

Stop Israeli genocide in Gaza!

WW COMMENTARY Defend the right to resistance

By Monica Moorehead

Based on a talk given at an Oct. 19, 2023, Workers World Party meeting in New York City.

With any struggle for national liberation, the role of violence of the oppressed versus violence of the oppressor becomes a debate within the worldwide movement. This debate has occurred for many generations starting with the Paris Commune in 1871, when the workers and the poor of Paris dared to seize state power for 72 days to challenge the repressive rule of the dominating French bourgeoisie.

Although the workers and the poor were eventually defeated, these important lessons were examined by Karl Marx's "The Civil War in France." Marx's work helped lay the basis for Vladimir Lenin's "State and Revolution," explaining the role of the repressive state and the triumph of the Soviet Union. There have been other important struggles where the issue of violence became a central question in Vietnam, Cuba, Chile, Angola, People's Korea and elsewhere, along with rebellions of the oppressed inside the U.S.

As Marxists, we don't view this question of violence as one of morality or in isolation, which pacifists and liberals tend to do. It is integral to the class struggle that goes to the heart of which side you are on — the side of the oppressor or the side of the oppressed; the side of the haves or the have-nots; the side of the working class or the side of the bosses. It boils down to supporting oppressed peoples

who have been superexploited by capitalism and imperialism, not just for one day or one month or one year, but for decades and even for centuries. In the instance of the colonized Palestinians, it has been 75 years since the Nakba.



Boston protest, Oct. 17, 2023.

WW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

During the height of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, there was a period when the Black masses and their representatives, like the African National Congress, tried to appeal to the racist regime for a transition of power with peaceful protests and other nonviolent actions. These appeals were drowned in blood with outright heinous massacres, most notably in the Black townships of Soweto in 1976 and Sharpeville in 1960, by the brutal apartheid police.

These terrorist attacks led to a shift in tactics by liberation forces who felt they had no other choice but to organize an

armed wing of the anti-apartheid struggle to fight force with force for both survival and social change. This significant decision was made with the understanding that any armed resistance would be a defensive one because the apartheid

regime had at its disposal the most sophisticated weaponry from the West, including the U.S. The guerrilla fighters in South Africa had to rely on going underground to retrieve arms from socialist countries like the former Soviet Union, along with military assistance from socialist Cuba.

And as apartheid became more isolated and reviled worldwide, the armed resistance was labeled as "terrorism" by the apartheid regime and its imperialist allies in an attempt to demonize the struggle in the eyes of the world movement. But in the end, it backfired because the masses backed the armed struggle,

which eventually led to the end of legal apartheid.

Palestinians challenge Zionism and imperialism

At this moment, the heroic uprising in Gaza, the West Bank, Jenin and other areas in the Occupied Territories in Zionist Israel that began on Oct. 7 has taken the global center stage on the question of violence. This righteous struggle is on the front lines of challenging imperialism in the region and the world. It has been over 75 years since the settler colonial state of Israel was formed resulting in another form of apartheid.

During that time, the Indigenous Palestinian population has been bombed, brutalized, exiled to other parts of the world, and made refugees in their ancestral land by a racist, terrorist regime. This regime acts as a military outpost, doing the bidding of the imperialist West to control fabulous wealth and profits for mainly Big Oil interests.

The Palestinians have used every means at their disposal to fight for their liberation, including general strikes, demonstrations, etc., where they were mowed down by Israel's occupation forces and driven further out of their homes. No liberation forces can compete against bombs, tanks, helicopters and other high-powered military weaponry by just throwing rocks and bottles, or even hijacking airplanes — as justified and heroic as these tactics have been to help bring worldwide attention to the Israeli occupation.

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They will never have the streets!

By Susan Abulhawa

The following is a transcript of a talk given by Susan Abulhawa, Executive Director of the Palestine Writes Festival, at a rally of 10,000 people for Palestine on the Art Museum steps, Philadelphia, Oct. 21. Abulhawa is also a member of the Philadelphia branch of Workers World Party.

Have we got our adrenaline pumping good? I'm just gonna ask everybody to just be silent for a minute. I want us all to really think about the 5,000 Palestinians who have been murdered. Most of them were children who barely had a chance to live. There are approximately 20,000 Palestinians who are missing, most of them are presumed to be buried under the rubble and will probably die there if they haven't already. I just want us to take a moment for all of us to fathom this.

This happened in the span of one week. It happened in the span of one week! The death toll is going to rise to the tens of thousands. We know that because those people aren't just missing somewhere.



