



**Cyprus: British  
Bases Out!**

Vera Polycapou



**Sudan: Stop the  
war, regain the  
Revolution**

Fathi-El Fadl



**China, India  
and the New  
World Order**

Steve Bishop

# Liberation

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**Genocide: Solidarity with Gaza**



# editorial/Liberation

Calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza have the widespread international support of people around the world, both in the Global North and South. Therefore, is it not high time that Britain liberated itself from the chains shackling its foreign policy to that of the US, to warmongering and destruction?

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## Stop the war in Gaza! Recognise Palestinian Statehood!

The genocidal campaign currently being waged against the Palestinian people in Gaza by the Israeli state, with the complicity of the US and British governments, poses a serious danger not only to the Middle East, but the whole world.

The US military-industrial complex has lost all control of the Israeli war machine as well as its influence over the far-right Netanyahu regime at its helm, underlined by Secretary Blinken's frantic and failed shuttle diplomacy to various Arab capitals.

By openly opposing UN resolutions, standing in contempt of International Court of Justice, and denouncing the Secretary General of the UN, Netanyahu's government now finds itself in among the league of rogue regimes it had hitherto claimed to stand above.

As predicted, the policy of appeasement of the Israeli government by the US, UK, and EU has completely failed to keep it under even a semblance of control. Concerned for his own political future, Netanyahu rigidly sticks to a line the cogency and wisdom of which some of Israel's key allies now openly question.

Since the very start of the war, there has been a danger of war spilling over Israel's borders. Attacks on a number of targets in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq with drones and other sophisticated weaponry have only agitated various forces based in these countries to seek revenge. There are growing rumours that Israel seeks a regional war in which it can directly engage the theocratic regime in Iran. Such a situation would mean the US and UK, as well as other countries, would be obliged to enter even further into the fray.

However, despite the tragedy in Gaza and the West Bank, new poles are clearly emerging in the international balance of economic and political power, portending well for an alternative to the woeful state of affairs that has hitherto dominated for the last 30 years.

A growing number of countries, especially in the Global South,

are rejecting US hegemony. The emergence of the BRICS+ alliance, the continued economic and social progress of China, and divisions among Western European states, are laying the basis for a new world order. The petition brought by South Africa at the International Court of Justice on account of Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinian people serves to expose the corrupt amalgam of interests destabilising the Middle East.

However, the region remains the eye of the storm. The attacks by Hamas on 7 October 2023 must be condemned not only for their brutality, but for providing a pretext for Israel to launch its horrific onslaught. One also cannot deny that the very existence of the various militant factions owes to over 80 years of vile anti-Arab policies as encapsulated in the apartheid constitution of Israel.

The old unipolar world order, in which the UK hangs desperately to the coattails of the US, offers no solution - only more escalation and destabilisation internationally. Yet, even in Western Europe, different approaches are emerging. Spain and Belgium have led the way by suspending arms and military supplies to Israel. Such small steps could serve to pave the way towards creating the conditions for a lasting ceasefire in Gaza and a new alignment in the Middle East, including the facilitation of a viable independent and sovereign Palestinian state.

The adopting of a non-aligned foreign policy by Britain, one that no longer kowtows to US mal-designs, would surely represent a step in the right direction.

Calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza have the widespread international support of people around the world, both in the Global North and South. Therefore, is it not high time that Britain liberated itself from the chains shackling its foreign policy to that of the US, to warmongering and destruction?

**Jamshid Ahmadi**  
Editor



# news/Liberation

Speakers slammed the toll on human life - the killing of civilians, in particular women and children, doctors, journalists, UN employees, the destruction of civilian buildings, homes, ambulances, schools and universities, mosques and churches. The context of this massacre was "the subjugation plan" drawn up by Israeli Government Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich in 2017.

