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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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04.08.2028

Gaza, India, Bhagat Singh, and the Right to Violently Rebel Against Imperial Repression



Photograph by Nathaniel St. Clair

Gaza

Israel is waging a genocidal war against the people of Gaza, murdering in excess of 40,000 persons, with more victims almost certainly dead under the rubble left by relentless bombing. The British medical journal *The Lancet* suggest that if indirect deaths—from starvation, diseases, and the like—are taken into account, up to 186,000 deaths can be anticipated. At least 90 children per day have been killed since October 7 (A comparable number for the war in Ukraine is less than 1). Well over 1,000 children have had limbs amputated since Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinians in Gaza began. Nearly all of the 2.3 million residents

of Gaza have been “killed, maimed, orphaned and displaced” by the Israeli assault. Hospitals have been obliterated; hundreds of medical personnel have been shot or bombed to death; journalists have been targeted and killed; starvation of Palestinians is state policy. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have murdered toddlers point blank. The brutality, callousness, racism, and mass murder clearly indicate both the actuality of genocide and the intent of the government to commit it. And there is no end in sight. It will go down as one of the worst atrocities in history. If a similar event took place in the United States, about seven million people would now be dead, and this in nine months.

The ideology of the Israeli state is that of Zionism, a political movement begun in the 1880s, which from its start was one of colonial domination of the Palestinian people living in what is now Israel. Between then and the Nakba commencing in 1948, the world’s dominant capitalist countries were busy solidifying their control of the countries of the Global South, first as direct colonial thieves and then as indirect imperial exploiters. The founders of Zionism, including those that founded Israel, learned much from these countries. They saw what the British, whose political decisions were decisive in establishing Palestine as a Jewish enclave, did to the Irish, what the United States did to Native Peoples and Black slaves, what the British, Germans, Belgians, Italians, and Dutch did in Africa. They even learned from Hitler himself.

The current Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, is a leader of the Likud Party, which is the heir of the most right-wing of the early Israeli parties. Historian Laurance H. Shoup provides quotes from Netanyahu’s government that give credence to the fascist trajectory of Israel’s history:

Prime Minister Netanyahu invoked a Biblical reference commanding: “Do not spare them, put to death men, women, children and infants.”

President Isaac Herzog gave the military the green light to attack Palestinian civilians as legitimate targets: “It is an entire nation out there that is responsible.... It is not true this rhetoric about civilians not being aware, not involved.... They could have risen up.”

Major General Ghassan Alian of the Israeli military threatened: “There will be no electricity and no water [in Gaza], there will only be destruction. You wanted hell, you will get hell.”

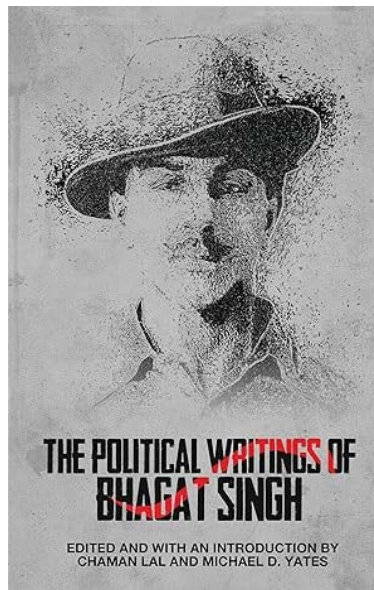
Yoav Gallant, Defense Minister stated: “I have ordered a complete siege of the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel.... We are fighting human animals and we will act accordingly; we will eliminate everything.”

If we accept that Israel is a settler-colonialist state, which has illegitimately taken what does not belong to it and has maintained control of its colony with extreme violence, then what can

we say about the right of the Palestinian people to resist? To answer this question, let us first examine another case of colonization, one in which, while there was a large foreign presence, there was not a settler class: India.

India Under British Rule

Before India became a British colony, it had undergone more than a century of predation by a private corporation, the East India Company (EIC), one of the first businesses to issue stock. With close ties to British politicians, including the Crown, leavened by large bribes, the EIC had enormous leverage in Parliament. Backed by British arms, including ships, by the early decades of the nineteenth century, the company had built its own army of a couple hundred thousand soldiers. Through more bribes, showing some favoritism to certain Indian groups, which then supported the company, even serving in its army, plus threats and actual violence, it was able to thoroughly defeat the power of the Mughal aristocracy that had conquered most of India but by the late eighteenth century had entered a period of sharp decline.



