

Today's D-Day celebration: An exercise in political propaganda and historical falsification

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The 80th anniversary commemoration of the D-Day invasion of Normandy by the Allied forces of the United States, Britain and Canada is a thoroughly cynical exercise in political propaganda and historical falsification. Even as they endorse genocide in Gaza and recklessly escalate the war against Russia, the US-NATO spinmeisters are exploiting the events of June 6, 1944 to justify and glorify the criminal policies of present-day imperialist governments.

To be perfectly blunt, the policies and objectives of NATO are eerily similar to those of the Nazi regime against which the Allies fought in World War II. Hitler, were he resurrected for the occasion, would feel perfectly at home in the company of US President Biden, British Prime Minister Sunak, French President Macron, and German Chancellor Scholz. He would use the opportunity provided by the Normandy celebration to offer them advice on how to escalate NATO's war against Russia.

Hitler would certainly have been pleased with the decision of Macron, in response to objections from the US and Britain, to rescind Russia's invitation to the D-Day memorial. The presence of a Russian delegation would have been an unwelcome reminder of the monumental and decisive contribution made by the Soviet Union to the defeat of the Third Reich. Notwithstanding the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism, Russia will always bear, in the minds of the imperialist powers, the stigma of the socialist revolution of October 1917.

"We would defer to the government of France, which organizes the commemoration at Normandy," a Biden administration official told *Politico* last month when the invitation was made public. "But perhaps this will remind the Russians that they actually fought real Nazis once, not imaginary ones in Ukraine."

The Nazi-lovers in the Kiev regime are real enough. Stepan Bandera, the Ukrainian fascist murderer whose forces fought alongside the *Wehrmacht* against the Soviet Union and collaborated in the Nazi Holocaust, has been elevated to the status of a great national hero in Ukraine.

The grim reality is that as Biden and his fellow imperialist leaders celebrate 80 years since the amphibious attack on Nazi-controlled France, the NATO powers have themselves embraced the goal of Nazi Germany on the Eastern Front: the conquest and dismemberment of Russia and the exploitation of its vast territories and resources. The 80th anniversary is to be exploited to further

the war in Ukraine and pave the way to open NATO intervention.

Moreover, this struggle is being conducted arm-in-arm with the political descendants of Hitler and Mussolini. Macron has admitted there is a genuine rise of fascist political forces across Europe, while he himself praises Philippe Petain, the head of the collaborationist Vichy regime, as a great soldier. Next week, Biden returns to Europe for a G7 summit in Italy, the first to be hosted by a fascist, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, a longtime worshipper in the cult of Mussolini.

And the methods of Hitler are being revived under US auspices in Gaza, where the Israel Defense Forces are carrying out a genocidal campaign against the Palestinian population, combining massacres, bombing of undefended civilian neighborhoods, and mass starvation. To date, more bombs have been dropped on Gaza by Israel than were dropped on the cities of London, Hamburg, and Dresden during the Second World War.

President Joe Biden's visit to France for the D-Day ceremonies will include meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to follow up on the massive military aid package that Biden finally got through Congress and signed into law six weeks ago. Biden will be meeting Macron as well, in a formal state visit, only days after the French president took the lead for the imperialist powers in suggesting that NATO ground troops should be deployed in Ukraine, escalating the conflict into an open NATO-Russia war, with the attendant danger of a full-scale nuclear conflagration.

While Biden will mouth phrases about the defense of democracy, every word will be a lie. American imperialism is the bastion of global political and social reaction. Its policies are directed toward the enslavement, not liberation, of the world's people.

Apart from the cynical exploitation of the D-Day memorial to justify the contemporary crimes of imperialism, the glorification of the events of June 6, 1944 has always been connected to a basic falsification of the real interests that were pursued by the United States and Britain in World War II.

There is no question that the soldiers who stormed the beaches 80 years ago were courageous and motivated by a hatred of Hitler and Nazism. The thousands of young soldiers who died that day should be remembered and honored. But their idealism was not shared by the political leaders of US and British imperialism, who understood very well that the war could only find mass support by

marketing it as a struggle against fascism. It was the period of Popular Frontism and a wartime alliance with the USSR, with the Stalinists working hand-in-hand with the imperialists to legitimize the war in the eyes of the population.