## For a ceasefire and a just peace in Gaza

### WEBINAR

IN DECEMBER, LIBERATION held a webinar, with speakers calling for an end to the current onslaught on Gaza, the intensifying attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank by settlers supported by the IDF, and the decades-long occupation, as well as a just peace to benefit all Palestinians and Israelis. Speakers included MK Dr Ofer Cassif, member of the Knesset for the left-wing Hadash party; Ben Chacko, editor of *Morning Star*; Louise Regan, Chair of the International Committee of the NEU; Jeremy Corbyn, joint president of Liberation and founder of the Peace & Justice Project; and, Dr Aqel Taqaz, Secretary of the Palestinian Committee for Peace and Solidarity.

Several speakers, including Regan and Dr Taqaz, slammed the devastating toll on human life that has resulted from Israeli attacks - the killing of civilians, in particular women and children, doctors, journalists, UN employees, the destruction of civilian buildings, homes, ambulances, schools and universities, mosques and churches. Dr Cassif elaborated on the context in which this massacre is taking place, calling it the realization of "the subjugation plan", drawn up by Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich in 2017. This plan called for the annexation of the occupied territories without a guarantee of equal rights to Palestinians. Those who resist the plan would be deported, or even killed.

Dr Taqaz reiterated the call for a two-state solution according to 1967 borders, and added that this war "is not only against Gaza. It is against Palestine in general". With democratic norms undermined by an increasingly fascist Israeli government that cracks down on activism, all speakers emphasized the need for the international community to continue to speak out and protest, listen to Palestinian voices, and put pressure on our politicians in order to achieve a ceasefire and an end to the occupation of Palestine.

## International solidarity with the people of Sudan

### WEBINAR

IN JANUARY, The joint Liberation and Stop the War webinar on the war in Sudan discussed the need for an urgent end to foreign intervention in the Sudanese Civil War, calling on progressive democratic forces and trade unions around the world to support the Sudanese people in their efforts to end the war between the two main fighting factions, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces.

Both sides are accused of committing grave crimes, including ethnically motivated killings, indiscriminate bombing, detention, torture, and sexual violence, according to Fathi El-Fadl, one of the speakers at the events. Fathi is a member of the Forces for Radical Change in Sudan, and the vice president of the International Centre for Trade Union Rights. Other speakers included Gawain Little, General Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions; Lindsey German, convenor of Stop the War Coalition; and Jeremy

Corbyn, joint president of Liberation and founder of the Peace & Justice Project. During the talk, Fathi noted that "both sides are maintaining their power and authority through the barrel of a gun", in this war that broke out in April 2023 and has taken the lives of at least 13-15,000 people, with 5.8 million people internally displaced.

According to Fathi, the main obstacle is the level of foreign intervention, with the UAE, Turkey, Iran, and Russia all supporting one side or the other in the conflict. He explained that the war is about natural resources and the geopolitical importance of Sudan, while Jeremy Corbyn added that the only winners are the arms dealers. It is imperative that all progressives in Britain and around the world support the grassroots movement comprising of resistance committees, trade unions, and civil society organisations in Sudan in order to bring about lasting peace in the country.

Watch the full webinars on [liberationorg.co.uk](http://liberationorg.co.uk).  
[insert Image of video ? ]

## Liberation

### Briefings

Check out Liberation briefings on key issues in the fight against imperialism and for peace, justice and human rights in the Global South. Liberation is a people-powered movement.

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## SALUTE LIBERATION 70 YEARS

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As we celebrate 70 years of fraternal international support by the Movement for Colonial Freedom and in its present form as Liberation the Indian Workers' Association GB, recalls with pride the people's global struggle for freedom.

The 85-year-old militant organisation of the Indian working class in Britain, the IWA established in 1938 to champion the cause of India's freedom from British colonialism. Today it stands in solidarity with the people of Palestine and all those worldwide seeking liberation.

India attained freedom in 1947 and became the first country to recognize the state of Palestine. The true "symbol of patriotism" is to protect the values of equality - economic, social and political, ingrained in our Constitution.

