

No to anti-Semitism! For the unity of the Russian, Palestinian, and Israeli working class!

The Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists
3 November 2023

The Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists is a Trotskyist youth organization that has declared its political solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International. It is active in Russia, Ukraine and other countries of the former Soviet Union.

On the evening of October 29, more than a thousand protesters gathered near Makhachkala International Airport in response to the arrival of a flight from Israel. Makhachkala is the capital of Dagestan, an extremely impoverished region in the Russian North Caucasus whose population is overwhelmingly Muslim.

The crowd penetrated first into the terminal and then onto the runway where the plane was standing. The protesters tried to prevent the arrival of passengers from Israel. A clearly antisemitic atmosphere prevailed and openly antisemitic slogans were displayed, including one describing the passengers as “unclean.” Crowds reportedly also searched a hotel for Israeli citizens. According to the Russian news agency RBC, a total of 1,200 people took part in the riots. The Kremlin mobilized the police to crack down on the protests, arrested over 60 people, and shut down the airport for several days.

This riot cannot be regarded as anything other than a reactionary result of the imperialist-backed genocidal onslaught against the Palestinian people by Israel. It confirms the warning, made by the International Committee of the Fourth International, in its first statement on the assault on Gaza: “The danger posed by a renewed growth of anti-Semitism is very real. But it emanates not from the democratic strivings of the masses of Gaza and the occupied West Bank, but from the reactionary national chauvinism incited by capitalism and imperialism.”

It must be stated clearly that principal responsibility for what happened in Makhachkala on October 29 lies with the Israeli government, which is engaged in a genocidal war on the Palestinian people while falsely claiming that the Jewish people and the Zionist project and Israeli government are one and the same. Responsibility also lies with imperialism, as it has for decades promoted the Zionist regime in Israel and now actively sponsors and arms the Netanyahu regime in its genocide. At the same time, in Ukraine, the imperialist powers arm and fund antisemitic and neo-fascist forces that stand in the tradition of the Ukrainian Nazi collaborators who played a central role in the Holocaust.

It is not completely clear what forces were involved in inciting the riot. A number of local Telegram channels were calling for protests, using clearly antisemitic language. The Russian state media and President Putin are claiming an exclusively Western influence on the protests. Indeed, one cannot rule out that Western special services

were involved in inciting the riots, seeking to undermine stability in Russia itself. The instigation of ethnic and nationalist conflicts and tensions, especially among the country’s large Muslim population, has long been part of the imperialist strategy to carve up Russia. The *Financial Times* reported that a channel previously associated with Ilya Ponomarev, a leading figure in the pro-NATO opposition in the Russian oligarchy who has coordinated incursions of Russian territory by Ukrainian neo-fascist militias, had helped incite the riot.

But political responsibility for the outburst of antisemitism also lies with the Kremlin and the Russian oligarchy as a whole. The Russian ruling elite has a sinister history of promoting antisemitism. This includes both the Jewish pogroms in Tsarist Russia and the antisemitic campaigns of the Stalinist bureaucracy, a central component of Stalinism’s nationalist reaction against the internationalist program of the October Revolution. The Russian oligarchy as it emerged out of the Soviet bureaucracy’s restoration of capitalism has revived all of these traditions in the vilest manner. For the centenary of the October revolution in 2017, the Kremlin sponsored the antisemitic TV series “Trotsky”, which was aimed at discrediting the personality of Lev Davidovich Trotsky and the October Revolution. Beginning on November 1 of this year, to mark the 106th anniversary of the October Revolution, Russia’s main federal TV channel—Channel One—started showing it again. Then, as now, the principal purpose of the promotion of antisemitism is to divide the working class and to undermine its class consciousness.

The working class of all countries must stand firmly, clearly and unequivocally on the Marxist position of class struggle and irreconcilable opposition to chauvinism, antisemitism and nationalism in all its manifestations. We must boldly condemn what happened in Makhachkala on October 29. This type of antisemitic violence can only serve to divide the working class and undermine the struggle against imperialism by the Palestinian people.

This principled stance is all the more important in the current situation. The genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza marks a new stage in the developing imperialist redivision of the world that began with the NATO-provoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022. A new front in this war has now opened up in the Middle East. In a recent speech, US President Joe Biden demanded \$105 billion to finance US-led wars, of which \$61 billion (i.e., more than half) will go to support the Zelensky regime and \$14 billion to the Netanyahu regime. This is a declaration of war not only on the American working class, which will be obliged to pay all these costs, but also on the Russian and international working class.