There was enormous popular sympathy for the struggle of the Soviet Union against Hitler's massive invasion, the largest military onslaught in history, whose goal was to eradicate Marxism and socialism through mass murder. Notwithstanding the unspeakable crimes of Stalin, including the blood purge of Trotskyists and other revolutionaries, among them the entire leadership of the Red Army, and his signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact, the Soviet masses fought with all their strength in defense of the remaining conquests of the October Revolution. The Red Army was losing 10,000 soldiers a day in battles like Stalingrad. In comparison, estimated casualties from D-Day, the bloodiest day in the West, come to just under 5,000 dead.

While Roosevelt effectively exploited popular democratic and antifascist sentiments, behind the scenes there was a raging struggle between a rising US imperialism and the British Empire, its nominal ally. Churchill resisted and delayed the launching of a "second front" in the West, against Stalin's desperate pleas, in order to bleed the USSR and concentrate British efforts on southern Europe, the Middle East, and above all the Indian subcontinent. He even pushed for a US-British strike from Italy across the Adriatic into Yugoslavia to preempt the revolutionary struggle in that country, safeguard British interests in Greece, and position the Allies to intervene, on Germany's side, in an assault against the Red Army.

When US, British and Canadian forces landed at Normandy, the Red Army had decisively defeated the Nazi forces in Ukraine and western Russia, ended the siege of Leningrad, recaptured the Baltic states and was on the verge of entering Poland as part of a general counteroffensive headed toward Vienna and Berlin. By most historical estimates, Hitler had deployed two-thirds of his military forces, about 200 divisions, to face the Soviet military, leaving barely 50 divisions apiece facing the expected cross-channel landing and the Allied forces moving up the Italian peninsula (the liberation of Rome came on June 4, 1944, two days before D-Day.)

Nine days after the successful D-Day landings, US President Franklin Roosevelt outlined the war aims of American imperialism in a speech in which he laid the basis for the eventual establishment of the United Nations, as the political instrument for the division of the spoils among the wartime victors. A commentary in *The Militant*, then the Trotskyist newspaper in the United States, argued:

Allied soldiers are shedding their blood, not in order to liberate the European peoples from Nazism, not to assure exercise of the right of self-determination by all nations and peoples, not to establish the "Four Freedoms" in the four corners of the earth, but to restore the old balance of power system in such manner as to guarantee the world domination of American imperialism.

The Trotskyist newspaper went on to describe the central political purpose of the alliance of American and British imperialism with the Soviet bureaucracy under the counterrevolutionary mass murderer Stalin:

Another function of the new triple alliance wrapped in the cellophane of "international organization" is to police Europe and all the world against the mortal danger of the socialist revolution. Stalin, like the imperialists, fears Socialist revolution. The Soviet bureaucracy knows that a successful Socialist revolution anywhere in Europe will topple it from power.

The pattern of this policing function has already clearly emerged in Italy and North Africa, where police-military dictatorships are being propped up with Allied bayonets. These are the blackly reactionary aims of the Wall Street masters. These are their "war aims." These are their "post-war plans."

While D-Day's Operation Overlord was underway, 18 American Trotskyist leaders were in prison for their opposition to the world war, while four British Trotskyist leaders had been tried and convicted, and were soon to be sentenced to prison terms for a similar principled anti-war position.

Eighty years after D-Day, the world stands on the precipice of a new global conflagration. Ahead of the commemoration, Biden and other imperialist leaders authorized Ukraine to attack Russian territory with NATO-supplied missiles, massively escalating NATO's war against a nuclear-armed state. At the same time, the escalation of the war demonstrates the bankruptcy of the reactionary foreign policy of the Russian oligarchy headed by Vladimir Putin, which seeks to use military pressure to induce its imperialist "partners" to make a deal favorable to Moscow's interests.

Today's official celebration of D-Day is a gathering of imperialist warmongers who are engaged, like the leaders of the Third Reich, in "crimes against peace" and "crimes against humanity." Their sanctimonious tributes to the soldiers who fell on June 6, 1944 will be followed next month by a meeting in Washington, D.C., where NATO leaders, under the direction of the Biden administration, will implement the expansion of the war against Russia and plot their future operations against China.

The central challenge now is the building of a mass international working class movement against genocide and the relentless military escalation that threatens the destruction of the planet.



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