"The Constitution of India, promises equal rights to all Indians to utilise our hard-earned freedom well. Along with these rights, the Constitution guarantees justice for all- social, economic and political. These are the fundamental values on which the Constitution is standing and today these very values are facing a threat," Sitaram Yechury

IWA GB National President Dyal Bagri

IWA GB National Secretary Leyose Paul

President Leicester Branch Mohinder Farma

AIC/CPIM Britain-Ireland Secretary Harsev Bains

"Today, we must all rise to defend our Constitution and that alone is the true symbol of patriotism,"

Join the IWA GB and strengthen the movement. [harsev.bains@icloud.com](mailto:harsev.bains@icloud.com)



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## AGM – Save the date!

Liberation holds its Annual General Meeting on Saturday 13 April 2024 at 11am, online. Look out for emails from Liberation with further details. Ensure you can participate, please check your membership is up to date - email [info@liberationorg.co.uk](mailto:info@liberationorg.co.uk)



# Gaza/view from South Africa

Parallels between apartheid-era South Africa's racial oppression and Zionist Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people are obvious, but for all its horrors South African apartheid never achieved the same genocidal, ethnic cleansing scale we are witnessing in the historic Palestinian lands



## Now more than ever: Solidarity with Palestine

The genocidal arrogance of the Zionist project is enabled by the military, economic and ideological support of Washington, London and Berlin. The outpouring of pro-Palestinian protests on the streets of both the Global North and South has raised the political and electoral costs for those supporting the genocide. Now more than ever, whether in forums like the ICJ and ICC, or in sustained protest, or in re-invigorating the BDS, the tide of anti-Zionist action needs to be sustained and consolidated. By **Jeremy Cronin**



THE INTERNATIONAL Court of Justice's finding that Israel's horrendous onslaught on the people of Gaza constitutes a plausible case of genocide is a landmark moment. The ruling thwarted Israel's attempt to block what will now become a substantive judicial enquiry into Israel's perpetration of this crime of crimes. The ICJ's ruling is a significant contribution to puncturing the global impunity with which Zionist Israel has acted over decades.

Despite the best efforts of political elites in Washington and London, powerful Zionist lobby groups, the likes of the BBC and *New York Times*, there is a loss of control over the dominant Western narrative on Israel. Even before the ICJ ruling, an Economist/YouGov poll found that more than one-third of Americans believed Israel was committing genocide with a further 29 percent undecided.

In early February 800 serving officials in the US, EU and 11 European countries warned "there is a plausible risk our governments' policies are contributing to grave violations of international law, war crimes and even ethnic cleansing or genocide". They note that not only are their governments failing to prevent these grave violations, they are actively complicit in them through the continued arming and funding of Israel. Everywhere, cracks are opening in the edifice of empire.

In the front-line of puncturing the pro-Zionist narrative are the courageous journalists reporting from inside Gaza (at the time of writing over 122 had been killed since October 7), as well as numerous Gaza citizens reaching millions globally through social media, filming on their cell-phones the sheer horror of the genocide being inflicted upon them.

Unsurprisingly, the Israeli government has brazenly defied the preliminary measures ordered by the ICJ to refrain from acts that could be genocidal and to urgently address the humanitarian crisis in the enclave. It is important to remember these preliminary orders are not just binding on Israel. They are binding on all signatory governments to the 1948 Genocide Convention including the US, UK, Germany and Canada. The ICJ has ordered Israel to report back to the court (and to South Africa) within one month. Exposing the Israeli government to ongoing public accountability to the people of the world through the ICJ should become a continued catalyst for all-round mobilisation and solidarity.

South Africa, like several other countries, is also actively engaging the International Criminal Court (which investigates individuals, rather than governments, for war crimes). The ICC has a poor record of bias. South Africa's foreign minister, Naledi Pandor, recently expressed frustration with the

tardiness with which the ICC is proceeding on Israeli. The ICC prosecutor simply "couldn't answer" when she asked him why he was able to quickly issue an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin, but none yet for Netanyahu.

It is not just at the international level that pro-Palestinian lawfare is being waged. In California progressive NGOs filed a civil case in a federal court accusing Biden, secretary of state Blinken and defence secretary Lloyd Austin of complicity in Israel's genocide. Listening to evidence from Palestinians including via video link directly from Gaza and Ramallah, the judge explicitly agreed with the ICJ there was a plausible case of genocide against Israel. He implored the defendants, Biden, Blinken and Austin "to examine the results of their unflagging support of the military siege against Palestinians", while regretting that, owing to a technicality in domestic US law, he did not have the power to stop the US supply of weapons to Israel. Similar genocide complicity cases against national politicians and civil servants in the UK, Canada, Italy, Australia and possibly Germany could well be more successful and should be pursued.

