

SEIU LOCAL 140

OCTOBER 17TH 2023 NEWSLETTER



TAKE ACTION!

Sign our strike [pledge!](#)

Fill out this [survey](#) for reimbursements from February's snowstorm

Phone bank at SEIU 10/21, 1-3:30 to let members know of our strike [pledge](#)

Next bargaining dates:

10/25 1-5pm PEC

10/26 1-5pm SEIU

10/27 1-5pm PEC



UNION UPDATES

Coalition Rally - October 10

Several hundred people held a [practice picket](#) at the PEC district headquarters this past week. The crowd then listened to speakers including Angela Bonilla, the president of PAT, Amy Silvia, the co-chair of our sub-local, Elizabeth Held from PFSP and Nichet Newsome from DCU who spoke about their demands for livable wages and expressed how the district was failing to acknowledge the hardships workers are facing. Multiple women also [spoke out](#) against the district's failure to respond in any meaningful way to a toxic culture of sexual harassment and retaliation that affects staff as well as students. Speakers described their own experiences while also reiterating the union coalition's demands and calling out the district leaders including Sharon Reese, Genevieve Rough, Roshni Sabedra, and Sarah Fitch for gaslighting and retaliating against those who speak out about harassment and discrimination.

Many later attended the board meeting, where [union leaders](#) Angela Bonilla, Amy Silvia, Adam Mauer and Elizabeth Held spoke for PAT, SEIU, DCU and PFSP respectively. Another speaker slammed the district for its response to repeated complaints of [sexual harassment](#) and named Richard Smith and Sarah Fitch as two perpetrators of retaliation against women who file complaints. A teacher also [spoke](#) about the district's failure to support teachers and students alike noting that "the school board repeatedly votes against teachers and staff who ask for the bare minimum."

The rally was an example of what's possible when we work together across union lines and show solidarity for our collective well being and for that of the students. It's key to note that despite being presented with so much emotional testimony from union members and the public, the board once again had little to say, preferring to remain silent and treat the audience to guilty and stoic gazes. It's perhaps time to evaluate whether simply speaking at the board meetings is enough, or if it's time for an alternative people's assembly or other actions to expose the board's failure to listen to the voters who elect them.

Public-Private Partnerships at PPS

At the October 10th board meeting, the board voted to [pursue a lease](#) with a private organization to develop a sports complex on a vacant lot owned by the district. The Whitaker site is the location of the former Whitaker school which was closed and demolished after the Willamette Week published a [story](#) showing that for years the district knew of unsafe levels of radon and carbon dioxide in the building (which had no operable windows) and yet did nothing to notify parents, students, or teachers. Now board chair Gary Hollands is seeking to lease the land to a nonprofit of which Hollands is the executive director. The resolution to seek a lease with the Albina Sports Program passed with the support of Julia Brim-Edwards, Andrew Scott, Herman Greene, and Eddie Wang. Michelle DePass and Patte Sullivan both expressed [concern](#) about the public-private partnership which would allow a private entity to profit off the development of public land without any guarantee that the facility would be accessible to PPS students.



Whitaker being demolished in 2007

LOCAL SOLIDARITY

UAW Workers on Strike in Beaverton

UAW workers are currently on strike around the country, including at the Stellantis Parts Distribution Center on Allen Rd in Beaverton. This hub sends parts to hundreds of dealerships across the Northwest and like other parts centers is a crucial chokepoint for strikers to put pressure on automakers since dealers can't do repairs without the necessary components. Walking the picket line 24/7, these workers are holding out against large corporations that have not continued to [enrich](#) their executives and investors while tossing crumbs to workers. The UAW announced an expansion of their

strike to hit one of Ford's most pivotal plants after bargaining broke down once again. We've written in previous articles about the parallels with our increasingly privatized school district where funding has been cut for direct classroom instruction and support while prioritizing high-paying administrative positions.



