Chicago Democrats pass resolution supporting Israeli assault on Gaza, as DSA members stage bankrupt stunt

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On October 13, a special session of the Chicago city council was called to debate and vote on a "Israel Solidarity Resolution," authored by 50th Ward Alderperson Deb Silverstein. The document is a lie from top to bottom, including the false and inflammatory claim that Palestinians murdered babies, in an attempt to morally defend the genocidal siege and blockade of Gaza.

The document falsely presented Israel's brutal retaliation as "ethically driven, with the goal of eliminating the terrorist infrastructure and taking extreme measures to minimize civilian casualties," as reported by the *Chicago Tribune* earlier this week.

The six Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) members on the city council organized no opposition to the resolution, refusing even to demand the votes be entered into the public record. Instead they attempted an easily defeated maneuver to block the vote, after requesting the resolution have more "nuance."

The Biden administration and leading members of the Democratic Party and corporate media have given full support to Israel's military policy. Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker, scion of the Hyatt Hotels Pritzker family, declared, "We pray for the men and women of the Israeli Defense Forces." State Department staff last week were given explicit instructions not to issue any press materials that contain the phrases "end to violence/bloodshed," "restoring calm," or "de-escalation/ceasefire."

A deadly consequence of the stream of propaganda and lies came Saturday morning in the Chicago suburb of Plainfield. Joseph Czuba, a 71-year old landlord, targeted and attacked two of his Palestinian-American tenants with a knife, grievously injuring a 32-year-old woman, who was stabbed at least 12 times, and murdering 6-year-old Wadea Al-Fayoume, who was stabbed 26 times.

Democratic Mayor Brandon Johnson, a former lobbyist for the Chicago Teachers Union and county commissioner, denounced the October 7 uprising as "truly heinous", saying that it "represents one of the worst acts of terror we've witnessed." Elected in April in a campaign season dominated by "law and order" candidates and media coverage, Johnson spent his first months in office working closely with the Chicago Police Department. On September 12 he signed a one-year $29.4 million deal with GardaWorld Federal Services to build and operate migrant detention camps in the city.

Johnson's election was supported by the five incumbent DSA alderpersons, Carlos Ramirez Rosa, Byron Sigcho Lopez, Jeanette Taylor, Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez and Dan La Spata, all of whom were awarded leadership positions on the city council, with Ramirez Rosa taking the position of floor leader, responsible for pushing through the mayor's agenda. The sixth DSA alderperson, Angela Clay, was elected for the first time last spring.

The city council passed its "Israel Solidarity Resolution" over significant public protest. The following day, more than 10,000 marched in Chicago against Israel's genocidal actions in Gaza. In recent days, millions have protested internationally to demand an end to the war, and that their own governments cease all material and political support.

When it became known on Wednesday that the resolution was coming before city council, there was public outcry. Protests against the Israeli state retaliation against Gaza were already underway. At the special session on Friday, protesters and counter-protestors were present for the public comment portion. Johnson eventually had police remove public participants from the hall, an act for which there is no recent precedent.

The main significance of the resolution was to signal that the city leadership, an epicenter of the Democratic

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Party and host to its 2024 national convention, gives its full-throated support to war crimes and violent repression both abroad and at home.

DSA alderpersons did not organize to try to defeat the resolution on the city council, nor did they insist the votes eventually taken be entered into the record. Instead they attempted a procedural move to block a vote from taking place, which was easily circumvented. According to media and activist reports, DSA members and other "progressives" on the city council absented themselves, aiming to deny the council the quorum needed. But the remaining members present eventually voted to proceed to a vote on the resolution anyway, passing the resolution by a voice vote, for which there is no detailed record. Any member of the city council could have demanded a roll call vote, for which votes are recorded.

Ald. Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez did not absent herself from the vote, and was the only alderperson to ask to be put on record as voting no. Earlier in the week, she volunteered to work with Silverstein to modify her resolution. She told the *Sun Times*, "If we are against violence, we are against all types of violence. And we need to be in solidarity with our Palestinian siblings."

After the resolution had passed, the Chicago chapter of DSA released a statement on the resolution, objecting that it was simply one-sided: "We reject a resolution passed today by the City Council which unequivocally supports the actions of the Israeli state without any recognition of the humanity and oppression of the Palestinian people, especially as Israel stands poised to destroy Gaza and indiscriminately kill Gaza residents in an unprecedented ground invasion. There is no justification for violence against civilians, and there is no justification for collective punishment and apartheid. In this moment, we must be bold in our calls for peace and the deescalation of an already horrific crisis."

Johnson's floor leader and leading member of Chicago DSA, Carlos Ramirez Rosa, announced in 2017 that he had fully accommodated himself to the Democratic Party's support for Israel's fascistic policies when he was dropped from the gubernatorial campaign of Daniel Biss for his support of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement. On that unfortunate episode, he said: "My hope is that five years from now, as a Democratic Party, we are more committed to having these constructive dialogues and allowing for these differences [in relation to BDS] to exist."

Just six years later, DSA elected leaders nationally have not only funded the Israeli military, but boosted the US military and state policing apparatus, engaged the US in a proxy war against Russia, supported the banning of a rail strike, and stood by as COVID-19 has taken the lives and health of millions of Americans.

Last week, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez condemned the New York DSA chapter's support for a protest in defense of Gaza, demonstrating clearly that the DSA's explicit purpose is to be the political instrument of and for the Democratic Party. The most prominent DSA elected leaders, Ocasio-Cortez included, have already endorsed US President Joe Biden for re-election in 2024.

The Democrats, the ruling party in the city council and in the Illinois state leadership, are keenly aware of the deep social opposition and anger boiling up in cities like Chicago all around the world. Ald. Anthony Beale's comments revealed more than he perhaps intended when he said, referring to the ongoing and insistent public protest against the resolution, "It's Ald. Silverstein today. It could be anyone tomorrow."

In opposition to the vicious militarism and brazen lying of the imperialist governments, the sympathy of the great majority of the world's population is with the Palestinians, who have faced decades of persecution. The Socialist Equality Party calls on the working class in every country to mobilize to stop the developing genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza, and the complicity of imperialist governments. Mass demonstrations and protests should be called in cities and on college campuses throughout the world.

Readers in the Chicago area are invited to attend a public meeting being held by the International Youth and Students for Social Equality:
Stop the Israel genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza!
Harold Washington Library, 3N6- 3rd Floor
Wednesday, October 25, 6:00pm

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