The EIC committed numerous acts of violence, including torture, murder, and starvation. To take one example, some estimates of the death toll among Indians during the revolt against the Company that began in 1857 range as high as 800,000, a figure that includes death from the famines and diseases that resulted from the war's destruction. In addition, the EIC looted (often quite literally, loading gold and other forms of wealth directly onto ships that then sailed to Great Britain) the Indian subcontinent. Taxes payable in cash forced peasants and farmers, large and small, to shift from subsistence to cash crops. Indians were compelled to stop producing manufactured goods, such as textiles, with domestic production replaced by

imports from Great Britain. The consequences of these imperial decrees were serious: besides the deaths, life expectancies fell, health deteriorated, poverty rose, and the Indian economy suffered greatly.

After the 1857 war, the fortunes of the East India Company plummeted, and eventually, the British government took over the company and became the direct colonial ruler of India. British imperialism has been endlessly propagandized as minimally violent. In fact, it has been seen as a “civilizing mission,” bringing progress and prosperity to the unwashed masses of the world’s poorest countries. As scholars Dylan Sullivan and Jason Hickel point out:

Recent years have seen a resurgence in nostalgia for the British empire. High-profile books such as Niall Ferguson’s *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, and Bruce Gilley’s *The Last Imperialist*, have claimed that British colonialism brought prosperity and development to India and other colonies. Two years ago, a YouGov poll found that 32 percent of people in Britain are actively proud of the nation’s colonial history.

They then write: “This rosy picture of colonialism conflicts dramatically with the historical record.” To put it mildly! British rule in India was vicious and violent, and this treatment of the Indian masses was tied directly to the political economy of imperialism. The colonial rulers imposed heavy taxation on Indians and then used these tax revenues to purchase the Indian goods needed by Great Britain. That is to say, imports from India to Britain were paid for by Indians, who had to produce cash crops to pay the taxes, resulting in further reductions in rural health. In some cases, the imperial power had a commodity monopoly, as with salt, and the indirect taxes on this also had to be paid by Indian salt consumers. India also had to import the textile products once produced locally, further weakening the Indian economy. For Great Britain, India was literally a gold mine. Wealth flowed from India to the seat of the colonial power in amounts difficult to believe. What is more,

Britain saw a steadily increasing and completely costless inflow of tax-financed commodities—textiles (up to the 1840s [when textile imports were prohibited by the British government]), rice, saltpeter, indigo, raw cotton, jute—which far exceeded its own requirements. This excess was reexported to other countries.

The reexport helped alleviate Britain’s trade deficit with some European nations, and part of the excess helped Britain extend its colonial and imperial power. Funds originating in the exploitation of Indians could even finance British government expenditures, some of which could help win working-class support for imperialism.

Economist Utsa Patnaik has estimated what she and others call the “drain” of Indian wealth to Great Britain:

Utsa Patnaik, an economic historian, set about to find the answer and published her research in 2017 establishing that the British colonial regime looted nearly \$45 trillion [in today's dollars] from India from 1765 to 1938. The amount is 15 times the annual GDP of the UK today. Even if it wants, it still can't return India the money it looted to not only build itself as a major global power but also fund much of the development in the today's developed world. Two inevitable corollaries to the extraction of such enormous amounts of loot follow. First, such astonishing exploitation cannot be achieved without violence, either directly in the form of imprisonment, torture, and murder or indirectly through death and poor health, the result of starvation. Police and soldiers routinely abused those arrested and imprisoned. People hung from tree branches, branded with hot irons, chilies rubbed into eyes and onto genitals, beaten with lathis (iron-bound bamboo sticks), confined in solitary for long periods, water-tortured, sodomized, raped, tied up and left out in the tropical sun. The East India company used torture to extract tax payments from their Indian subjects. In one of his essays, Bhagat Singh, of whom more later in this paper, was severely beaten while on trial in a British-run court!

Large numbers of Indians were murdered by the British. We have already mentioned the direct deaths during the 1857 war. An infamous slaughter of protesters took place in 1919, known as the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre:

On 13 April 1919, a largely peaceful protest demonstration against the British against the arrest of two independence activists took place in Amritsar at the Bagh, which had once been a garden and was then an area of rest for those visiting the nearby Golden Temple, a Sikh Gurudwara. British general R.E.H. Dyer ordered his troops to fire on the crowd, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people and injuries to over one thousand. Today, a memorial stands on the site in honour of the dead. This horrific slaughter was a seminal event in deepening Indian resentment of British rule and the drive for independence.

