

The Washington Post and the lie of Uyghur genocide

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The *Washington Post* has been in the forefront of promoting the vilification of China as the US ramps up its confrontation with Beijing and preparations for war. This includes the lie that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime is engaged in the genocide of the Muslim Uyghur minority in Xinjiang in western China.

A *Washington Post* editorial on Sunday entitled “China’s repression of Uyghurs is not only cultural, but also physical, a new report shows” begins by selectively quoting the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide. It cites the convention’s Article II (d) which declares that genocide including “imposing measures intended to prevent births” within a population, then refers to two reports showing sharp falls in the birth rates among Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

The citation is deliberately misleading as the editorial fails to quote the opening of Article II which states: “genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” Without this necessary context, any birth control program could be seized upon as evidence that the government involved is carrying out “genocide.”

On this basis, China’s One-Child policy introduced by Deng Xiaoping in 1979, as he was initiating the processes of capitalist restoration, could be construed as “genocide” as it was selectively applied to the urban population of the Han majority. National minorities, including the Uyghurs, were exempt from the policy and allowed to have two or even three children. Rural communities were also granted some exemptions.

It is, of course, absurd to label the One-Child policy, which was certainly a bureaucratic and repressive response to an expanding population, as “genocide” of the Chinese Han majority. But then it is just as absurd

to label the current policies being carried out in Xinjiang against the Uyghurs as “genocide” on the basis of falling birth rates.

The Stalinist CCP regime is certainly carrying out repression against the Uyghurs in Xinjiang as part of its domestic “war on terrorism” and the threat posed by Uyghur separatism—as it does against any threat to its rule, particularly from the working class.

The lack of independent information makes it impossible to gauge the extent of the police-state measures directed against the Uyghurs. On the one hand, the CCP denies its trampling on democratic rights and paints a rosy picture of life in Xinjiang. On the other, US imperialism and its allies are ratcheting up a filthy propaganda campaign based on misrepresentations and falsehoods to demonise China as it prepares for war.

The US has justified every one of its wars of aggression—itsself a war crime in international law—over the past three decades on the basis of lies. Its campaigns on “human rights” are turned on and turned off to suit its strategic interests. The Biden administration, which condemns China for genocide, has given the green light for the Zionist state of Israel to wage its murderous “war on terrorism” against the Palestinians.

Indeed, as it was seeking support for its own criminal “war on terrorism” and invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Bush administration backed China’s “war on terror” in Xinjiang. Now as US imperialism intensifies its war drive against Beijing, it no longer sanctions Uyghur separatists as “terrorists” and is marshalling its propaganda outlets to condemn China’s “genocide” of the Uyghurs. Xinjiang has become a particular focus for American misinformation as it is strategically located adjacent to Central Asia and is essential to the

land routes to Europe envisaged in Beijing's Belt-and-Road Initiative to unify Eurasia and counter US encirclement.

The *Washington Post* is integrated into this campaign as have those responsible for the two reports referred to in its Sunday's editorial. The first published last year by right-wing, anti-communist German academic Adrian Zenz pioneered the comparison of birth rates in predominantly Uyghur counties in Xinjiang to those of predominantly Han counties. Like all of Zenz's "research," including his widely-cited figures on the number of Uyghurs in detention centres, his methodology is riddled with flaws and his findings crafted to reach a predetermined conclusion. He is a born-again Christian who declares he has been "led by God" to his work on Chinese minorities.

The editorial is focused primarily on the stark figures in the second report produced this month by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)—a government-supported think tank that also receives funding from American sources. Citing the report, it declares that China has put in place "a more coercive and intrusive policing of reproduction processes" against the Uyghurs, with hefty fines, disciplinary punishment and extrajudicial internment or the threat of it for any "illegal births." Birth rates for Uyghurs plunged by 43.7 percent between 2017 and 2018.

It is necessary to consider the context. In 2016, as it was moving to ease its One-Child policy for China as a whole, Beijing ended its comparatively liberal approach to national minorities in Xinjiang that not only allowed urban Uyghur women to have two children and rural Uyghur women up to three, but effectively turned a blind eye to larger families, especially in rural areas.

As part of its "war on terrorism," Xinjiang authorities began applying similar "coercive and intrusive policing of reproduction processes"—including the insertion of IUDs and sterilisations—as had applied for decades to the majority Han population elsewhere in China. According to Wikipedia, between 1980 and 2014, 324 million Chinese women received IUDs and 108 million were sterilised. The insertion of an IUD was mandatory by law four months after the birth of the first child.

Of course, wealthier layers of the population able to pay the fine or the necessary bribes, were never limited to one child. Just as Zenz, ASPI and the *Washington Post* have nothing to say about the CCP's anti-

democratic measures against the Chinese working class, so they do not refer to the repressive One-Child policy that was directed above all against working-class women in urban centres.

Moreover, ASPI, like Zenz, in presenting its dramatic, if questionable, figures fails to take other factors into account, in particular the exodus of Uyghurs from Xinjiang, either as a consequence of the CCP's oppressive measures or in search of better opportunities in coastal China. Many of those who left will have been young, including women of child-bearing age, which would also have skewed the Uyghur population and contributed to lower the birth rates. To what extent it is unknown. But neither ASPI nor Zenz bothered to consider, let alone investigate the issue, as it did not fit their pre-conceived conclusions.

As for the *Washington Post*, it seizes on the most dramatic declines in birth rates to insist that global corporations, such as Airbnb, Bridgestone, Intel, Coca-Cola, P&G, Samsung, Toyota, Visa, Panasonic and others, end their support for China's 2022 Winter Olympics as a sign of protest.

"Either you believe in 'never again,' or you contribute to 'once again,'" the editorial concludes, deliberately drawing a connection to the Nazi murder of Jews that prompted the phrase "never again" and the 1948 Convention on Genocide. The comparison between the CCP's policy of lowering Uyghur birthrates and the systematic extermination of Jews in Nazi gas chambers is not only false but also diminishes the monstrous crimes of the Nazis and devalues the meaning of term "genocide."



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