

As protests against Gaza genocide continue across Canada, Trudeau forced to cancel reception for Italy's fascist prime minister

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4 March 2024

Millions of people took to the streets around the world over the weekend to protest Israel's imperialist-backed genocide against the Palestinians. The demonstrations were fuelled by the horrific "flour massacre" perpetrated by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) Thursday, when at least 115 Palestinians were killed while waiting for desperately needed food aid in Gaza City.

Significant protests were held in major cities across Canada, including one in Vancouver, British Columbia, that shut down the busy Granville Bridge for over an hour. In Toronto, a protest against the genocide forced the cancellation of a downtown reception planned by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for Italy's fascist head of government, Giorgia Meloni.

Upwards of 400 demonstrators gathered outside the Art Gallery of Ontario, where the event was set to take place. The Prime Minister's Office called off the reception after declaring that secure passage for Trudeau and Meloni into the building could not be guaranteed. Protesters held placards and shouted slogans denouncing the Trudeau government's complicity in the genocide.

Demonstrations in the Greater Toronto Area have taken place on almost a weekly basis since Israel's brutal onslaught on defenceless men, women and children in Gaza began in October last year. At one recent demonstration in Mississauga, families and people of all ages and ethnicities gathered to express their opposition to both the Israeli government and the Canadian political establishment, which has been complicit in the genocide since day one. Demonstrators chanted various slogans including, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!"

Over 30,000 people have been killed in the Israeli assault on Gaza, a figure that rises well above 35,000 if the missing are included. Much of the infrastructure of the

enclave lies in ruins. Food and water are scarce, and aid agencies like the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) have had their funding cut, including by the Canadian government. Figures on infant disease and starvation are horrifying.

Giovanni, a retiree who immigrated from Italy to Canada in 1968, told the *World Socialist Web Site* why he was attending the Mississauga demonstration.

"We have a genocide going on in Gaza, and the numbers are atrocious," he said. "Approaching 20,000 children killed, and 70,000 injured, and the Canadian government is basically silent on it. So we have a role to make people aware as much as we can of this situation."

Asked about the role of the Canadian government and opposition parties, Giovanni condemned all of the mainstream parties. "I've been watching TV the last couple of days, and it's Navalny, Navalny, Navalny [the recently deceased pro-Western Russian opposition figure]," he said. "And 20,000 children killed in Gaza, which is not even mentioned.

"There is no opposition. They're all in unison on this. The ruling class controls them, gives them money, and they respond to the needs of what the ruling class wants. We don't give contributions to political parties. Most of us can give \$10, but not the big money that they receive to run the elections."

Canada's opposition parties have been just as complicit as the federal Liberal Party government in the Zionist massacre of the Palestinian people. The social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) has kept the Liberals in power since 2022 through a "confidence and supply" agreement, even as the Liberals summarily dismissed South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice, and withdrew funding for the UNRWA in a transparent endorsement of the far-right

Netanyahu government.

The NDP, along with the official opposition Conservatives under far-right leader Pierre Poilievre, and the Quebec nationalist Bloc Quebecois, have viciously denounced peaceful anti-genocide demonstrations. The NDP has also clamped down on dissent within its ranks. Last October, the NDP expelled Member of Parliament Sarah Jama from the party's Ontario legislative caucus for describing Israel as an "apartheid state."

Yasmina is a university student studying marketing. Her family is of Palestinian origin and immigrated to Canada in the 1980s from Lebanon. She attended the demonstration with her friend, who is Jewish.

"Just to be clear, we have to separate Zionism from Judaism," she commented. "That's very important. Do not let them conflate the two. That you're antisemitic if you're anti-Zionist. That's the most important element of this."

Asked what she thought of the idea that the imperialist powers, principally the United States, supported Israel's creation to project their interests more aggressively in the Middle East, Yasmina expressed her agreement. "I would agree with that, absolutely," she remarked. "But there is undoubtedly some Holocaust guilt, which is used very effectively to smear people. The sad reality is it's reaching the bottom. This is nonsense. There have been countless genocides in human history. The Holocaust was the worst one of the 20th century, performed by a developed nation that was heavily industrialized, and on a scale that we hadn't seen before.

"But this perpetual victimhood that Zionism projects does a disservice to Jewish people and to Judaism. This is a religion, like Islam, of peace and genuine nonviolence. The prophet Mohammed, towards the end of his life, was against war."

Charges of antisemitism have been used by all of the major parties and their media mouthpieces to smear and silence all opposition to the genocide in Gaza. The hypocrisy of these charges becomes evident when considering that less than six months ago, the entire Canadian federal parliament gave a standing ovation to Yaroslav Hunka. The 98-year-old Ukrainian was a veteran of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division, a military unit complicit in the Holocaust and massacring of tens of thousands of Poles. The Canadian government continues to fund and arm the Ukrainian military, which is riddled with neo-Nazis, in the NATO-instigated war against Russia.

Greg, a high school history teacher, expressed his hope

that the genocide and imperialist war could be stopped by a mass movement of the working class, especially the youth.

"This myth in Canada that we are a peacemaking nation is utter nonsense," he said. "I teach history and I try to make my students aware of this ...

"I have faith in young people. The beautiful thing is the United States is having difficulty filling the ranks of its military. Because young people are waking up. Even in Israel, young people are refusing to serve. They're going to jail, refusing to serve in the IDF. There's resistance."

Greg was asked about the connection between social inequality, the growth of workers' struggles, including in the education sector, and war. "Definitely the elites have stacked the deck," he responded. "The money is funneled upwards to these corporations and defence contractors, and basically the military industrial complex. There's a dumbing down of our population. They don't want people knowing the truth. They don't want people to awaken to the fact that any war, it's always the working class that fights the wars. This is what I show my students.

"This is the reality. They do not want to pay a living wage to people. The fact that two people died in a homeless shelter in Mississauga, outside, in the last two weeks, this is indicative of Canada's care of the most marginalized, the weakest people."

Discussing his views on the way forward for the protest movement against genocide, Greg continued, "We need a global movement of working people who recognize that they are being used and exploited. That they are fodder for this capitalist machine, in essence. That's what keeps it going.

"We need to educate people, to inform them. And they can't be just localized. You need to unify everybody around this. What they depend upon is racial division, particularly in the United States, and dividing people—this is a divide and conquer strategy that we see these governments of the world use."



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