

MARXIST

Theoretical Quarterly of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)

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Editor's Note

This double issue of the **Marxist** is dedicated as an expression of our unequivocal solidarity and support to the Palestinians who are currently facing the most barbaric and inhuman genocidal assault in Gaza by Israel. For nearly five months now, the merciless bombing and destruction of Gaza continues with nearly 30,000 innocent Palestinians being killed, two-thirds of whom are women and children. More than one lakh Palestinians are reportedly missing or under the rubble of the merciless bombing. The death toll is bound to rise to grotesque levels.

Palestine was part of the Ottoman territories. As the World War I was ending with the Ottoman empire disintegrating, the British and the French sat together to divide the Arab Levant by drawing a line on the map! (British colonialism is notorious for drawing such lines on a map which have generated tensions, wars and human dislocations, that continue till date – partition of the Indian subcontinent, McMahon line demarcating India-China borders and many more – in various regions of its erstwhile Empire). In 1916, the Britain – France Axis negotiated a treaty known as the Sykes-Picot agreement. Palestinian territory became part of the British controlled areas. In 1917, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration committing the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in historic Palestine.

As a result of such a gigantic imperialist conspiracy and fraud, the Palestinians are continuously denied their right to their homeland. The most rightwing Netanyahu government in Israel has, in recent months, intensified the illegal occupation of

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Palestinian lands, patronized the creation of private armies by the illegal Jewish settlers in the West Bank and now launched a war of extermination.

World imperialism led by the USA has pronounced unabashed support to Israel in this enterprise, under the pretext of 'right to self-defence' following the October 7 Hamas attack in South Israel. Biden, Rishi Sunak, Macron and the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited Israel to personally express solidarity with Netanyahu. The USA has established, over the decades, Israel as its outpost in West Asia and has been funding it to the tune of more than \$4 billion a year apart from providing it with the most advanced military technologies and armaments.

The Israeli genocidal carnage against the Palestinians is threatening to shape into a regional conflict. The Yemen based Houthi militia has been attacking merchant vessels disrupting the global oil trade in the Red Sea. US and UK have stepped up military strikes against Yemen targeting the Houthi operational bases. Apart from Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq have also been drawn in these exchanges of military strikes. The Hezbollah operating from Lebanon has been mounting rocket attacks on Israel.

USA carried out air strikes against alleged Iranian facilities in Syria, allegedly for supporting the Houthis. Iran has conducted military strikes in Iraq and Syria. Iran also launched missile and drone attacks inside Pakistan. Pakistan retaliated.

A drone attack killed 3 US soldiers and wounded at least 34 more at bases in Jordan. Blaming the Iran-backed militias for the first US military casualties since Israel's genocidal assault on Palestinians, President Biden vowed to respond, increasing apprehensions of enlarging the conflict in West Asia.

Gigantic global protests are taking place demanding an immediate declaration of ceasefire, on all the six continents of the world with major cities seeing massive protest demonstrations every weekend. Contemptuously dismissing this global opinion, USA has consistently vetoed out all UN Security Council resolu-

tions calling for an immediate ceasefire.

Marxist is privileged to have the opportunity for reproducing verbatim a talk followed by Q&A by professor **Ilan Pappé**, delivered at the Asian College of Journalism colloquium on January 15, 2024. Ilan Pappé is an Israeli intellectual with a global reputation reflected in his numerous books and contributions in support of the Palestinian cause. Even before the current Israeli genocidal assault on the Palestinians in Gaza, Pappé spoke of Israel's objective being the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. As Israel, backed fully by US led imperialism, will never permit the UN mandated 'two-state solution', he advocates a one-state solution as the only way to not obliterate the legal right for a State of Palestine.

John Cherian traces the historical background of this Israeli project of ethnic cleansing. He notes that between 11th and 15th centuries, the European powers were trying to establish their presence and control over the West Asian region. The Crusaders launched a war at the behest of the then Pope to establish control over the 'Holy Land' calling it "Latin Empire of Jerusalem". He notes that the Balfour Declaration, the first notable success of political Zionism, led to the creation of a Jewish state willfully ignoring the rights of the Palestinians, around 8 lakhs, who were in possession of these lands in 1917, while there were only a few thousand Jews. Subsequently, as a 'British mandated territory' Jewish immigration was encouraged allowing Zionists to organize paramilitary groups. Since then, till the current genocidal assault, it is a history of illegal occupation of the Palestinian lands, merciless repression and terror.

Sayantani Mukherjee and **Shatam Ray** discuss the current imperialist efforts to control anti-Israel protest narrative in the context of the changed quotidian reality of the world since the audacious Hamas military action on October 7. Traditional US media establishments are being abandoned by sections of traditional followers. There is the emergence of new sites of solidarity. Similar tendencies are occurring amongst the workers' unions and the

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Universities where the authors conclude that “a new generation of committed anti-Zionists and anti-Imperialists has taken root.”

Discussing changing protest forms and the role of social media, they highlight the specific case of Elbit Systems, Israel’s largest arms company which supplies 85 per cent of drones and land based equipments including surveillance monitors capable of identifying, tracking and killing Palestinians at border points across the apartheid wall. Elbit factories have been special targets of protest actions across its facilities in Europe leading to permanent closure of its London headquarter and blockades in USA and Japan.