Understanding Zionist Israel's key strategic vulnerability (its existential dependence on external support) underlines the importance of these deepening cleavages opening up in the heart of its Western backers.

Zionist Israel's genocidal destruction of Gaza post-October 7 has burst the bubble on a certain world-weary fatigue that had set in regarding the fate of the Palestinian struggle. Just weeks before October 7, in a largely empty UN General Assembly chamber, Netanyahu infamously held up a map of the "New Middle East" that simply eliminated Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. I don't recall any public statement from the South African government on the matter at the time.

The post-apartheid government in South Africa and the ruling ANC and its alliance partners have a long and sincerely held sense of deep solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. As activists in the underground structures of the 1980s, we were greatly inspired by the urban based Intifada strategies developed by the Palestinians in struggle. Here was a form of struggle better suited to our largely urban social reality than the more characteristic, largely rural-based national liberation struggles of the second half of the 20th century whether in China, Cuba, Vietnam, or closer to home in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Angola. I still have copies of underground SACP 1980s pamphlets urging local communities to take up "our own Intifada".

There were many factors that contributed to the eventual negotiated transition to democracy in South Africa, including international sanctions, boycotts and widespread international anti-apartheid mobilisation. But it was the rolling, mass-based South African factory-floor and township-based Intifada sustained through the 1980s that was the key in eventually bringing about a negotiated transition. South African solidarity with the Palestinian struggle in the present should, therefore, also be grounded in a sense of indebtedness and admiration.

But as the years have stretched on and the seeming implacable Zionist entrenchment of more walls, more illegal settlements, more killings, more prisoners, in short, as a genocidal process of ethnic-cleansing that dates back to 1948, if not before – so a South African sense of solidarity with Palestine, however sincere, risked becoming ritualistic. The post-apartheid government, as should be expected, has always voted consistently on UN resolutions on Palestine. ANC national conferences always pass resolutions on Palestinian solidarity.

But attempts, for instance, by the Boycott Divest Sanction (BDS) movement (deliberately modelled on the anti-apartheid experience, by the way) to get full cooperation from the South African government, or

even from the ANC, have met with an uneven and at times lukewarm response in the recent past. Part of the problem has been the way in which the post-apartheid government, with a revisionist reading of our negotiated transition, has been inclined to present itself as a global consultant on and exporter of essentially elite-pacted, negotiated settlements to all and sundry. And this inclination has, in part, been responsible for a certain hesitancy hitherto to take a firmer stance against Zionist Israel. Strong measures to isolate and sanction Israel were often resisted on the grounds we were positioning ourselves as credible intermediaries between Israel and the Palestinians.

As South Africa's preparedness to take the global lead on charging Israel with genocide at the ICJ underlines, that illusory positioning has been blown away by the sheer scale of what is happening in Gaza. But the genocide of the past months simply concentrates dramatically in time and space the grinding, systematic genocide of the Palestinian people underway since 1948. Nothing short of a comprehensive, just and equitable peace settlement that fully recognises the rights of the Palestinian people will end the spiral of violence and insecurity, including for Israelis.

We should have no illusions about the difficulties that face progressive forces in Palestine and beyond in seeking such an outcome. Nor should we lose sight of the special responsibilities that all of us not living in Gaza, or in the West Bank, or occupied East Jerusalem now bear.

The parallels between apartheid-era South Africa's racial oppression and Zionist Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people are obvious, but for all its horrors South African apartheid never achieved the same genocidal, ethnic cleansing scale we are witnessing in the historic Palestinian lands. A critical difference lies in the much greater dependence of South African capital on black labour. The summary withdrawal of 110,000 work permits for Palestinian labourers post-October 7 has seen the Israeli construction sector temporarily slump. But that contraction is being hurriedly addressed through the importation of Indian labourers with the connivance of Modi's government.

