

2 years of the Gaza genocide: A crime of Zionism and imperialism

WSWS Editorial Board
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Today marks two years since the beginning of Israel's genocide in Gaza, one of the greatest crimes of the modern era. Before the eyes of the entire world, the Israeli government—armed, financed and defended by every imperialist power—has carried out a campaign of mass murder, ethnic cleansing and deliberate starvation. At least 67,000 Palestinians have been killed, including 20,000 children, and the entire population has been repeatedly displaced.

In order to launch this long planned genocide, Israel used as its pretext the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023, in which a few thousand fighters with small arms, possessing no armored vehicles or aircraft, breached the Israeli border without resistance. To claim that Israel, with one of the most sophisticated intelligence networks in the world, was taken completely by surprise by a few thousand Hamas fighters is a despicable fiction.

As the events of the past two years have shown—in Israel's assassinations of foreign leaders, military officers and scientists—Israeli intelligence has penetrated every state and movement in the region. Indeed, within months of the October 7 attacks, newspaper accounts revealed that Israel possessed the entire Hamas battle plan but orchestrated a deliberate stand-down of its troops stationed on the border.

The genocide that followed was the premeditated outcome of 75 years of brutal oppression, the implementation of the “final solution” to the Palestinian “problem.” It has exposed before the entire world the bankrupt and reactionary character of Zionism. The Israeli state has shown itself to be a murderous instrument of imperialism.

While carried out by Israel, the genocide has been a joint operation of world imperialism. Every imperialist government, from Washington to London, Paris and Berlin, together with the entire media, justified the Israeli assault on Gaza. A hideous double standard was adopted, in which any act of mass murder by Israel, which illegally occupies Gaza, was justified, while any effort at resistance by the Palestinians was demonized as “terrorism.”

Opposition to the Israeli state was slandered as “antisemitism,” in an exercise that the WSWS referred to as “semantic inversion,” in which “a word is utilized in a manner and within a context that is the exact opposite of its real and long-accepted meaning.” This became the framework for a brutal and escalating assault on democratic rights, in which opposition to genocide has been criminalized. The attempt to equate opposition to the genocide with hatred of the Jews, is, in any case, negated by the prominent role played by Jewish people around the world in mass demonstrations.

The United States has been Israel's key weapons supplier, funneling unlimited amounts of deadly military gear to fuel the slaughter. But Germany, France, Britain and others have all contributed their share to

the bloodbath. Moreover, they have all purchased billions in Israeli government bonds to help finance the murderous military machine they also armed.

Underscoring the fact that these crimes have been facilitated by the major North American and European powers, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was allowed to defend his actions from the podium of the United Nations last month, even though an arrest warrant against him for war crimes is outstanding.

The imperialists back the genocide as a central component of their drive to secure control over the oil-rich Middle East, part of a global eruption of imperialist war targeting Russia and China. Their support for the genocide has demonstrated that they are ready to deploy any and all means to secure for themselves access to markets, raw materials, labour and geostrategic influence.

This imperialist plunder has culminated in Trump's “peace” plan, which proposes robbing Palestinians of all their rights by creating a neo-colonial protectorate under the control of America's would-be Führer and his bagman, the unindicted war criminal Tony Blair. If Hamas follows Trump's demand to accept this arrangement, the Palestinians will be expelled to make way for a US-controlled trade corridor through the Middle East. If they refuse, Israel will get the green light to slaughter the remaining Palestinians en masse.

A particularly foul role in this process has been played by the bourgeois nationalist regimes of the Middle East. The entire history of the 20th century has shown the incapacity of any form of nationalism to secure the democratic and social rights of the working class. The despicable role of these governments culminated in their embrace of the “peace” plan promoted by Trump, which completely repudiates the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

The genocide in Gaza has provoked mass revulsion and opposition throughout the world. Over the past two years, tens of millions have participated in demonstrations spanning every continent, from Europe and the Americas to the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Trump's plan to turn the Middle East into a US fiefdom on the bones of the Palestinians, and Israel's violent seizure of the Sumud aid flotilla, have ignited a new and broader wave of protest.

In recent days, millions have filled the streets of Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Colombia and Argentina. In Italy, action initiated by dockworkers, who refused to load weapons for Israel, triggered a one-day general strike of more than 2 million workers and a million-strong march in Rome. Though still limited by the trade union bureaucracies and appeals to the Meloni government, these actions point to the immense potential power of the international working class to halt the genocide.