I (Keenan) went out to the picket line for a while this previous week to show solidarity and I hope to make it back when possible. Listening to music, socializing and waving to passersby, many of whom seemed to show support, the workers have been holding it down in shifts. As with all strikes, UAW workers have to abide by labor laws and can't block trucks bringing shipments of parts into or out of the facility. Thankfully, a handful of community supporters stood in front of a truck that was attempting to leave the property, delaying the shipment and hopefully costing the corporation on some level. It's impossible to go too much into the history of labor laws here, and while some important wins such as OSHA have been secured over the years, we'll never truly be able to beat the bosses and capital by fighting on their terms. In other words, let's study the history of labor law as workers and come to our own conclusions as to whether disobedience is necessary rather than assuming that playing by the rules will win us the respect we deserve.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Role of Labor in the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Movement

The Israel-Palestine conflict can be a delicate and complicated subject in the mainstream media, but this article attempts to understand the root causes of the conflict, and the historical and contemporary role of the international labor movement in resolving it. For instance, workers in Palestine protested British colonial rule in 1936 by launching a

[general strike](#) which lasted 6 months, which faced severe repression by British occupying forces. It was actually the British who originally facilitated the creation of the state of Israel through colonial confiscation of Palestinian land. The intensifying antisemitism raging in Europe forced thousands of Jews to seek refuge abroad, many joining the British-backed Zionist movement that encouraged Jews to settle in what was then the British Mandate of Palestine. However, rather than uphold the rights of all people to equality and freedom from persecution and injustice, the creation of the state of Israel has been premised on the oppression and expulsion of the Palestinian people, while also being subservient to British and US military and economic interests in the wider Middle East region.

Graphic aired in 2015 on MSNBC



On Friday, Israel ordered the mass evacuation of over 1 million Palestinians within 24 hours, while continuing to conduct airstrikes which have killed over 2,800 Palestinians so far including more than 850 children. Gaza, which is home to some 2.3 million people, has been under a severe blockade for over 15 years with Israel limiting access to basic goods; [Human Rights Watch](#) has described it as a massive “open air prison.” The surprise attack by Hamas on October 7th—and the organization itself—only exist to begin with in the context of decades of violent occupation. Specifically over the last year, Israel has escalated its illegal seizure of land in the occupied West Bank, carried out attacks which have left over 200 dead, many of them children, and repeatedly conducted police raids on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, one of Islam’s holiest sites. Now, Israel has announced a “complete siege” on Gaza, with Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant openly calling Palestinians “human animals” and declaring “there will be no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel. Everything will be closed.”

Israel is by far the largest recipient of US aid in the world, receiving [\\$4.8 billion](#) just in 2022. Besides being a key US ally in the oil-rich region, Israel is a major buyer of US made weapons and surveillance technologies. In fact, the recent escalation of attacks have seen [stock prices](#) of weapons manufacturers like Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman soar. Other major corporations which have profited off of the conflict include Boeing, G4S, Raytheon, Caterpillar, Hewlett Packard, Google and Amazon. Moreover, many US police departments participate in [exchanges](#) with the Israeli Defense Force where they are trained in practices of surveillance, racial profiling, and use of force to suppress public protest.

The boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement is one way in which workers around the world show support for the liberation of Palestine. In the last 15+ years, numerous trade unions have expressed [solidarity](#) with the Palestinian people by holding actions, boycotting Israeli-made products, and passing resolutions opposing Israeli apartheid. The [BDS movement](#) was inspired by the anti-apartheid movement which succeeded in eventually toppling the white-supremacist apartheid regime in South Africa in the early 90s. Some unions which have expressed solidarity with the struggle for liberation in Palestine include the [UAW 2865](#), [Seattle Education Association](#), [dockworkers](#) in South Africa, the [Canadian Union of Postal Workers](#), and dockworkers with [ILWU Local 10](#) in Oakland.



Labor protests to block Israeli ships from docking in 2021, Oakland and New Jersey