The maximum weapon of the liberation struggle in South Africa was the mass stayaway from work, and consumer boycotts of white owned shops, in other words, active withdrawal into the numerous, racially segregated peri-urban dormitory townships that were the core feature of apartheid South Africa. There were many brutal massacres inflicted by the regime on these peri-urban ghettos, but for its own survival the apartheid regime could never carry out a Gaza-style ground-level destruction of a Soweto, for instance.

Israel is, effectively, an astro-turfed US-European project implanted upon the Middle East. To a much greater extent than De Klerk's South Africa, apartheid Israel can only be kept afloat through the support of external actors. The genocidal arrogance of the Zionist project has been possible because of the sustained military, economic and ideological support emanating from Washington, London and Berlin. The recent outpouring of massive, pro-Palestinian protests on the streets of both the Global North and South has begun to drive a wedge, to raise the political and electoral costs for those supporting the genocide. There is a long way to go. Now more than ever, whether in forums like the ICJ and ICC, or in sustained protest, or in re-invigorating the BDS, the tide of anti-Zionist action needs to be sustained and consolidated. The heroic Palestinian people deserve nothing less.

**Jeremy Cronin** a veteran South African Communist Party Central Committee and Politburo member, former SACP deputy general secretary, a former government deputy minister and former political prisoner. He is also a poet.



# Gaza: view from Iraq

Drone strike in Baghdad killing a high-ranking commander of the Kataib Hezbollah militia which Washington blamed for “directly planning and participating in attacks” on American troops in the region” enraged the Iraqi government. It triggered once again demands for the withdrawal of US forces

## Imperialism and escalating Middle East tensions



With the Israeli war of genocide on Gaza and the Palestinian people now in its fifth month, the tensions in the Middle East are intensifying and threatening to engulf the region in a new war with grave dangers for world peace. They have been exacerbated by the US airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, and US-UK airstrikes on Yemen, part of the proxy war between the Washington and Tehran, writes **Ahmed Salem**

AS THE ISRAELI war of genocide on Gaza and the Palestinian people enters its fifth month, the tensions in the Middle East are intensifying and threatening to engulf the region in a new war with grave dangers for world peace. They have been exacerbated by the US airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, while US-UK airstrikes are continuing in Yemen.

The fascist Israeli government led by Netanyahu, with the full backing of the US, has blatantly rejected the demands by the world public opinion, the UN and all peace-loving forces in the world, for an immediate and permanent ceasefire and lifting of Israel's blockade of Gaza.

It is now clear that one of the immediate aims of Netanyahu is to expand the war in the region, regardless of the consequences, in order to resist the mounting international pressures for an immediate end to Israel's barbaric onslaught and atrocities in Gaza. This would also help Netanyahu to contain the deepening divisions inside his ruling clique and allow the continuation of the war until the criminal objectives he declared are achieved.

Once again, as in previous wars and conflicts in the Middle East, the US has provided unwavering political and crucial military support to Israel and the Zionist plans to continue the illegal settler-colonial occupation of Palestinian territories. Over the past five months, since 7th October 2023, Biden's administration has vetoed all attempts at the UN Security Council to bring about an immediate ceasefire. It also obstructed efforts comply with the legally binding decision of the International Court of Justice, following South Africa's submission of the genocide case, to implement six provisional measures including for Israel to refrain from acts under the Genocide convention. The US also supported the cruel decision to suspend funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), dealing a devastating

blow to more than two million refugees in occupied Gaza for whom the organisation serves as a sole lifeline.

But the strategy of US imperialism in the Middle East, with commitment to Israel's security and qualitative military edge continuing to be its cornerstone, aims first and foremost to perpetuate its hegemony over the region in a turbulent and changing world. It must be viewed as part of the US global strategy, preparing to face up to what it sees as a “global threat” to its dominant position in a unipolar world that has existed since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. This “global threat”, as seen by the occupants of the White House whether Democrats or Republicans, is China's emergence as a global superpower, driving the transition towards a multipolar world.

