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Netanyahu regime staggered by Palestinian uprising



Palestinians inspect the rubble of a building struck by the Israeli air force in Gaza, Saturday October 7, 2023. [AP Photo/Fatima Shbair]

“A slave-owner who through cunning and violence shackles a slave in chains, and a slave who through cunning or violence breaks the chains—let not the contemptible eunuchs tell us that they are equals before a court of morality!”—Leon Trotsky, 1938

On Friday night, Palestinian forces in the Gaza Strip launched a surprise attack, firing a rocket barrage and attacking Israeli forces surrounding the Gaza Strip. As of Saturday night, there were 200 Israelis dead and 1,100 wounded, and 232 Palestinians dead and 1,697 wounded. Initially caught unprepared, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are counterattacking, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to extract an “unprecedented price” in blood from Gaza.

What began Friday night is an uprising of the Palestinian people against the violent and brutally oppressive Israeli occupation. The Netanyahu government has sanctioned the constant theft of Palestinian lands by fascistic Israeli settlers, blockaded the Gaza Strip, targeted members of its ruling Hamas party for assassination and organized provocations against Muslims at Al-Aqsa Mosque. By imposing unbearable conditions on Gaza, it made armed resistance inevitable.

The *World Socialist Web Site* condemns the vicious and obscenely hypocritical statements of President Joe Biden and leaders of the European Union denouncing the Palestinian resistance as “terrorism” while supporting without any reservations Israel’s onslaught on Gaza.

Pledging “rock-solid and unwavering” support for Israeli military operations against Gaza, Biden said: “The United States unequivocally condemns this appalling assault against Israel by Hamas terrorists from Gaza, and I made clear to Prime Minister Netanyahu that we stand ready to offer all appropriate means of support to the government and people of Israel. Terrorism is never justified. Israel has a right to defend itself and its people.”

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock declared: “The odious violence of Hamas against civilians in Israel is unprecedented and unjustifiable. This terrorism must stop immediately. Israel has our full solidarity.”

The hypocrisy of these statements is staggering. As always, the sympathies of the imperialist powers are with the oppressors. Any manifestation of resistance by the oppressed is greeted with frenzied denunciations. The media ignores the fact that the Israeli government is led by a criminal, whose coalition is dominated by fascistic racists and is engaged in efforts to suppress the constitution.

In its coverage of the Ukraine war, the media never fails to condemn what it habitually refers to as Russia’s “illegal annexation of Crimea.” The United States has repeatedly declared that it will support Ukraine’s war to regain Crimea “as long as it takes.” But it never condemns Israel’s illegal annexation of vast tracts of Palestinian land.

The Palestinian population of Gaza and the Hamas government do not have powerful imperialist backers arming them to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars. As the Palestinians take up arms against an occupation by the Israeli military, which receives billions of dollars in US military aid each year, they know they face overwhelming odds.

Yet the Palestinian forces are not hailed as heroes, but rather denounced as terrorists by the reactionary politicians and servile media of the NATO countries. In reality, the Israeli

state for years has repeatedly targeted and killed hundreds or thousands of civilians in indiscriminate attacks on the densely populated Gaza Strip.

On Saturday night, in a bloodcurdling address to the nation, Netanyahu told “residents of Gaza” to “get out now, because we will operate everywhere and with full force.” Since his government blockades Gaza and does not let anyone leave, this is a declaration that Netanyahu sees Gaza’s entire population as a legitimate target. Asserting that “ Hamas wants to murder us all,” Netanyahu pledged to “fight them to the bitter end” and that cities where Hamas operates would turn into “cities of ruin.”

This barbaric threat to destroy the Gaza Strip testifies to the fascistic character of Netanyahu’s regime. The end product of the Zionist regime’s decades-long shift to the right has been his incorporation of violent far-right groups like the Religious Zionist Party into his government. Its members call for the expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories, promote killings of Palestinians such as the 1994 Cave of Patriarchs massacre, demand the destruction of the Al-Aqsa mosque and promote the legacy of American-born fascist Meir Kahane.

Netanyahu’s justification for his war is based on a falsification of the aims of Hamas, which he treats as a genocidal organization. In reality, the statement issued by the Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, stresses its opposition not to Jews but to Israeli occupation. Condemning murders of Palestinians by Israeli troops and settlers, long-term imprisonment of Palestinians, theft of Palestinian lands, and provocations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, it concludes:

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“As the Israeli occupation maintains its siege of the Gaza Strip and continues its crimes against our Palestinian people, while showing utmost disregard for international laws and resolutions amid US and Western support and international silence, we have decided to put an end to all of that. We announce a military operation against the Israeli occupation, which comes in response to the continued Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people and violations at the Al-Aqsa mosque.”

Hamas's ability to secretly prepare such an operation and launch it on October 6—50 years after the Yom Kippur War—exposes the depth of the crisis of the Israeli state. It is overrun with fascistic elements, has battled a years-long trial of Netanyahu for corruption, and faced mass protests of workers and youth earlier this year as it tried and failed to ram through a constitutional reform to undermine the legal independence of the judiciary. Its attempt to suppress Palestinian opposition through fascistic terror has failed.

The Netanyahu government was surprised by the Palestinian uprising in much the same way as Nazi commanders in occupied Poland were surprised by the 1943 uprising of Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto and the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. Blinded by its arrogance and racial hatred, it believed that repression had so broken the back of the Palestinians that resistance would be impossible. Its error now exposed, it is moving—also as in occupied Poland, where the Nazis reacted to uprisings by slaughtering tens and hundreds of thousands—towards a bloodbath.

This policy faces mass opposition in the Arab and international working class. Despite the shameless lies of the imperialist powers, there is broad sympathy for the Palestinians among billions of people worldwide.

This sympathy and opposition must, however, be politically mobilized. In particular, workers and youth in Israel must separate themselves from and oppose the homicidal policies of the Netanyahu government and support the fight of the Palestinians against oppression and occupation.

The corrupt Arab and Middle Eastern bourgeois regimes are complicit in Netanyahu's preparations to launch a bloody, imperialist-backed crackdown. Capitalist governments in Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the region are making appeals for de-escalation and restraint, which Netanyahu will ignore. At the same time, they are all seeking for their own military and strategic reasons to develop closer ties with the Israeli regime.

The force that can halt Netanyahu's onslaught in Israel is the Israeli, Palestinian and international working class, advancing a united struggle to stop the attack on Gaza, bring down the Netanyahu regime and end Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank.

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