

A PALESTINIAN STATE NOW, NOT IN SOME MISTY FUTURE

With Israel's war against Hamas and the civilian population of Gaza winding down, and the world outraged at plans to starve and expel said population, we are now at an opportune moment.

If there were a left worthy of the name in Europe, now would be the time for it to give their governments a giant nudge. The Warsaw Ghetto tactics of the Israeli government have been sufficient to stir and unify EU countries and the UK into a previously unheard of response of "condemning in the strongest terms", suspending trade talks and threatening other sanctions.

A mass movement on the streets could build on this momentum to press for direct intervention. But this is not going to happen, of course, because most active Palestine supporters are heavily infected with "anti-imperialism" or a more general peace mongering. Their chants of "free Palestine" are empty noise.

It should be made part of the general understanding that on this question the UN is displaying its quite normal inability to do its job. If it were functioning properly it would mandate an external third party force to replace the present Israeli one in the occupied territories and provide the security necessary during the transition to an elected Palestinian government.

Given the inability of the UN to act, the pressure should be put on the western European powers to fill the breach. The UK and France should definitely be involved. The Italians are another possible participant. They could land in Gaza by sea and through Egypt, and enter the West Bank through Jordan. They would have the job of preventing hostilities between Palestinian factions and between Palestinians and Israeli settlers, and ensuring the supply of humanitarian aid. They might also have a post-independence role in deterring Israeli interference.

However, what we are talking about here is maximum economic and diplomatic pressure accompanied by troops already in place ready to move once the Israelis concede. As well as just getting out of the way they would be required to cooperate in a range of areas such as ensuring electricity and water supply, and allowing the construction of a land bridge between Gaza and the West Bank.

Let's hope European leaders can recognize, by just relying on their own brain cells, that fixing the continually festering criminal mess is in their own best interest and this kind of intervention is what is required.

Of course, the pseudo left could not countenance such "imperialist" intervention. According to them, the Palestinians have to remain under Israeli occupation until a successful proletarian revolution in the region! So, they shouldn't

hold their breath! An article in *Red Flag* by SAlt elder Mick Armstrong back in December 1, 2023 represents this view as does an article of November 8, 2023 from his former pals at Solidarity. And we shouldn't fail to mention a similar echo from the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group on October 31, 2023.

Armstrong does correctly point out that talk in the past about a Palestinian state had been a sham given that Israel was never going to accept an independent state. But here we are not talking about a phony "peace process" but something imposed on Israel.

ANOTHER GLORIOUS MISSED OPPORTUNITY

I have just been reading about Portugal's Carnation Revolution in 1974, and cannot resist indulging in a bit more Trot bashing. They were rather disappointed in how things turned out. According to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, any bourgeois democratic revolution in the present period can only occur when it is led by the working class who should if they had their act together immediately follow things through with a proletarian revolution. If only there had been a genuine revolutionary party, it could have gone great guns!

Talk about "Socialism in One Country"! Maybe they thought events in tiny Portugal could have triggered revolutions in London, Paris and Bonn!

The pro-Moscow communist party tried to fish in troubled waters but was thankfully pushed aside.

None of this of course is to detract from the role of workers in the whole affair. It is worth study. They were able to turn a military coup into a popular uprising through their strikes, workers' committees and occupations. They ensured the successful transition to bourgeois democracy.

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EUROPEAN FAR RIGHT ARE BEST DESCRIBED AS RUSSIAN QUISLINGS

Just as in the 1930s, we can see that the major powers are divided into aggressive fascist tyrannies and non-aggressive democracies. This parallel also extends to the far right. In both cases we have rightist in the aggressor states set on conquests and rightists in democracies spreading pacifism. In the present European context we are talking about Russia versus everybody else.

It is good to see that nowadays the far right in Europe do not want to invade their neighbors or retake their colonies. Their ill will towards foreigners is mainly confined to an indifference to their woes and a hostility towards immigrants. However, their pacifism makes them dangerous, use-ful idiots in the service of the Ruscists. They are wannabe modern-day Quislings you might say. Pointing to this Russian connection as clearly as possible should be the primary focus when dealing with these creeps.

They parrot the Ruscist line on the invasion of Ukraine. It is all the fault of Europe and Ukraine. Of course, the reality is that the Ruscists cannot afford to have a democracy next door and they consider that Ukraine should really be part of Russia and a new czarist empire.

The Quislings and Ruscists share the same set of ideas. They are all ethno-nationalists who dream up all kinds of internal and external enemies. Their "degenerate West" narrative is quite similar.

The Quislings look benignly upon a regime that is tyrannical and corrupt in the extreme. It is a playbook for how to white-ant ostensibly accountable representative government. Orban in Hungary has obviously been attending master classes.

They are supported by the Russian regime in various ways including funds and social media manipulation. They lead the way in opposing the European rearmament response to the Ruscist threat. Orban and the German AfD deserve special mention here.

Focusing on their role as fifth columnist Quislings is the best way to put them on the defensive and to unite everyone against them. It is they who are the internal enemy, and Putin and company are a much more credible external threat than illegal immigrants.

CUCKOO LAND

As we all know Ukrainians are indifferent as to whether they are killed, tortured and terrorized by Moscow or Brussels. They see revolutionary defeatism as the only way ahead and have no doubt that Russians feel the same way. They only regret that they do not have a Trotskyist party to provide them with brilliant revolutionary leadership.

