

Another Israeli Massacre in Gaza

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Israeli armed forces, firing indiscriminately on unarmed Palestinian demonstrators, men, women and children, have killed at least 16 and injured well over one hundred. As is usual in such cases, the US and British representatives on the UN Security Council have blocked any condemnation of Israel, or even any call on it to stop the slaughter. The massacre comes a day after a shell fired from an Israeli tank killed a Palestinian farmer, tending his parsley crop.

The brutal repression of the Zionist settler state, occupying lands from which they drove their indigenous inhabitants in 1948 and 1967 and in countless smaller expulsions since, is aimed at disrupting a planned demonstration named The Great Return March, along the so-called security fence which isolates the inhabitants of the Gaza from their stolen lands.

April 9 is also the 70th anniversary of the Deir Yassin Massacre in which between 100-250 villagers, the figures are disputed, were killed by Irgun and LEHI Zionist militias. Menachem Begin, at the time the commander of the Irgun, who went on to become the Prime Minister of Israel and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate (!) boasted : "The massacre of Deir Yassin was not only justified, without the victory of Deir Yassin there would never have been a state of Israel." (The Revolt, Story of the Irgun (New York: Henry Schuman, 1951).

Gaza itself has been under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade for eleven years as well as being subjected to devastating aerial bombardment, most recently in 2014. Between July 8 and August 27 of that year, more than 2,100 Palestinians were killed in the invasion and partial occupation of the Gaza Strip, along with 66 Israeli soldiers and seven civilians in Israel.

The current protest, which started on Land Day, March 29, and is planned to go on until Nakhsa Day, May 15, is aimed to highlight the actions of a state which keeps 5 million Palestinians in the status of refugees and exiles from their homeland. In a few weeks, Israel will celebrate 70 years of its existence, doubtless with the warm congratulations of the imperialist powers that made this possible, Britain, the United States, France and their allies.

The propaganda machines of the Israeli government and its embassies around the world are now churning out propaganda claiming that the 'Arabs' brought this upon themselves by throwing stones or the odd petrol bomb. The Western Media will back this up, as will right wing forces in western labour movements. Such forces are already engaged in a preemptive strike against Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the British Labour Party, who has hitherto defended the Palestinians and condemned Israel's atrocities.

There are other plans afoot. Trump and May, with the aid of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, himself engaged in a genocidal war in Yemen, see Israel as a key ally against Iran, itself no progressive force as its crimes in Syria show. The recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital by Trump is a first instalment of allowing Israel to make another move towards seizing yet more Palestinian land around Jerusalem. Any

major war in the region, triggered, for example, by an attack on Iran's nuclear industry, will no doubt be used as a cover to expel more Palestinians and seize more land.

The Israeli state is an overwhelmingly powerful military force, it not only has nuclear weapons but also the unconditional backing of the US and most European states, when it takes actions such as those in Gaza, against unarmed civilian demonstrators, it erodes the sympathy it has enjoyed from ordinary citizens around the world. They regard such actions with abhorrence. The attempt to hide behind the Holocaust is increasingly recognised not only as an obscenity against its six million victims but as undermining the still necessary fight against real and vile anti-Semitism.

The reason the western powers always support Israel is not because of deep seated sympathy for Zionism or their own Jewish people, let alone their guilt (justified) at having closed their borders to most of the European Jews who became the victims of the Holocaust. It is because Israel has always acted as a powerful obstacle to the unity of the countries of the Middle East against the western powers which have plundered its oil resources for over a century.

For all these reasons, it is vital for socialists and trade unionists in the West to come out in support of the Palestinians, to condemn the Israeli massacres and to support the Palestinians' demand for their right to return.

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