One day of coordinated strike action has shaken Trump's closest

European ally. An organized, global industrial and political movement of the working class could stop the imperialist war machine in its tracks. Nothing less than a mass, international movement of workers can end the genocide and block the extension of American imperialism's drive for domination—from Gaza to a wider war aimed at Iran, Russia and ultimately China.

The development of opposition to the genocide must be guided by an understanding of the political lessons of the past two years. The central lesson is the total bankruptcy of all appeals to governments of the imperialist powers. They are not the instruments for halting genocide but its perpetrators and enablers.

The perspective of a two-state solution has failed. Only the unification of all the peoples of the Middle East can lead to a viable future. The Israeli state has proven to be a historical monstrosity, resulting in demoralization and degradation. The Israeli working class must repudiate the poisonous ideology and politics of Zionism, reject the reactionary dystopia of the “Jewish state” and strive for the unity of Israeli and Palestinian workers in the struggle for the United Socialist Federation of the Middle East.

In a lecture delivered on October 24, 2023, three weeks after the beginning of the genocide, WSWS International Editorial Board Chairman David North explained:

In the final analysis, the liberation of the Palestinian people can be achieved only through a unified struggle of the working class, Arab and Jewish, against the Zionist regime, as well as the treacherous Arab and Iranian capitalist regimes, and their replacement with a union of socialist republics throughout the Middle East and, indeed, the entire world.

This is a gigantic task. But it is the only perspective that is based on a correct appraisal of the present stage of world history, the contradictions and crisis of world capitalism and the dynamic of the international class struggle. The wars in Gaza and Ukraine are tragic demonstrations of the catastrophic role and consequences of national programs in a historical epoch whose essential and defining characteristics are the primacy of world economy, the globally integrated character of the productive forces of capitalism, and, therefore, the necessity to base the struggle of the working class on an international strategy.

Two years later, there are growing signs of a global resurgence of working class struggle. The Trump administration's drive to establish a presidential dictatorship is bringing it into head-on conflict with the working class in the United States, despite all efforts by the Democrats to sow complacency and passivity. President Macron in France is unable to form a stable government, amid mass opposition to his demands for austerity to pay for remilitarisation. Starmer in the UK and Merz in Germany have no popular support whatsoever.

Internationally, there has been an explosion of popular anti-government struggles, led by “Generation Z”—in Kenya, Nepal, Indonesia, the Philippines, Morocco and Madagascar.

The development of this opposition along revolutionary lines requires that workers break free from the control of the social democratic, Stalinist and trade union bureaucracies, along with their pseudo-left defenders, who work to contain and dissipate opposition. This requires building new, democratic organizations of class

struggle—rank-and-file committees in every workplace and neighborhood—to coordinate and lead a unified international offensive of the working class.

Workers, students, youth and all opponents of Zionism and imperialism must fight for:

An immediate halt to all weapons shipments to Israel;

• A comprehensive boycott of all trade and other economic activity with Israel;

• The prosecution of all US, European and other corporations assisting Israel in carrying out the genocide.

The arrest of Israeli officials for war crimes;

• An end to state repression of anti-genocide protesters and the repeal of all anti-demonstration laws;

Immediate, unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza by all available routes.

These demands must spearhead the broader movement already developing in the working class internationally. The same governments that funnel weapons of death to Israel are erecting dictatorial forms of rule at home to suppress opposition to oligarchic rule, mass impoverishment and the drive to world war.

The genocide in Gaza has laid bare the historical dead end of the capitalist system itself. The “normalization” of genocide is the product of a system that has exhausted any progressive role. It is accompanied by the normalization of fascism, the normalization of military-police dictatorship, the normalization of world war and oligarchic rule.

The perspective that must guide the working class is Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution. The democratic and social aspirations of the oppressed can be achieved only through the independent political mobilization of the working class, on a world scale, for the conquest of power.

The critical task is the building of a new revolutionary leadership to guide this struggle. The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and its sections, the Socialist Equality Parties, fight to unite workers and youth across all borders in a single movement against capitalism, for the establishment of workers' governments and the socialist reorganization of the world economy to meet human need, not private profit.



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