WAS THE FRENCH POPULAR FRONT A STALINIST BETRAYAL?

When being inducted into a Trotskyist sect you are told about the many "Stalinist betrayals". One of the favorites is the Popular Front in France in the late 1930s where the Communist Party (PCF) formed an antifascist united front with the Socialist Party and the liberal Radical Party. A Popular Front government was formed by the latter two with Communist Party support.

The main problem with the story is that there was no revolution to betray. There was a huge surge in disputes over wages and conditions involving the occupation of thousands of workplaces. There was also considerable growth in the revolutionary movement and communist party membership mushroomed. However, what you cannot say is that there was a revolutionary situation. The bourgeoisie was way too strong and the working class still very wet behind the ears.

Talk of revolution in these conditions was foolish if not dangerous. But this did not stop the small Trot group in France from calling for workers militias and factory committees to organize an uprising.

And regardless of one's assessment of the internal balance of forces, there were the Nazis on the other side of the border to consider. Any convulsion that significantly weakened France's military capacity would have been an open invitation to invade, and any revolutionary forces would have been crushed by the German steamroller.

It may well be that the Communist Party (PCF) could have been more effective in ensuring that workers were better organized and legally protected when the inevitable employer counter-attack struck. But in the scale of betrayals it scarcely registers.

In all this the PCF is criticized for being a compliant local branch of Moscow's Comintern. I think the latter's policy of collective security against the aggressor fascist powers was a correct one. Endeavoring to ensure a bourgeois government that supported such a policy was perfectly fine. Of course, for the Trots any idea of siding with one imperialist power against another was anathema. Indeed, when war broke out Trotsky believed an Allied victory would be just as fascist as an Axis one.

The Comintern connection did, however, become a problem with the German-Soviet Neutrality Pact that was signed a week before the outbreak of World War II. The pact was necessary to ensure that the Soviet Union was not stuck fighting the Germans on its own, however, there was no reason for anybody to be indifferent to the outcome of France's war with Germany. Quite the opposite. The PCF did not handle this very well. But that's another story for another time.

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IGNORE IT AND IT MIGHT GO AWAY

The Chinese military used to be clunky and outdated. However, its technology has come a long way in the last decade. Military spending has been increasing at a cracking pace every year for over 20 years and their spending is second only to the US.

Not long ago it had no ocean-going navy. Now it does, and it also has lots of new shiny aircraft and missiles.

Apparently, if we don't provoke them we have nothing to worry about. Yeah sure!

A QUESTION FOR MACG

A question for the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group after reading their booklet "No War on China!" Are you indifferent to the prospect of a fascist tyranny becoming the dominant global military hegemon?

CITIZEN'S MILITIA

We used to have a Citizens' Militia before WWII. My father was in it and manned the guns at Queenscliff. Such a part-time force could be an important element of a porcupine strategy which hopefully just adds to successful deterrence and is not actually required for a shooting war. Its deterrence would depend of course on how effective the adversary perceived it to be.

One should not have to spell out the political importance of everyone having military training.

GERMANS STOP SABOTAGING NUCLEAR

Here is some good news on the nuclear front. Germany is to stop blocking EU funding for nuclear power projects in other EU countries. This will make it easier for projects planned for France, Poland, Czech Republic and Romania.

PROVISIONAL PLATFORM FOR DISCUSSION

Below are some of the policies or positions that a left will have to adopt if it is to play a positive role.

- Support for collective security against military aggression. This includes stepped up aid to Ukraine and NATO membership, and a European force in Gaza and the West Bank to ensure the establishment of a Palestinian State. It also means agitating for reform of the United Nations so that it can perform its originally intended role as security guarantor.
- Oppose the "communist" tyrannies. If these regimes were socialist you would have to oppose socialism. They have nothing "socialist" worth salvaging and should be overthrown by bourgeois democratic revolutions. They provide rich lessons on how revolutionary regimes can be transformed into their opposite and the revolution reversed. This includes a better understanding of the struggle to limit what Marx called bourgeois right and the resistance to this from many of those holding positions of power and position. Explaining all this will counter attempts by anti-communists to tar us with the same brush and provide an opportunity to explain the nature of the communist revolution and the reasons for supporting it.
- Oppose "ecosocialism". If we need to "degrow" or go to a steady-state economy to "save the planet" we are done for because capitalism is not going to be overthrown in a relevant timeframe. We need to agitate for more R&D and "technofix". The other thing ecosocialists get wrong is in failing to recognize that growth, with its elimination of economic backwardness, is a prerequisite for successful revolution. Reaching a high level of development creates the prospect of sharing material prosperity, humanizing work and having ample free time. We have a long history showing how we are not prepared to share the opposite - poverty and toil. These two blights have been the very basis of class society. So, we need to achieve a level of material conditions where the benefits of living in a convivial classless society considerably outweigh the benefits of being a "winner" under capitalism.
- Support the YIMBY movement for more plentiful and cheaper housing. This is key to improving the living standards of low and middle income earners. Medium and high density development in inner and middle ring suburbs is the key and requires removing the many restrictions on demolishing old "heritage" houses while developing infill that is done well both in appearance and livability.
- Press for education reform to ensure a much higher general level of literacy and STEM knowledge. This is necessary if workers are to become their own masters and eliminate the present oppressive division of labor where a minority do most of the thinking and deciding.