

The mass protest in London and the global fight against Israel's genocide in Gaza

Chris Marsden
13 November 2023

Millions protested Israel's genocide against the Palestinians this past weekend as part of a rising tide of opposition sweeping across the world. This global outrage has pitched workers in every country against their own rulers backing the genocide.

The most extraordinary of these demonstrations took place in London. Between three quarters of a million and one million people took to the streets of the capital city of imperialist Britain, which ranks alongside the United States and Germany in its bloodthirsty backing for Israel. The march included a vast section of the Muslim population and young people of all ethnic backgrounds.

It is in the UK that the gulf between the ruling elite and its parties and the mass of working people is most fully expressed, and which therefore points the way to explosive conflicts rapidly maturing in every country.

Gaza is a catalytic event, acting as a focal point for the hatred felt not only for the Conservative government but for the entire ruling class and its parties, including the Labour Party. Sir Keir Starmer's backing of Israel has made him the most despised Labour leader since Tony Blair took Britain into the Iraq war in 2003 based on lies. This has led to mass resignations and a collapse of support in inner city areas. Many demonstrators carried homemade banners targeting Starmer as an accomplice to war crimes.

The protest was an act of mass defiance against the filthy campaign waged by the Tory government and the press to slander anti-war demonstrators as antisemitic supporters of terrorism. In the week leading to the protest, the extreme-right racist Home Secretary Suella Braverman insisted that the "hate march" should be banned by the Metropolitan Police. She was supported by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. The Met refused to comply only because they knew this would only spark greater resistance to the government's dictates and its backing for Israel.

Governments everywhere peddle the lie that opposition to genocide is antisemitic. In fact, it is the spearhead of a global eruption of anti-fascism, anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism.

The accusations of antisemitism against protests that have mobilised large numbers of Jews have only confirmed that the government, Labour and the media will stop at nothing to justify their own crimes. This was confirmed by the response of Braverman to Saturday's protest, posting on X/Twitter: "This can't go on. Week by week, the streets of London are being polluted by hate, violence, and antisemitism. Members of the public are being mobbed and intimidated. Jewish people in particular feel threatened. Further action is necessary."

She wrote this vile diatribe on the day that Israel was laying siege to the al-Shifa hospital and killing babies. If Braverman wants "further action" to stop protests against Israel's barbarity then this can only mean unleashing police repression on a massive scale and mobilising the fascist scum who tried to attack sections of Saturday's protest. She would deal with opposition in the UK in the same way that Netanyahu is responding in Gaza.

The ruling elites of all the imperialist countries are using the language of civil war and extermination. Last Tuesday, the introduction of a bill in the Florida state legislature calling for an "immediate de-escalation and cease-fire" and for "supporting protection of constitutional rights of Floridians" was rejected by 104-2, with Democrats joining Republicans in turning their backs on the bill's sponsor, State Representative Angie Nixon.

When Nixon pointed to the deaths of 10,000 Palestinians in Gaza and said, "We are at 10,000 dead Palestinians. How many will be enough?", Representative Michelle Salzman shouted from the floor, "All of them!"

This open backing for genocide merely expresses in naked form the policy of the Biden administration and the entire political establishment. In Florida, the state's fascist governor, Ron DeSantis, has disbanded student groups opposed to Israel's genocide.

Last month, the US Senate passed by unanimous consent a motion branding as antisemitic students opposed to Israel's action, and universities throughout the country—including Columbia, Brown and Brandeis—have suspended Students

for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace or arrested students engaged in protest action.

The Gaza protests in the UK have provided a means for millions to express their hatred of a government responsible for over 200,000 deaths during the pandemic and a savage assault on workers' living standards, which have been systematically suppressed.

The Tories have been in a state of crisis ever since the forced resignation of Boris Johnson as prime minister in July last year. This came amid a resurgence of the class struggle internationally, which in the UK saw a strike wave that within six months encompassed two million workers. His replacement, the notorious warmonger Liz Truss, lasted just 45 days in office before being removed at the behest of the financial markets for failing to immediately impose the austerity measures they expected.

An October 20, 2022 WSWS Perspective statement, "British Prime Minister Liz Truss resigns: A revolutionary crisis for British imperialism," drew attention to the fact that conditions existed for a general strike and the downfall of the government. But the Tories were given a stay of execution by the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy, with Starmer denouncing strikes and proclaiming unswerving backing for the war in Ukraine, while the trade union bureaucracy isolated and betrayed strikes by rail and postal workers, civil servants, educators and health workers.

This brief interlude is over, confirming Trotsky's declaration in the Transitional Program: "The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and second, by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first, of course, is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus."

This situation of acute class antagonisms exists in every country. The mass movement in defence of the Palestinians is proof that the reactionary political stagnation of the past decades has come to an end. Gaza is the spark that has ignited the popular anger that has been building up beneath the surface of official political life--an anger to which the capitalist politicians and media have been oblivious.

Based on a Marxist appraisal of the crisis of world imperialism, the *World Socialist Web Site* anticipated this development in its New Year's Perspective statement for 2020, "The decade of socialist revolution begins."

The statement explained that "the dominant and most revolutionary feature of the class struggle is its international character, rooted in the global character of modern-day capitalism. Moreover, the movement of the working class is a movement of the younger generation and, therefore, a movement that will shape the future."

It continued:

The growth of the working class and the emergence of class struggle on an international scale are the objective basis for revolution. However, the spontaneous struggles of workers and their instinctive striving for socialism are, by themselves, inadequate. The transformation of the class struggle into a conscious movement for socialism is a question of political leadership.

The successful defence of Gaza and the fight against war must now be rooted in the working class and directed against all the capitalist governments and political parties of the ruling class. The working class alone can defeat and halt this offensive by making it impossible to wage it. Working class action, including strikes and boycotts of arms companies, docks and airports, can stop the shipment of any items to Israel with a military use. They can paralyse the economy and bring down governments.

The massive social power of the international working class must be mobilized in a political general strike against war. This can become a focus for the explosive anger over the savage austerity faced by workers. This fight must be waged against the trade union bureaucracy, which has done nothing to mobilise in defence of the Palestinians and acts as a dead hand in preventing any action that threatens the interests of the ruling class.

Through their mass murder of the Palestinians, the ruling class wants to prove that all resistance to their global domination will be crushed. It is up to billions of workers who have already begun waging a counter-offensive in the form of escalating strikes and protests in country after country to develop this struggle as a conscious fight against imperialism and the capitalist profit system.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact