

Israel's genocide in Gaza and the resurgence of imperialist barbarism

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11 November 2023

In the face of mass protests involving millions of people throughout the world, the Israeli government is escalating its genocidal assault on Gaza.

Throughout the day Friday, Israel bombed and burned hospitals in Gaza City, which is being invaded by Israeli forces. Israel attacked six hospitals, including two children's hospitals, in the span of 24 hours.

The head of Al-Shifa Hospital, Muhammad Abu Salmiya, told *Al Jazeera*, "This day was a day of war on hospitals." This included the direct strike on the front gate of Al-Shifa hospital, where thousands of refugees are sheltering. Videos shared online show the use of white phosphorus against the hospital, a blatant violation of international law.

The actions of the Netanyahu regime have the active support and are being coordinated with the US-NATO powers, and in particular the Biden administration, which repeatedly and insistently rejects a ceasefire and any limits or conditions on Netanyahu's actions.

This past week, US President Joe Biden declared that there is "no prospect" of a ceasefire. National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby reiterated that there were no "red lines" regarding the killing of civilians by Israel. "That is still the case," Kirby said. "It's also true that the airstrikes continue, and it's also true that civilians are dying in those airstrikes."

Calls for a ceasefire have been rejected by the entire political establishment, including and not surprisingly the despicable political fraudster, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders.

The events of the past month are radicalizing millions of people throughout the world, which has found expression in the mass demonstrations against Israel's genocide. The development of this movement requires an understanding of the underlying causes of the imperialist atrocity.

The universal support by US and NATO for the homicidal actions of the Israeli regime is an extension and

deepening of 30 years of unending war, spearheaded by the United States. US imperialism and the NATO alliance saw the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990-91 as an opportunity to utilize its unrivaled military force to reimpose shackles on the former colonial world.

In 1991, in response to the Gulf War, the International Committee of the Fourth International organized the Berlin Conference of Workers against Imperialist War and Colonialism. The statement calling for the conference, "Oppose Imperialist War and Colonialism!," explained the imperialist gang-up against Iraq.

All the great historical and political tasks that confronted the working class and the oppressed masses at the beginning of the 20th century are now posed in their starkest form. The savage bombing of Iraq and the virtual destruction of its industrial infrastructure marks the beginning of a new eruption of imperialist barbarism. Capitalism cannot survive without enslaving and destroying millions....

This ongoing and de facto partition of Iraq signals the start of a new division of the world by the imperialists. The colonies of yesterday are again to be subjugated. The conquests and annexations which, according to the opportunist apologists of imperialism, belonged to a bygone era are once again on the order of the day.

Emphasizing this point, in a report to the Special National Congress of the Workers League in 1991, convened to discuss the Gulf War, David North, then national secretary of the Workers League (predecessor of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States), concluded:

[The Gulf War] marks the beginning of a new imperialist redivision of the world. The end of the postwar era means the end of the postcolonial era as well. As it proclaims the “failure of socialism,” the imperialist bourgeoisie is, in deeds if not yet in words, proclaiming the “failure of independence” as well.

The first war against Iraq was followed by an eruption of imperialist violence. Throughout the 1990s, the imperialist powers engineered the carve-up of Yugoslavia, culminating in the 1998 bombing campaign against Serbia. The United States then used the September 11, 2001 attacks as a pretext to launch the “war on terror,” including the invasion of Afghanistan and the second war against Iraq, which led to the deaths of more than one million people.

The United States launched an unremitting campaign of assassination, torture and kidnapping throughout the Middle East, the most horrible expression of which was the torture of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison. This was followed, under the Obama administration, with the war against Libya and the CIA-backed civil war in Syria.

In justifying its own crimes against the population of Gaza, Israeli officials have pointed to the precedent set by the United States under the “war on terror.” The war crimes of the past are being used to justify the war crimes of the present.

At the same time, the open support for genocidal actions is intended to set the precedent for the future. In the context of the US-NATO war against Russia over Ukraine and the preparations for war against Iran and China, the imperialist powers are making clear that there are no “red lines” that they will not cross.

War abroad is at the same time a war against the working class at home.

In his 1916 work *Imperialism and the Split in Socialism*, Lenin defined imperialism as “reaction all down the line.” In both war and domestic policy, he explained, “finance capital strives for domination, not freedom. ... The difference between the democratic-republican and the reactionary-monarchist imperialist bourgeoisie is obliterated precisely because they are both rotting alive.”

Israel’s genocide in Gaza is accompanied by an open turn to state repression and censorship. Last month, Congress overwhelmingly passed a resolution accusing students opposing Israel’s actions of “antisemitism” and “solidarity with the terrorists.” In Florida, Palestinian

student groups have been banned, and Columbia University announced Friday that both Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace would be disbanded as student groups and prevented from holding events on campus.

Germany, France and the UK have all attempted to ban demonstrations and carried out mass arrests. German Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck threatened Muslim immigrants who make statements opposing Israel’s genocide with arrest and deportation.

These measures are directed not only at protests over Israel’s crimes but all opposition to the policies of the ruling elite. Confronted by a growing strike movement, the ruling classes of the imperialist powers are turning to war and domestic repression.

The eruption of war, genocide and political repression are not an aberration. Imperialism, as Lenin noted, is not merely a policy but rather a specific historical stage of capitalist development. Opposition to imperialism is, therefore, a revolutionary question.

It is not a matter of appealing to the capitalist governments responsible for these crimes to alter course but rather turning to the working class, fusing the struggle against war with the developing struggles of workers all over the world against inequality and exploitation. This includes strike action to stop the shipment of weapons to Israel and the development of a movement for a political general strike to demand an end to the slaughter in Gaza.

The logic of these struggles is the conquest of political power by the working class, the expropriation of the capitalist oligarchs and war criminals, and the socialist reorganization of economic life on a world scale.



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