The discourse has not simply shifted on Palestine, “what we are witnessing is a deep rejection of imperialist capitalism and all its apparatus”. The enlargement of conflicts in Middle East and North Africa, the diplomatic efforts engineered by USA to enhance Israel’s legitimacy amongst the Arab countries are also part of this larger imperialist efforts to ensure smooth global flows of capital and labour to serve imperialist designs for strengthening global hegemony.

As a document, we are carrying extracts from the application filed by South Africa in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for violation of the ‘Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.’

Nelson Mandela, at the time of South Africa’s historic liberation from the Apartheid regime, had famously declared that South Africa’s freedom is not complete until the Palestinians acquired their freedom. Following this spirit, the government of South Africa moved the International Court of Justice (ICJ), for a ruling that Israel is guilty of committing genocide against Palestinians.

Invoking the precedent of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) hearing an appeal of Gambia against Myanmar, invoking the *erga omnes partes* (standing based on obligations to everyone), South Africa filed a case against Israel for violating its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the

Crime of Genocide. It sought a series of provisional measures.

Ironically, the killing of six million Jews in the Holocaust, the basis for enacting this treaty on the crimes of genocide, is the one that Israel is now accused of violating in the ICJ.

In an unprecedented historic move, the ICJ decided in favour of issuing provisional measures as requested by South Africa. Though it stops short of calling for a ceasefire ending military operations in and against Gaza as requested by South Africa, it nevertheless put forward six provisional measures for Israel to implement: (a) Israel must take all measures to prevent acts of genocide, (b) Israel must prevent and punish incitement to genocide including by government and military officials, (c) Ensure that Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) do not indulge in acts of genocide, (d) Enable basic services and humanitarian aid to Gaza, (e) Israel must preserve evidence related to violation of the Genocide Convention and (f) Israel must submit a report in one month to the ICJ on the measures it has taken to implement the above.

If Israel has to comply with these provisional measures, then it means that it has to effectively halt its military operations in Gaza. Netanyahu predictably has rejected the ICJ verdict.

The ICJ, in this situation, referred the matter to the UN Security Council for a resolution to ensure that Israel complies with implementing the provisional measures. With Netanyahu's contemptuous rejection of the ICJ verdict, the USA predictably exercised its veto power for the third time to not permit a ceasefire. However, if South Africa's case in the ICJ proceeds to the next level – the merit stage – it can have implications for those countries actively supporting and aiding Israel. As a party to the Genocide Convention, the United States has an obligation to take affirmative action to prevent genocide. This can well prohibit the ongoing financial and military assistance to Israel. The Leahy law in the USA prohibits military assistance to foreign security forces where there is credible information of gross violations of human rights being committed. This US law makes genocide as well as

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incitement to genocide a criminal offence.

Also, as a document, we carry an extract from ‘Zionism’ which deals with the ideological underpinnings of Zionist terrorism.

The ideological justification for the establishment of Israel with Jerusalem as its capital lies in the Zionist campaign which exploits the thin line between mythology and history to claim that David’s city and Temple are located at Jerusalem.

In this context, pre-eminent historian of the 20th Century, Eric Hobsbawm says: “The only history that Israel can use to justify itself as history is at least two thousand years old. Everything else that has happened in the meantime is glossed over, as it does not justify the foundation of Israel and the wars which that state has fought. The fact that the Temple has been located in Jerusalem was transformed into a modern political fact, in order to argue that Jerusalem had always been the center of the Jewish religion, and therefore the capital of the Jewish people (besides, it makes little sense to talk about capitals in a period previous to the Roman Empire, but that is another question). In any case, it has been used by the Jews to justify not only the foundation of their state, but the establishment of Jerusalem as their capital”. (The New Century, Eric Hobsbawm, Little, Brown and Company, 1999). On the widely held belief that myths constitute the collective historical memory of a people, Hobsbawm says: “But here again, it is not a question of the people constantly remembering: they remember because someone is constantly reminding them”. The crucial point is that people are constantly reminded in order to rouse their passions to serve a political end.

The World Zionist Organisation (WZO) was founded in 1897 with Theodor Herzl as its president. The Zionists advanced the slogan “Give land without people to the people without land.”

The ideological platform of International Zionism proclaimed the right of the ‘chosen people’. Thus, when the State of Israel was established and since it was not a land without people,

the original inhabitants of the land for the centuries, Palestinians, had to be either expelled or exterminated. This led to the *Nakba* (catastrophe) in 1948 when nearly 7 lakh Palestinians were either expelled or pushed into settlements on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The current horrendous genocidal assault and the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians is aimed at ensuring that even these two small areas – West Bank and Gaza Strip – are reduced to rubble to force the Palestinians out of these lands and occupy the whole of Palestinian territories and define it as ‘land without people’ that Israel can occupy.

This issue of the Marxist is a humble contribution to strengthen the Palestinian struggle for their homeland. We join the global protests and solidarity with the Palestinians and their just struggles for homeland that is being criminally denied by a gigantic imperialist fraud.