While so far there have been no large-scale protests in Russia, the Putin regime is highly unstable. This is reflected in the recent failed coup attempt by the late Evgeny Prigozhin and in the repression and curtailment of the democratic rights of the working class by the ruling class on whose behalf Putin speaks. The ongoing crisis of the Russian bourgeoisie, deepened by the war in Ukraine, will only lead it to intensify its attacks on the working class.

Already, the Russian oligarchy, which emerged directly out of the Soviet bureaucracy's restoration of capitalism, is increasingly borrowing repressive methods from its predecessor to continue its offensive against the working class. The Putin regime is also rehabilitating Stalin, creating a climate where the few existing monuments to the victims of the Great Terror of the 1930s, when generations of socialists were murdered, are routinely vandalized and even destroyed.

So far, the Russian oligarchy has reacted to the Israeli assault on Gaza by trying to maneuver. While the Kremlin condemned the invasion of Israel (without specifying who exactly invaded), it also condemned manifestations of "terror" and "genocide" on "both sides," emphasizing that this conflict can only be solved by the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Last week, the Kremlin welcomed a delegation from Hamas. One of the reasons for this maneuvering is Russia's extensive ties with Israel, which has a Russian speaking population of 1.3 million (15 percent of the population). In the Ukraine war, Israel has taken an ambivalent position. Unlike Washington's other allies, it has condemned not only the Russian invasion but also the supply of arms to Ukraine. Moreover, the Kremlin is well aware of the plans of US imperialism to escalate this conflict with further involvement of the entire Middle East, primarily Iran, which would open a new front in the war against Russia.

The other front of this emerging global conflict—Ukraine—has already become a mass grave for hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians and tens of thousands of Russians. Workers of Israel, Palestine, Russia, Ukraine and the rest of the world must be warned: A disaster of even greater magnitude is in the making.

The escalation of war in the Middle East and in the world at large confirms the analysis made by the International Committee of the Fourth International. In August, David North said: "In 1938, Trotsky wrote at the beginning of the Transitional Program that the imperialist powers were even less able to prevent World War II than they were on the eve of World War I. The capitalist elites of North America and Europe are less able to prevent World War III than they were able to stop the outbreak of World War II." We are now witnessing with our own eyes the vindication of this analysis.

The working class has the power to stop the new international imperialist war, but it cannot do so without uniting on an international basis. As Leon Trotsky already wrote in 1928, in his "Critique of the Draft Program of the Comintern":

In our epoch, which is the epoch of imperialism, i.e., of *world* economy and *world* politics under the hegemony of finance capital, not a single communist party can establish its program by proceeding solely or mainly from conditions and tendencies of developments in its own country. This also holds entirely for the party that wields the state power within the boundaries of the USSR. On August 4, 1914, the death knell sounded for national programs for all time. The revolutionary

party of the proletariat can base itself only upon an international program corresponding to the character of the present epoch, the epoch of the highest development and collapse of capitalism. An international communist program is in no case the sum total of national programs or an amalgam of their common features. The international program must proceed directly from an analysis of the conditions and tendencies of world economy and of the world political system taken as a whole in all its connections and contradictions, that is, with the mutually antagonistic interdependence of its separate parts. In the present epoch, to a much larger extent than in the past, the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not *vice versa*. Herein lies the basic and primary difference between communist internationalism and all varieties of national socialism.

This applies with even greater force to the twenty-first century. Only based on an international program, only by international struggle, can world imperialism be destroyed. But the ruling classes will not sit idly by. They will try to preserve their power and wealth by any means, no matter the cost. That is why the bourgeoisie of all countries foments anti-Semitism. That is why it pits workers against each other, trying to undermine its international unity. Consequently, we must oppose every manifestation of nationalism, chauvinism and anti-Semitism and stand up for the international unity of the proletariat. This requires learning the lessons of the struggle of the entire Marxist movement from its foundation, and in particular learning the lessons of the struggle of Trotskyism against Stalinism.

The Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists calls on the working class of all countries to mobilize and unite against imperialism on the basis of a program of struggle against the entire international capitalist system. Only in this way can wars, oppression, poverty and inequality be destroyed once and for all. This is the program of revolutionary Marxism.



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