There are many other examples that could be cited, but by far, the British killed innumerable more Indians indirectly. Britain financed its Second World War expenditures in Asia by devising a scheme to place the burden of this spending on the people of India, especially the poor. The way in which this was done impacted the residents of the Indian province of Bengal the most. The great economist, John Maynard Keynes, was the key economic advisor to the British government. He sought a way to shift the costs of the war away from Great Britain and onto India. A tax on the Indian rich wouldn't do the trick because there weren't enough rich Indians to pay for the war in the East and a tax on the poor would likely lead to mass protests. So, he recommended a roundabout, and devious, action, namely inflation. Britain simply printed money to pay for what soldiers needed to prosecute the war in India.

This caused prices to skyrocket, with the price of rice rising by 300 percent. Needless to say, the incomes of the poor stayed relatively constant, forcing them to greatly curtail their consumption. This allowed the difference between output produced and locally consumed to be siphoned off by the British military. Indian merchants who made windfall gains from the high prices were also taxed by Britain, providing additional revenues to pursue the war. In Bengal, the forced tightening of the already tightened belts of the poor resulted in famine, killing at least three million people. Interested readers should consider watching the film *Distant Thunder* by the great Indian director Satyajit Ray, which shows the human costs of what Keynes wrought on the people of Bengal. Here is how Jason Hickel summed up the famine:

In the name of the Allied cause, the policies imposed by Keynes and Churchill killed more than three million people – many times more than the total number of military and civilian casualties suffered during the entire war by Britain and the US combined. The scale of this tragedy is almost impossible to fathom. If laid head to foot, the corpses of the victims would stretch the length of England, from Dover to the Scottish borders, nearly 10 times over.

In the essay by Hickel and Sullivan cited above, there is a calculation of excess Indian deaths between 1880 and 1920, those above what the best available data imply was average before the British entered India. This was the time during which British imperial power was at its peak. The authors estimate excess deaths at 100 million, and they offer the qualification that this is very likely a conservative estimate. The midpoint between 1880 and 1920 is 1900. In that year, the population of India was about 240 million, which puts in perspective the enormity of the death toll.

Resistance and the Question of Violence

The second corollary of the fact of extreme exploitation is the resistance of those who suffer unbearable abuse. While there were Indians who submitted and to some extent benefited from British colonialism, peasants and workers actively countered what the foreigners imposed upon them. In what follows, I rely on a book that Chaman Lal, the leading authority on the life and work of Bhagat Singh, and I edited, titled *The Political Writings of Bhagat Singh*. Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from this book.

While most of India's people were peasants and small landholders, there was a sizeable class of wage workers. Railway employees, street sweepers, mill workers, and many others called strikes, sometimes winning better working conditions and higher wages.

Much of the resistance to British rule was led by Gandhi, whom many consider the “father” of Indian independence. He is most famous for his insistence on nonviolent struggle, coining

the word *satyagraha* to signify a set of beliefs and rules that were employed to carry on nonviolent actions that would, Gandhi believed, compel the British to leave India and make the country's people free to rule themselves. An example often employed was the peaceful refusal of peasants to pay unjust taxes. Another, more important one, was the Non-Cooperation Movement, begun by Gandhi in 1920. Indians would refuse to cooperate with the British and any reforms they imposed:

The movement begun by Gandhi in 1920 to encourage Indians to refuse cooperation with British rulers. They would no longer support British "reforms," withdraw labour from any activity supporting British rule, including schools, boycott British goods, etc. With the aim of attaining self-governance. Gandhi ended the movement after the violence of the Chauri Chaura incident in February 1922.

The Chauri Chaura incident occurred in the town of that name, located in the northern India province of Uttar Pradesh. On February 4, 1922, police opened fire on Indians taking part in the Non-Cooperation Movement. In response, protesters set fire to the police station, killing everyone in it. Gandhi then ended the Movement, which some members of his Congress Party opposed. This and the hangings that resulted led many Indian nationalists to the left.

Nonviolence has been a powerful weapon in efforts to end oppression, as the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, as well as the Gandhi-led struggle for Indian independence, demonstrated. Nonviolence in the form of strikes, boycotts, mass demonstrations, powerful and emotional speeches like those of Martin Luther King, shaming of politicians, picketing the homes and businesses of the powerful, all of these have been effective. However, in the face of relentless violence, is counter-violence both justified and necessary? One can surely legitimately ask if the Chinese revolutionaries led by Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party could have liberated their country without a long period of violent struggle. Or if the Bolsheviks could have built the Soviet Union without an army. Could the Vietnamese have defeated both the French and the United States without violent guerilla warfare? Would apartheid in South Africa ended without the actions of the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC)?

