



Israel marks its 70th anniversary by massacring Palestinians

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Over the past four weeks, at least 37 Palestinians have been killed, and more than 4,000 wounded, by Israeli troops firing indiscriminately into demonstrations organised as part of the Great Return March.

As usual, the US and British representatives on the United Nations Security Council have blocked any condemnation of the Israeli state's repression of peaceful protests.

The violence comes as the Israeli government and world leaders prepare to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948.

For Palestinians, Israel's foundation is known as the Nakba or Catastrophe, in which almost a million Palestinians were driven from their homes in a bloody campaign of ethnic cleansing.

The Great Return March in Gaza, which started on Land Day, 29 March, and will end on Nakba Day, 15 May, aims to highlight the right of the refugees and their descendants to return to their stolen lands.

The propaganda machine of the Israeli government and its embassies are churning out lies claiming the 'Arabs' brought the violence on themselves by throwing stones or petrol bombs over the 'security fence' that imprisons the Palestinians in Gaza.

In Britain, the pro-Israeli media will back this narrative up, and it will be repeated by Zionists and opponents of Palestinian solidarity in the labour movement.

The BBC describes one of the most powerful armies in the world firing on demonstrators as 'clashes', while right wingers in the Labour Party have spent the past month denouncing Jeremy Corbyn 'who has hitherto defended the Palestinians and condemned Israel's atrocities' as an antisemite.

All this is mood music preparing public opinion for new outrages. Donald Trump and his tame UK prime minister Theresa May, see Israel as a key ally against Iran, whose occupation of Syria has alarmed Israel. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, engaged in a genocidal and largely unreported war in Yemen, shares this concern.

Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital is the first step to permitting the settler-state to seize yet more Palestinian land around the city. An escalation of any of the regional wars, or the outbreak of an open clash between Israel and Iran, will doubtless be used as cover to expel more Palestinians, and further consolidate Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land.

The actions of the Israeli state, a country which not only possesses nuclear weapons, but the world's fourth most powerful army, and the unconditional backing of the United States and most European countries, are not measures of 'self-defence' but acts of aggression and colonisation against the practically defenceless and friendless Palestinians.

Israel's repression of unarmed demonstrators, its war crimes, its contempt for international law and human rights are rapidly eroding the sympathy it has historically enjoyed from ordinary people. The attempt to hide behind the

Holocaust is increasingly recognised not only as an insult to its millions of victims, but an obstacle to the fight against the resurgence of antisemitism.

The reason Israel enjoys the unqualified support of the western powers does not derive from Zionist convictions, or any particular sympathy with Jewish communities, let alone their (justified) guilt at having closed their borders to most of the European Jews who became the Holocaust's principal victims.

It is because Israel, carved out of Mandate Palestine with British assistance, has always acted as a powerful obstacle to the unity of the Middle Eastern countries against the western powers who have plundered its oil with impunity for over a century.

For all these reasons, principled socialists and trade unionists in the West should step up our support for the Palestinians' right to return, condemn the crimes of the Israeli state, and fight to end our government's military, diplomatic, and economic support for the Zionists' colonial project.

That's why every branch, CLP, regional and national conference must be deluged with motions condemning the crimes of the Israeli state, and committing our movement to supporting Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel until they :

End the occupation

End their racist citizenship law

Grant the right of Palestinian refugees to return

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