn't doing that.



Across the world, labor must stand with Palestine. Here, British workers march to demand no more arms to Israel.

## "The organizing is the goal"

### On labor law and standing in solidarity with Palestine

Chaumtoli Huq is a labor law professor at the CUNY Law School and a founding member of Employment Lawyers for Palestine, which connects workers facing retaliation from employers with legal counsel and aims to bridge the world of legal advocacy and Palestine organizing. She can be reached at chaumtoli.huq@gmail.com.

How did Employment Lawyers for Palestine come about?

After October 7, we learned from Palestine Legal and CAIR that they were getting an overwhelming number of cases of employment termination and calls for disciplinary hearings. Because labor employment is my expertise, I called the group of labor employment lawyers I knew who were committed to Palestine, and it grew to about 70 or 80 nationally. We quickly met, and we identified a number of issues. One was direct support, for advice. We have a number of private lawyers who have agreed to do pro bono consults and to take cases at a reduced fee.

We also focus on institutional advocacy, because we knew there was going to be a lot more coming, that this was just the tip of the iceberg. I don't think we fully know the extent of the retaliation, because the individuals that came to us were savvy enough to be able to contact groups like Palestine Legal. But we believe there are more workers who were coerced into really exploitative conditions. For example, we've heard of people being required to do apology statements in order to keep their jobs, or are just intimidated and not speaking at all. Because it's not only just the speech, what's alarming is that it's completely chilling any action whatsoever. And that's, of course, all intentional, right?

We have community principles in order to join, but the key is that there has to be align-

ment with Palestinian liberation. We cannot make any demands or arguments that would undermine that. We have to think about the law and how to push it open to provide protection. And when it doesn't, we have to think about other strategies.

What is the landscape of workplace repression right now? How have you seen that change since October 7?

We have to keep in mind that there has been retaliation against anyone who spoke up on Palestine before. I think that those of us who have observed that and know that history, that's why we quickly formed into this group, because we knew what was going to come. And we knew that it was going to be fiercer, because over time, the movement has gotten stronger, so the tactics that will be used are going to be really vicious.

So I think that the repression has happened before, but now there's a totalism of the repression. What I mean by that is that really all institutions are being activated to prevent individuals from speaking. One way to look at it is to get afraid, but the way I look at it is that it should allow us to double down because that means that wins are now in sight. Because when there's greater efforts to activate institutions to repress, that usually means they're afraid.

What kinds of resources are available to us as workers within a legal framework?

If you have a private employer, the law that has the most relevance here is Title VII, a federal anti-discrimination law based on race, color, national origin, sex, or religion. Okay, so how does this work with someone who is being retaliated against for Palestine speech? It's not a protected category, right? We then have to

develop the case. For example, individuals who are not in the protected category, but who still speak up for someone in the protected category and are fired also have what are called "associational rights."

The state of New York and New York City have similar laws. The good thing about New York City laws is that they're a little bit more liberal in their interpretation, and they're more open to anonymous complaints. There's also the National Labor Relations Act — people assume that you have to be a member of a union to get its protection. But Section 7 says that if two or more people organize for workplace conditions, and are retaliated against, that is an unfair labor practice.

For union organizers, this could mean bringing the Palestine issue as a matter of affecting your workplace conditions. It's about how you couch your claim.

Outside of legal tactics, how can workers be fighting back against repression?

Legal tactics are just the support. This is a really important political moment, not just for the Palestinian liberation movement, but for all liberation movements. Most of our folks like myself, we're not just lawyers, we're also organizers. So the law doesn't drive the strategy — the organizing is the goal. We think about what laws exist that can protect us, and if the laws don't protect, what are some things to put in place so that those who are most vulnerable to retaliation are at least protected. No one's going to be able to completely erase any vulnerability, but doing things collectively can help. At the end of the day, labor — being part of a community, labor as part of a larger movement — that's really how we're going to be able to bring any kind of fundamental change.

## "Beyond Making Statements"

### Dispatch from de-occupied Columbia University

In the early hours of the morning on Wednesday, April 17, a group of Columbia University and Barnard College students set up tents in the center of their campus. Though the initial group was arrested and suspended after the administration called in the New York Police Department, the encampment was rapidly rebuilt and has sparked a wave of student solidarity with Palestine across the country. We spoke to a Columbia graduate student worker and member of UAW Local 2710 who was arrested and suspended among the initial group of organizers about their experiences.