Perhaps Chile shows the need for violent anti-colonialism/imperialism most clearly. Salvador Allende, the valiant radical doctor who became president of Chile, began successfully to lead the nation leftward. He believed that socialism could be achieved through "*medios pacificos*," that is, by peaceful means. In retrospect, this proved wishful thinking. Without control of the reactionary Chilean military, which had close ties to the United States, Allende fell victim to a coup hatched in Washington DC and led by the fascist general Augusto Pinochet, who took

power in September 1973. Pinochet then headed a brutal seventeen-year dictatorship in which thousands were tortured and murdered.

When I use the word “violence,” I do not mean random killing of those you oppose. Rather, I mean violence embedded in a radical political program. If a political group targets certain colonial or imperial leaders who are raining misery on their people with assassination, this is a legitimate use of violence. For example, if the ANC’s military wing killed leaders of the apartheid government, or Afrikaans settler-colonialists, this is legitimate violence.

There were those in India unhappy with Gandhi’s nonviolent approach, even as they often enough cooperated with Gandhi’s Congress Party, and even as some Congress members, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru, were sympathetic to those who espoused violence. The leader of those opposed to the Congress’s politics was a young man named Bhagat Singh. He was born on September 28, 1907, in a small village in Lyallpur, which is now part of Pakistan. As the surname Singh tells us, he was a Sikh, an ethnoreligious group in the northwest Indian region called the Punjab, which is the historic homeland of Sikhs. The Sikh religion stresses the necessity of leading one’s life for the benefit of all. The persecution that Sikhs suffered from various other religious groups politicized many Sikhs, and even today Sikhs are often in the forefront of radical political movements.

Bhagat Singh

Bhagat Singh is India’s best-known revolutionary. He lived but twenty-three years, but he is remembered today as well as anyone in the country. An enormous farmers’ revolt against the Indian government’s enactment of three laws aimed at weakening the power of India’s already impoverished farmers (suicides of farmers had between 2014 and 2022 topped 100,000, a sure sign of economic desperation) began in August, 2020. The protests, which included a blockade of Delhi, lasted sixteen months. Throughout the protests, the memory of Bhagat Singh was very much alive. In an essay about these extraordinary events, Chaman Lal began with a lengthy quote from Bhagat Singh’s most famous political essay, “Letter to Young Political Workers,” written on February 2, 1931:

The real revolutionary armies are in the villages and in factories, the peasantry and the labourers. But our bourgeois leaders do not and cannot dare to tackle them. The sleeping lion once awakened from its slumber shall become irresistible even after the achievement of what our leaders aim at. After his first experience with the Ahmedabad labourers in 1920 Mahatma Gandhi declared: “We must not tamper with the labourers. It is dangerous to make political use of the factory proletariat” (*The Times*, May 1921). Since then, they never dared to approach them. There remains the peasantry. The Bardoli resolution of 1922 clearly defines

the horror the leaders felt when they saw the gigantic peasant class rising to shake off not only the domination of an alien nation but also the yoke of the landlords.

Anyway, we were discussing the forces on which you can depend for a revolution. But if you say that you will approach the peasants and labourers to enlist their active support, let me tell you that they are not going to be fooled by any sentimental talk. They ask you quite candidly: what are they going to gain by your revolution for which you demand their sacrifices, what difference does it make to them whether Lord Reading is the head of the Indian government or Sir Purshotamdas Thakordas [A Bombay Industrialist and Congress leader]? What difference for a peasant if Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru [A leading Advocate and rich Congress leader] replaces Lord Irwin! It is useless to appeal to his national sentiment. You can't "use" him for your purpose; you shall have to mean seriously and to make him understand that the revolution is going to be his and for his good.

Cast aside the youthful dreams of a revolution within ten years and of Gandhi's utopian promises of Swaraj [roughly, self-rule] in one Year. It requires neither the emotion nor the death, but the life of constant struggle, suffering and sacrifice. Crush your individuality first. Shake off the dreams of personal comfort. Then start to work. Inch by inch you shall have to proceed. It needs courage, perseverance and very strong determination. No difficulties and no hardships shall discourage you. No failure and betrayals shall dishearten you. No troubles imposed upon you shall snuff out the revolutionary will in you. Through the ordeal of sufferings and sacrifice you shall come out victorious. And these individual victories shall be the valuable assets of the revolution.

