

Meeting of Indian WSWs readers discusses how the working class can stop the imperialist-backed genocide in Gaza

Our reporters

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Supporters of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and the World Socialist Web Site (WSWS) in India organized a zoom meeting on November 9 titled “How to stop the genocide in Gaza”.

Attended by WSWs readers in India, the meeting was chaired by Deepal Jayasekera, General Secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka), the Sri Lankan section of the ICFI. Keith Jones, the National Secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (Canada), the Canadian section of the ICFI, also addressed the meeting.

An important discussion, which raised essential political tasks on developing a movement to stop the war in Gaza, followed the speeches. The full proceedings of the meeting were translated into Tamil, a major language in India with more than 70 million speakers.

In his opening remarks, Jayasekera denounced the imperialist-backed war crimes committed by Israel’s far-right, Benjamin Netanyahu-led regime: “Israel’s military has been relentlessly attacking Palestinians in Gaza with missiles, bombs and artillery for more than 30 days now. The death toll is now over 10,000 and more than 70,000 have been injured. More than half of them are women and children...Israel’s Zionist regime is carrying out ethnic cleansing against Palestinians.”

Jayasekera placed Israel’s genocide in the broader context of the US war drive against China and ongoing US-NATO war in Ukraine against Russia. “The imperialist powers, mainly the US,” he said, pointing to the massive US military build-up in the region, “are utilizing the Gaza war to prepare for a wider war in the Middle East, particularly threatening Iran.”

Insisting on the significance of protests of millions of workers and youth globally against Israel’s genocide and in support of the Palestinians, Jayasekera said: “While calling for the expansion of the global protests against the Gaza war with the widest possible participation, we make a special call to the working class internationally, the social force capable of stopping this war and growing imperialist war drive, to independently intervene to take the lead in the struggle against war.”

Jones denounced the Indian government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Indian ruling class as a whole for their “direct complicity in the war that the Israeli state, with the backing of all the imperialist powers, is waging on the Palestinian people.”

Referring to the arrival that day of US Secretaries of State and

Defence, Antony Blinken and Lloyd Austin respectively, in New Delhi for a so-called 2+2 meeting with their Indian counterparts, S. Jaishankar and Rajnath Singh, Jones said: “No doubt this meeting will conclude tomorrow with further announcements of arms deals and enhanced military cooperation as part of the so-called Indo-US global strategic partnership.

“That the Indian government—with, it need be added, the unanimous approval of the corporate media—should choose to deepen its alliance with US imperialism, and publicly be seen to do so, as Israel with Washington’s blessing and encouragement massacres the Palestinians and threatens to unleash a war engulfing the entire Middle East must be taken as a sober warning by the Indian working class.”

“There are,” Jones asserted, “no limits to the lengths the Indian ruling class will go—to the crimes it will commit and the violence it will unleash—in pursuing its predatory interests through its partnership with US imperialism.”

He subsequently pointed to three factors that explain why the Modi government and the Indian ruling class have abandoned their so-called historic position in support of the rights of the Palestinian people and openly lined up with Israel’s genocidal war against the Palestinians in Gaza.

“The first and far and away most important is the Indo-US strategic partnership,” he explained. “This partnership was forged by the Congress Party-led Manmohan Singh government with the administration of George W. Bush as it waged illegal neocolonial wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Moreover, it was from the start directed at ‘containing’ and strategically encircling China—something that was admitted and indeed celebrated in US and Indian government and military-strategic circles.

“Under Modi’s now decade-old regime and with the full support of the Indian ruling class, India has been transformed into a veritable frontline state in US war preparations against China and is working with Washington to counter China across South Asia, Central and South-East Asia, Africa, the Middle East and even the South Pacific.”