What do you think was the impact of the university's response to the encampment?

Right after we were arrested, hundreds of Columbia students flooded the field and took the campus back. And it's been amazing to hear that our own risk has inspired other people to take risks. Since then, we've learned that Gaza solidarity encampments are spontaneously forming in other universities across the country. This is one of the ways we can pressure universities: taking up space, refusing business as usual and making it impossible for the university to continue to function as basically a money laundering system instead of an institution of education.

Were you surprised by how the university has been responding to organizing?

I wish I could say that I was surprised by the university's reaction, but I didn't know how bad it would get at this point. Campus feels like a police state. I'm not at all surprised that the university has stood on the side of capital and on the side of white supremacy, both of which I believe are motivating its investment portfolio and its treatment of Palestine solidarity activists.

What have been the material impacts of arrest and suspension?

Students, many of whom are teenagers, are now suddenly without housing, a regular meal plan, or access to their normal doctors. Those of us who are employed by the university — graduate students on teaching or research appointments, undergrads with similar roles, or RAs in dorms — have lost our income. And so we are relying on mutual aid to stay afloat.

In our teaching roles, as faculty and as student instructors, we are limited in what we can safely say. Faculty have lost their jobs over expressing support for Palestine. One of our demands is ensuring not only that suspended students are allowed to return to campus, but also that faculty who have been fired or had their contracts not renewed can return to their normal teaching positions.

How have people as a community been showing up to take care of one another?

It's been really amazing. The more immediate concerns are for housing, particularly for undergrads. I have an undergraduate student



Columbia in 1968...



... and in 2024

who is staying with me right now who was suspended. I'm taking care of myself, but I'm also in community with other people who are struggling, and so we are taking care of each other. Professors have offered up their homes to people who lost housing; students are sharing their housing resources. It's really beautiful. But still, it's incredibly disturbing that the university has chosen to make dozens of students homeless.

What kind of risk-taking would you like to see from workers and faculty?

As always, workers have the most power when they withhold their labor and identify the leverage points where they control their employers, in this case, the university's capital. And so I would encourage any worker to consider withholding labor in whatever way they safely and legally can. And, in general, even if not withholding labor, to figure out what they can do to pressure their institutions beyond making statements.

How can people show solidarity and increase pressure in this moment?

It's really important to keep the focus on policy and not figureheads. It's quite easy to demand, for example, a resignation. That feels very satisfying, but what does that really accomplish? Of course I care about winning amnesty for my own benefit, but the focus here needs to remain on the people in Gaza and the movement for Palestinian liberation. Everything we do must come back to the people of Gaza, not to campus culture wars or questions of free speech. Those are entirely secondary to the genocide that is happening every single day in Gaza.

# A History of Struggle...

*A timeline of the Palestinian labor movement*

## THE EARLY YEARS...

As the British colonization of Palestine lay the groundwork for Zionist takeover, labor organizing comes to play a key role in the emergence of Palestinian national resistance, culminating in the general strike that inaugurated the Great Revolt of 1936–1939. While early efforts at Jewish-Arab solidarity to resist Zionism emerge, they are to be quashed by the Zionist-British power.

### December 1920

Zionist settlers found the Histadrut, a trade union that Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir later calls as “a great colonizing agency.” The Histadrut owns a construction company and other enterprises which it wielded against Arab-Jewish solidarity, securing jobs for Jews while ostracizing Arabs. Palestinian businesses begin to suffer, while Arab workers struggle for jobs.

### February 1935

Hundreds of Arab and Jewish workers at the Iraq Petroleum Company in Haifa strike together for higher wages, shorter hours, and better conditions. Their action inspires workers across Haifa, the industrial center of Palestine.

### April 19–October 13, 1936

Palestinian workers conduct the longest general strike in modern history. Lasting nearly six months, it is the opening salvo of the 1936–39 Arab Revolt. They demand a ban on further Jewish immigration and sales of land to Jews, as well as a national government that reflects the large Arab majority. “Many of the unemployed, alienated workers joined armed rebel groups led by Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam,” writes journalist Ramzy Baroud. “After his death in 1935, his followers, joined by Palestinian laborers, initiated a general strike which transformed into a three-year-long mass rebellion. Thousands were killed in the battle or were executed by British colonialists and their Zionist allies.”