In a sense Gandhism with its counter-revolutionary creed of quietism makes a nearer approach to the revolutionary ideas. For it counts on mass action, though not for the masses alone. They have paved the way for the proletariat revolution by trying to harness them, however crudely and selfishly to its political programme. The Revolutionary must give to the angle of non-violence his due.

Let not the revolutionary be lashed round and round the vicious circle of aimless outrages and individual self-immolation. The inspiring ideal for all and sundry workers should not be that of dying for the cause but of living for the cause, and living usefully and worthily.

The nationalists to be effective must harness the nation into action, into revolt. And the nation are not the loudspeakers of the Congress—it is the peasants and the labourers who formed more than 95 per cent of India. The nation will stir itself to action only on assurance of nationalization. i.e.... Freedom from slavery of Imperialist—capitalists.

Here Bhagat Singh illustrates the weakness of Gandhi's approach to Indian independence. All that it can achieve is India's political independence from direct British rule. It is a nationalist program that ends there. Bhagat Singh's Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) was formed in 1928 as the successor to the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA). While the latter was not opposed to direct actions that might involve violence, such as a series of train robberies, it did not have a truly revolutionary outlook. The HSRA, on the other hand, did have such a stance. In one sense, the HSRA can be seen as the left-wing of the independence movement, and as such it had a checkered relationship with Gandhi's Congress. Gandhi, himself, was not sympathetic to the radicals, but others, especially Nehru, were. The latter "... [paid] one thousand rupees to help revolutionaries go to Russia, but such a trip never materialized due to Azad's death. Subhas Chandra Bose and Nehru were both much appreciative of Bhagat Singh's personality." Nehru admired the courage of the young revolutionary.

By his early teens, in the 1920s, Bhagat Singh was already involved in the battle for Indian independence. As he became a committed revolutionary, a communist deeply influenced by Marx and Lenin, his political ideology did not reject violence. In this, he was certainly not alone. Efforts to eject the British from India had been going on for many decades, and while Gandhi had many followers, the historical record shows many acts of violence against the British. And while Bhagat Singh wrote many perceptive essays about his country and those fighting for independence, he realized that in India most people were not literate. Symbols such as posters and photographs became important ways to reach the masses of peasants and workers. Courageous acts, such as the aforementioned train robberies, also captured great public attention. However, Bhagat Singh came to see that some particularly spectacular acts might catalyze people into revolutionary action.

A group of seven members of Britain's Parliament were sent to India in 1928 to investigate the political situation, seeking especially to discover why previous reforms had not been effective. Given the millions of Indians who had already died as a result of British imperialism in India, and the rapaciousness of its rule, which drained the country of its wealth, the outrageousness of this move was obvious to Indians. There were, unsurprisingly, no Indian members of the Commission. Protests immediately ensued. As we note in our book:

In Lahore, the youth had convinced Lala Lajpat Rai, the most important Punjabi leader of the Indian freedom struggle, to lead the anti-Simon commission protest, which he did on 30 October 1928. The police charged the march, and Rai became a victim of police brutality, hit

repeatedly by the bamboo clubs known as lathis, wielded by DSP Saunders at the orders of Senior Superintendent of Police James A. Scott. Due to this beating, about which Bhagat Singh declared that 'every lathi on his body would prove to be the last nail in the coffin of British rule in India!', Lala Lajpat Rai died on 17 November 1928.

This brutal act set Bhagat Singh and the HSRA on a path that would both seal their fate and make Bhagat Singh a martyr in the cause of the independence and radical transformation of India. They planned an assassination of James Scott. On December 17, 1928, they inadvertently shot and killed his assistant, John Saunders. This made little difference, because it was Saunders who had actually beaten Lala Lajpat Rai. The HSRA gave the assassination maximum publicity, and over the next months, they engaged in more direct actions, the goal of which was to place the British imperialists themselves on trial.

On April 8, 1929, Bhagat Singh and his comrade B.K. Dutt threw small bombs (more like large firecrackers) into the Central Assembly in Delhi in protest of pending anti-worker legislation. They then threw a flyer into the room. Its first sentence was "If the deaf are to hear, the sound has to be very loud." It also contained the slogan *Inquilab Zindabad* (Long Live Revolution), which from that point on has always been associated with the name of Bhagat Singh and which has echoed in the ears of revolutionaries in India and throughout South Asia.