The second factor was India’s military-strategic partnership with Israel and the third the political-ideological affinity between Modi’s BJP and its far-right Hindutva allies and the Zionists ... Both celebrate religious exclusivism and state criminality and violence and derogate Muslims as their common enemy. (Read

more: India's far-right government joins imperialist powers in backing Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza)

Jones explained that to stop the war the growing movement of the international working class against social inequality and austerity must be infused with opposition to militarism and imperialism: "We have to draw the connection between what workers are experiencing in their day to day life and the war and the foreign policy and geopolitical strategy of the Indian bourgeoisie."

He said that opposition to the genocide in Gaza must be linked to the fight against the reactionary Indo-US strategic partnership.

The struggle to mobilize the working class against imperialist war invariably means a struggle against the bureaucratic, pro-capitalist trade unions and the phony left parties in India with which they are aligned. "This means exposing the role of the Stalinist Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) and Communist Party of India (CPI), and their Left Front." Jones said.

The Stalinists, who initially joined with the Modi government in denouncing Hamas "terrorism," are presently organizing protests against the Gaza war. But the political perspective they are advancing is entirely in line with their decades-long role as an integral part of the Indian political establishment, opposing any independent class action by the Indian workers and making appeals to the Modi government.

They are promoting the INDIA alliance, a right-wing electoral bloc headed by the opposition Congress Party, that does not have any fundamental differences with the Modi government in domestic or foreign policy.

Jones concluded: "An anti-war movement must be rooted in the working class, . . . and based on a revolutionary socialist perspective. That is the perspective historically associated with Leon Trotsky, who led the Russian Revolution with Lenin in October 1917, and then struggled against its betrayal by the Stalinist bureaucracy and founded the Fourth International."

During the question and answer session, one participant wanted clarification on the ICFI's support for the call by Palestinian trade unions for actions to block military supplies to Israel despite its characterization of contemporary trade unions as partners of capitalist governments and employers.

"We very much welcome the call of the Palestinian trade unions," Jones commented, "as it directs attention to the necessity of mobilizing the working class around the world to oppose the genocide that is taking place. We have sought to popularize that call, while also seeking to further elaborate and develop it by explaining that the independent action of the working class to halt arms shipments to Israel must be accompanied, not with appeals to the capitalist governments, but with the fight for a broader mobilization of the working class, and ultimately a general strike."

He further elaborated on the ICFI stance: "We oppose the trade unions because they have failed the working class as nationalist organizations that accept the framework of the capitalist system. They are incapable of defending even the previous conquests of the working class. But that doesn't mean that under certain conditions if they are forced to take actions we oppose them. When a trade union calls a strike do we oppose them for doing so? We do not oppose the strike. Instead we advance the interest of the

working class. We say the workers have to take the struggle into their own hands and should not place their confidence in the unions' bureaucratic maneuvers."

A participant noted that trade unions in India, whether it be the CPM-led CITU, CPI-led AITUC, or any other trade union or alliance, obstruct workers being conscious about their revolutionary role and confine them to economic struggles with this or that individual employer. She asked how to overcome this challenge.

Jones explained that the transformation of the working class into a revolutionary force is a vital and complex question.

The deepening crisis of capitalism, he explained, is impelling the working class to struggle, creating the conditions for a greater receptivity to socialism, which corresponds to workers' objective interests. However, this is not an automatic process. The revolutionary party must fight to bring socialist consciousness into the working class. That is the task of the ICFI.

Jones emphasized that this challenge was at the center of the work of the ICFI. The effort to overcome this challenge must be based on the accumulated lessons of previous class struggles and the Fourth International's struggle against Stalinism, Maoism and the pseudo-left.

In concluding the meeting, Jayasekera urged the participants to read the rigorous coverage by the WWS on Israel's onslaught on Gaza and the global movement against it, and its coverage on India. He specifically encouraged them to study the recent lecture given by David North at the University of Michigan on the occasion of the centenary of Trotskyism.

"The only way to stop the Gaza war is to build an anti-capitalist, socialist global anti-war movement of the working class," He concluded. "For this we have to consciously and systematically develop our campaign among the working class politically and theoretically. For that we need your support comrades. Join with us to build a section of the ICFI in India to build the revolutionary leadership of the working class."



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