### 1945–1947

Despite the escalating pace of Zionist aggression and terror in the final days of the British Mandate, some strikes between Jewish and Arab workers continue. The Arab Workers Congress and the Histadrut strike and win against British military employers and Haifa’s Consolidated Refineries in 1945. In 1946, blue and white collar workers across the postal, telegraph and telephone, and railway industries conduct a general strike. Others join in, with an estimated 23,000 workers participating in total. A tenuously-aligned Arab-Jewish strike breaks out at Consolidated Refineries in January 1947.

## THE NAKBA, NAKSA, AND AFTER...

The Nakba violently disperses and dramatically weakens the Arab working class. Palestinian workers become dependent on international handouts for survival. In the catastrophe’s aftermath, the Israeli government bans the Arab Workers Congress. Palestinian citizens of Israel are granted the right to join the trade unions of the Jewish Histadrut in 1960, although they are unable to fully realize their rights as members. Meanwhile, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, workers are under the control of Jordan and Egypt respectively. The economic interests of the Palestinian bourgeoisie increasingly overlap with those of the Zionist settlers, contributing to the marginalization of Palestinian workers and peasants. After the Naksa of 1967, all of Palestine falls under the shadow of Zionist occupation.

### 1965

The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions is founded in the Jordanian-controlled West Bank. Following Israel’s 1967 conquest of the West Bank, the PGFTU begins to operate as an independent body for Palestinian workers, often meeting in secret due to its ties to the Palestinian Liberation Front.

### 1972

In need of cheap labor, Israel opens the 1948 borders to Palestinian workers. By then, Palestinian workers in the Occupied Territories are desperate for employment.

### March 30, 1976

Palestinians hold a mass protest and general strike in opposition to Israel’s 1975 Galilee Development Plan to confiscate some 20,000 dunams (20 km<sup>2</sup>; 7.7 sq mi) of land between the Arab villages of Sakhnin and Arraba. During the uprising, Israeli police killed six unarmed workers, half of whom were women. Today, workers commemorate the anniversary as “Land Day.”

### 1980s

A handful of strikes against both Palestinian and Israeli employers. The most notable were strikes of educational staff, including a mostly unsuccessful hundred-day strike of Palestinian public-school teachers employed by the Israeli government in 1981 and a partially successful three-month strike at Birzeit University in 1986.

### 1987–1991

The First Intifada sees a proliferation of general strikes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip aimed at advancing the Palestinian demand that Israel completely withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967.

### After 1967...

Tens of thousands of Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank begin to work in Israel, often in precarious conditions on the construction of Jewish settlements. Palestinian workers must pay an “organization fee” to the Histadrut to cover the cost of collective bargaining — which they are excluded from. Conditions are precarious, and the minimum wage is often not met, “but striking to remedy this was out of the question,” according to historian Joel Beinin. The military occupation monitored the workers’ movements too closely.

### 1967–1971

The Israeli military issues more than two hundred orders regulating Palestinian economic life. Confiscations of land and economic restrictions lead to the collapse of the Palestinian agricultural sector. As reported by Jacobin, agrarian work made up 40% of the jobs in Palestinian territories in 1967, and less than 30% by 1993.

## OSLO AND ONWARD...

Following the Oslo Accords in 1993, the Palestinian Authority is established. This brings new public-sector job opportunities, with the PA employing around 20% of Palestinians. But this promise of prosperity is a lie. The PA, ever subservient to the Zionist occupation and its interests, instead works steadily against the interests of Palestinian workers and their rights. “The PA’s manipulation of jobs and salaries as a way to ensure political allegiance or to punish dissent can be clearly seen in the besieged Gaza Strip,” writes analyst Ramzy Baroud. “As the PA’s main faction, Fatah, continues to clash with its Hamas rivals in Gaza, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas has repeatedly slashed salaries and altogether denied employment to thousands of struggling Gazans, prompting mass protests.” Nevertheless, Palestinians continue to mobilize for their rights as workers and their inalienable right to resist occupation.

### Late 1990s

WAC-MAAN, an Israeli reformist labor organization supporting Palestinian unionism against Israeli employers, is founded.

### September 2012

Palestinian taxi drivers in the West Bank strike to protest rising fuel prices and living costs.

### April 2016

Palestinian teachers in the West Bank initiate a wildcat strike that lasts for over a month. What begins as a two-day walkout for better teacher pay evolves into one of the biggest protests since the second intifada.