There were a few minor injuries from the bombs but nothing major. The two perpetrators and the HSRA had carefully prepared their action, making sure that all the major Indian media would report what happened, complete with photographs and copies of the flyer. What is more, both men put down their pistols and allowed themselves to be arrested. From that point on, Bhagat Singh would use his arrest and imprisonment, which would lead to a sentence of death once police were able to tie him to the Saunders assassination, to rally the country around his and his companions' ordeal. Bhagat Singh was tortured, beaten even in court appearances, but he fearlessly resisted, going on extended hunger strikes, writing endless letters of protest, and, in effect, putting the British on trial. All of this was widely publicized, stirring people to action. There were protests around the world against his death sentence. He had become a symbol and still is today of selfless resistance against oppression. Echoing Sacco and Vanzetti, Bhagat Singh said not long before he was hanged,

This is the highest award for patriots and I am proud that I am going to get it. They may kill me, but they cannot kill my ideas. They may crush my body, but they will not be able to crush my spirits. My ideas will haunt the British like a curse till they are forced to run away from here. Bhagat Singh dead will be more dangerous to the British.

Had Gandhi's Congress rallied around the forces unleashed by the HSRA, had they better read the mood of the peasants and workers, they would have moved decisively to the left. Instead, for the most part, they distanced themselves from the revolutionaries and from thoroughgoing revolution itself. Thus, when independence was finally achieved in 1947, capitalism still held economic power. Yes, there were many years of liberal democracy and attempts to curb private interests and provide for the welfare of the people. But poverty remained overwhelming, and communal antagonisms remained unchecked. Today, we see what often happens in such cases. The far right, in the person of the fascist Prime Minister Narendra Modi, now dominates the political scene, and the left is almost everywhere in the country on the defensive.

Let's return again to the question of violence. It is difficult to argue against the reality in India. It was occupied by a murderous imperial power. Every British soldier and policeman, every "civil servant," and for that matter, every adult British family member who lived in India was part of an occupying army. These people could be seen as fair game in terms of violent responses to the daily violence of British occupation. Bhagat Singh never singled out so-called civilians. He participated in the assassination of a policeman who himself had beaten a man nearly to death, and, in fact, in reality murdered him, given that he died as an immediate consequence of the assault on Lala Lajpat Rai. The HSRA was a legitimate anti-imperialist organization, and as such, the assassination was an act of war, and those arrested were really prisoners of war, no different than any soldier captured in wartime. The killing of Saunders was not something done sensationally but rather an act aimed at galvanizing the long-suffering Indian masses. That history has not worked out as Bhagat Singh would have wished is no fault of his.

Similarly, in Palestine, acts of violence against the Israeli state are certainly justifiable. Hamas, whatever the imperial media tell us, is a legitimate political entity engaged in a liberation movement. Recently, China hosted a conference of various Palestinian factions, and a certain unity has been agreed upon. This will make anti-Israel violence still more justifiable. I might add that, as attorney and civil rights activist Stanley L. Cohen makes clear, Palestinians and all those suffering illegal occupation have the legal right, under international law, to resist by any means necessary, including violence. We should always condemn the intentional murder of civilians, such as those attending the rock music festival in Israel on October 7. However, the soldiers killed were legitimate targets. And even the adult settlers, who occupy Palestinian land illegally and who are armed and dangerous if you are Palestinian, were as well.

There can be no moral right, and there is no legal right, for a colonial, imperialist power to defend itself against those whose land it has stolen and whose people it has killed. Despite the constant refrain that Israel is engaged in self-defense, the truth is exactly the opposite. It is simply aiming to maintain its colonial and imperial power. The moral and legal high ground is held by those who are oppressed, and this includes the absolute right to use violent means to liberate themselves.

As we have argued, nonviolent struggles are obviously useful: demonstrations, marches, strikes, hunger strikes, boycotts, etc. Yet, the IDF shoots, arrests, and tortures peaceful protesters; strikes are crushed with violence; hunger strikers will be left to die; and boycotts have not stopped the killing. Yes, if the United States and its allies stopped arming the Israeli government and demanded change, change might occur. But every Palestinian living today will very likely be dead before this happens. What this means is that organized violence will surely be an increasingly important weapon in the anti-colonial struggle in Palestine. Rather than decry it, we in the global left should defend it, just as we have defended armed struggles around the world. And at the same time, we should do whatever we can to encourage those engaging in armed resistance to embrace a philosophy implacably hostile to imperialism, which is simply part and parcel of what makes the capitalist economic system tick. And take whatever actions we can muster to fan the flames of radical revolt in our own countries.

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AUGUST 2, 2024