Susan Abulhawa tells 10,000 supporters of Palestine, 'We are the people of the land who have been there for millennia.' Philadelphia, Oct. 21, 2023.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

We know where they are. I want you all to feel our ancestors come through us. And to also feel this loss and to honor them.

We are all here. We are Black, and white and Brown. We are Muslims and Christians and Jews. We come from all walks of life. You don't see this kind of

turnout for them. Why? Because the only people showing up for them are our corrupt leaders. The only ones showing up for them are the people who have to answer to money. Are the people who answer to corruption.

Nobody shows up for them like this

anywhere in the world. Because they are the oppressors, not because they are Jews. They want you to think it's because they're Jewish. They want you to think we're antisemites. They want you to think we hate them because they're Jews. No! Our ancestors were Jews. Our ancestors were Christian. They were Muslim. They converted between religions. We are the people of the land who have been there for millennia continuously for unbroken habitation.

They want the world to believe they are the victims. But let me tell you people who can turn off the water taps for millions of humans are not the victims. People who can stop food and medicine from getting to millions of people are not victims. People who can make the media across the whole Western Hemisphere repeat lies of beheaded babies without any verification — they are not the victims. They are the people with all the guns with the money, with the political covers, but you know what they do not have and will never have. They will never have this. They will never have the streets. □

Defend the right to resistance

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So, once the Hamas group was democratically elected to represent occupied Gaza in 2006, an uncompromising organized resistance to the occupation was elevated, rooted in the First Intifada in the late 1980s.

Working-class forces worldwide must defend the right of Hamas to lead an armed struggle, despite any ideological differences with its leadership. Any form of resistance against Israeli occupation is also a blow against imperialism. This resistance also continues to break the decades-long isolation of those opposing Zionism, an isolation that has enjoyed the united support of the global ruling class and its bourgeois pundits, especially the media.

The rest of the masses in the Arab world, who have also suffered at the hands of the Zionist bullies for decades, view the Palestinian struggle as inspiration for struggling against their own puppet governments, which are complicit in submitting to Israel and imperialism. The only thing that can challenge a repressive state like Israel — a state founded on the wholesale theft of land, carried out with brutality and genocide — is armed resistance and the backing of the masses supporting that armed resistance.

Palestine is an exemplary demonstration of the right to self-defense of an oppressed people or nation, which any left force that views itself as revolutionary — especially if based in an imperialist country — must defend in order to strengthen global class solidarity.

A class view on violence

Sam Marcy, the late chairperson of Workers World Party, wrote three articles featured in the 1992 pamphlet “A Marxist Defense of the L.A. Rebellion,” when the Black and Latine communities rose up in a spontaneous rebellion following the acquittal of four racist white police officers charged with beating a Black motorist, Rodney King, almost to death in 1991. This heinous crime was caught on video before there was social media. The name of the following section is called “Marxism on violence.”

“After every stage in the struggle of the workers and oppressed people, there follows an ideological struggle over what methods the masses should embrace to achieve their liberation from imperialist monopoly capital. There are always those who abjure violence while minimizing the initial use of violence by the ruling class. They denounce it in words, while in deeds they really cover it up. That’s precisely what’s happening now.



100,000 people rally in London, Oct. 21, 2023.

“Yes indeed, they readily admit the verdict in the Rodney King beating was erroneous and unfair. But — and here their voices grow louder — ‘The masses should not have taken to the streets and taken matters into their own hands.’ Their denunciation of the violence of the ruling class is subdued and muffled — above all it is hypocritical, a sheer formality. It’s an indecent way of seeming to take both sides of the argument when what follows is in reality a condemnation of the masses.

“In times when the bourgeoisie is up against the wall, when the masses have risen suddenly and unexpectedly, the bourgeoisie gets most lyrical in abjuring violence. It conjures up all sorts of lies and deceits about the unruliness of a few among the masses as against the orderly law-abiding many. Marxism here again cuts through it all. The Marxist view of violence flows from an altogether different concept. It first of all distinguishes between the violence of the oppressors as against the responsive violence of the masses.

“Just to be able to formulate it that way is a giant step forward, away from disgusting bourgeois praise for non-violence. It never occurs to any of them to show that the masses have never made any real leap forward with the theory of nonviolence. Timidity never made it in history. Indeed, Marxists do prefer nonviolent methods if the objectives the masses seek — freedom from oppression and exploitation — can be obtained that way. But Marxism explains the historical evolution of the class struggle as well as the struggle of oppressed nations as against oppressors.” (workers.org/book/a-marxist-defense)

From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free! □

Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and

worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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