### 2017

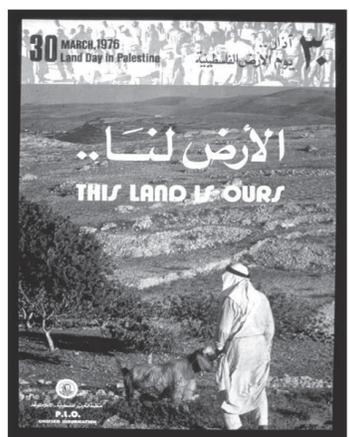
An Israeli court rules the workers of Zarfaty Garage in the Maa’ale Adumim settlement in Occupied Palestinian Territory have the right to form a union. “I beat my Israeli boss through his own courts,” said a worker-organizer. In 2017 the Zarfaty mechanics become the first Palestinian workers from the West Bank to sign a collective agreement with an Israeli employer.

### 2018–19

Palestinians strike as part of a series of nonviolent mass demonstrations demanding the end of the Israeli blockade and the right of return for refugees. In Gaza, demonstrators march toward the occupation wall on Land Day beginning a series of protests collectively known as the “Great March of Return” that continues for 18 months. Zionist forces kill more than 230 Palestinian protesters as they approach the barrier separating Gaza from the rest of Palestine.



Protesters in Gaza raise the Palestinian flag during the Great March of Return in April 2018. Over the course of 18 months of protests, Zionist forces kill more than 200 demonstrators and injure over 9,000.



A poster for the first Land Day. On March 30, 1976, Zionist forces killed six Palestinian citizens of Israel who were protecting their lands in the Galilee against confiscation. The date has been Land Day ever since.

### 2019

Amidst a worsening economic crisis, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon face a work-permit crackdown, adding to the already precarious situation. Palestinian workers have long been barred from employment in 72 professions in Lebanon.

### October 2020

West Bank teachers go on strike again. The Palestinian Authority does not have the funds to pay its 130,000 employees because Israel periodically refuses to transfer duties and tax receipts to it as the terms of the Oslo Accords require.

### November 2020

Eighty Palestinians workers employed by businesses in the illegal Nitzanei Shalom industrial settlement in the West Bank unionize and go on strike after the Israeli Yamit Filtration company refuses to negotiate with them for improvements to their working conditions. They demand a collective labor agreement in order to put an end to the company’s practice of providing different and unequal terms of employment for its Israeli and Palestinian employees.

### May 18, 2021

The High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel, the unofficial leading body of Palestinian Israelis, who comprise about 20% of Israel’s citizens, initiates the call for the “Dignity Strike.” They are joined by West Bank construction workers and the resulting strike disables Israel’s construction industry for a day.

### April 21, 2024

A general strike is called in the West Bank after Israeli occupation forces attack the Nur Shams refugee camp in the city of Tulkarm in the West Bank and kill 14 people. Residents of the camp say the raid left it uninhabitable. “What happened is that they left no trees,” one resident of the refugee camp told Democracy Now! after the deadly raid.

### May 1, 2024

Today. Around the world, workers mark May Day with marches, protests, and strikes in solidarity with their comrades, colleagues, and fellow workers in Palestine. In the U.S., the student intifada continues to unfold...

## Al Sanah on labor and solidarity

*Continued from page 1*

state violence and repression, but also policies of co-optation. And in daily life, Palestinians in ‘48 are the poorest population in Israel. There are huge levels of unemployment. The job market is tight, in terms of where people can work, and what kind of work people do. All of these things come together to create a situation that is challenging, and it’s challenging to organize in. In 2021, when people rose up and fought, it was against the odds, because everybody had forgotten about ‘48 Palestinians, right?

And I think for many ‘48 Palestinians, they had forgotten that they had political agency as well. May 2021 was a moment where the fire was relit, and we felt alive again. And in that moment in time, it was the people who are most marginalized in our communities — people who were feeling the economic dispossession, the settler-colonial state violence, the police repression on a regular basis — who were also at the forefront. And they ended up paying a heavy, heavy price. A lot of young kids have been sentenced, some of them to decades in jail.

The way that Israel has historically worked, it worked to fragment that community base, to the level that, when that repression was taking place, there wasn’t anybody to hold it back. There wasn’t the kind of infrastructure ready to support those communities that were being repressed and targeted, deliberately targeted, to teach us all a lesson. And that brings us to this place where we are right now, where people are scared of putting up Facebook posts about Gaza. Implementing a process of self-censorship around that.

But also the repression has continued beyond, so there’s been a lot of people that have been fired from their jobs for posting, there are people that have been imprisoned. There’s been a lot of incitement campaigns. Our comrade and colleague Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, a professor at the Hebrew University who works on childhood and trauma and on Israeli policies of what she calls the “un-childing” of Palestinian children, was suspended for signing a statement saying Israel needs to stop its violence against Palestinians. And then she was arrested a few days ago when she was coming back from travel. She’s released now, but these smaller, individualized examples of repression, they reverberate and they create a culture of fear. And when we don’t have solid political organizations on the ground that are able to offer an alternative political vision, are able to offer material and concrete support, then it becomes a challenge for political movements to grow and develop and find a space.

**The last thing I wanted to ask is, how can workers abroad support their Palestinian comrades in the labor movement?**

Palestinian workers, with the start of Israel’s genocidal onslaught, very quickly on the 16th of October, they issued a call to their comrades internationally to act, to stand in solidarity with them, and, particularly, to stop arming Israel, to stop the manufacturing and the transport of weapons to Israel, to target all of those

institutions and companies that are complicit with Israeli crimes, particularly in the siege of Gaza.

For the 1st of May, Palestinian workers have called on making May Day a day for Palestine, of centering Palestine within our organizing. Trying by any means, in any way, to stop the transport of goods going to Israel, to engage in work stoppages on that day, to center Palestine in the mass mobilizations, to organize meetings where they can talk about Palestine and the conditions of their colleagues and workers.

Because really, we do understand—we Palestinians have been in the struggle for a long time. And there’s a lot of new people coming to the movement, and that is fantastic and amazing. We need to build on the fact that new people, people who are not familiarized with Palestine, are coming into our movement. And we need to have an eye for the future. Sadly, we know that this is not going to be our last battle.

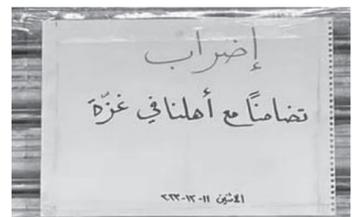
**“For the 1st of May, Palestinian workers have called on making May Day a day for Palestine.”**

This is not the last battleground. But we need to be attentive to the potential that this moment has opened up for us. And we need to take that with dignity and respect. We need to respect what this moment means for us as labor organizers, for us as Palestine organizers in the labor movement, and we need to engage with that. And we need to use that momentum now to build our capacity to exert much more influential change in the future as we move forward. Because a lot has happened, but it’s over six months on, the genocide is still going, the weapons are still reaching Israel. A lot has happened in terms of moving us forward, particularly in the American labor movement, there have been massive leaps forward towards Palestine.

And I think we can really talk about the development of an anti-war movement within the labor movement, where Palestine is at the center of it. We see it also in terms of a defeat for labor Zionism, because the relationship of the labor movement in the U.S. and the Zionist movement has been a longstanding and strong one. And I think the call from Palestine and the agency that Palestinian workers have exerted has been influential in making this shift that we see here today. And we have a responsibility to think seriously, to take stock, to look around to see what we have achieved so far, but to also have an eye for the future and thinking through, how do we integrate Palestine as a workplace issue? How do we bring Palestine into every single workplace? There’s a lot of people on the streets, there can be way more people organizing in their workplaces, and organizing effectively to shut down the war machine.

## OCTOBER 7 AND THE FUTURE...

Since the launch of Al Aqsa Flood, the Palestinian trade union movement has issued calls to the workers of the world to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Workers across historic Palestine and in the diaspora have also organized strikes to call for a permanent ceasefire, the liberation of their lands and their rights for freedom, dignity and return.



December 11, 2024: A sign in the West Bank reads “On strike in solidarity with our people in Gaza.”

### October 16, 2023

The Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions calls to divest from arms companies: “The time is NOW to halt the arms trade, funding, and military research. Palestinian lives depend on it. Share this message far and wide!”

### December 11 and 18, 2023

Palestinian workers call for general strikes. The West Bank and much of East Jerusalem are both completely shut down both times.

### March 23, 2024

The PGFTU releases a more radical demand: divest from Israel. It is endorsed by more than thirty Palestinian unions and labor federations.

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1st OF

MAY

2024

أيار عيد العمال

This is an updated version of a poster produced for International Workers' Day on May 1, 1982 by the Palestinian Liberation Organization's Information Bureau. Four months later, the PLO would be expelled from Beirut following the siege of the city and massacres of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese citizens at the hands of Zionist forces.