The desperate attempts by the US and its NATO allies to impede the ongoing transition from a unipolar world order are taking place amid deepening international crises, aggravated by the Covid pandemic, the Russia - Ukraine war, and finally the Israeli war on Gaza. It is a complex and difficult process, with the danger of fascism and war on the rise as imperialism seeks to maintain its hegemony that was consolidated by neoliberal globalisation during the past three decades.

Until the 7th October 2023, the US was continuing to implement a policy in the Middle East designed to build a strategic security-military alliance, under the leadership of Israel, with participant Arab regimes providing essential economic and financial support. A principal part of this policy was widening the process of “normalisation” of relations with Israel, under the so-called Abraham Accords, that began under the Trump administration and included the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan. Egypt and Jordan had already signed peace treaties with Israel.

Just before 7th October, Biden and Netanyahu

were preparing to achieve a bigger prize with an Israel-Saudi Arabia normalisation deal. During his speech to the UN General Assembly in New York last September, Netanyahu showed a map of “The New Middle East” without Palestine. It was an attempt to illustrate the increasing number of Arab countries normalizing relations with Israel under the Abraham Accords. He said: “But I believe that we are at the cusp of an even more dramatic breakthrough, an historic peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia will truly create a new Middle East.” But on 13th October 2023, Saudi Arabia froze the deal.

The US administration, according to recent reports, seem to have developed a so-called “Biden Doctrine”, a plan to use the turmoil caused by the Israeli war in Gaza “as an opportunity to transform the region”. The plan has an internal dimension, aimed at improving Biden's chances of re-election later this year.

It is “a grand bargain” that involves the normalisation of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, and “substantial movement towards the recognition of a Palestinian state – all incentivised by diplomatic and economic sweeteners from Washington”. This would require a “reformed” or “revitalised” Palestinian Authority. But Netanyahu has so far strongly rejected any Palestinian state, as part of a two-state solution, even if it was demilitarised, demanding that Israel must exercise total security control over the West Bank and Gaza.

The “Biden Doctrine” or plan also involves dealing with Iran's increasing influence in the region, “including a robust military retaliation against its proxies”. There have been nearly 170 attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria since 18 October 2023, carried out by a broad coalition of Iran-backed militias. These attacks were carefully calculated to avoid inflicting substantial loss of life, and thus ensure that Iran would not be directly targeted by the US forces. But a drone strike in Jordan on 28 January was the first to take American troops' lives, killing three soldiers. The latest US military response was a drone strike in Baghdad killing a high-ranking commander of the Kataib Hezbollah militia which Washington blamed for “directly planning and participating in attacks” on American troops in the region”.

Kataib Hezbollah had said in a statement that it was suspending attacks on American troops to avoid “embarrassing the Iraqi government” after the strike in Jordan. It was clearly an attempt by Iran to signal to the US its determination to reduce tensions.

The attack in Baghdad enraged the Iraqi government, triggering once again demands for the withdrawal of US forces from the country. The two countries had begun, just one day before the attack in Jordan, a first round of talks on the future of US and other foreign troops in the country, with Baghdad expecting discussions to lead to a timeline for reducing their presence.

The recent cycle of proxy war between the US and Iran, conducted in Iraq, Syria and other countries of the region, is fuelling an already highly dangerous situation in the Middle East as a result of the Israeli genocide war on Gaza and the Palestinian people. It is a grave threat to peace and stability in the region and the whole world.

**Ahmed Salem** is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the author

A US Navy F/A-18 fighter jet taking off at night prior to the 2024 Yemeni airstrikes.

US Army Reserve Sergeant William Jerome Rivers, Specialist Breonna Alexsondria Moffett and Specialist. Kennedy Ladon Sanders were killed in a drone attack on an outpost in northeast Jordan last week. © US Army



# Gaza/defending dissent

Once the Gaza assault had begun, the Knesset was quick to move against prominent opposition voices. Aida Touma, renowned campaigner for women's rights, was banned from for two months for speaking out against Israeli attacks on Gazan medical facilities. Fellow Hadash-Ta'al MK member Ofer Cassif was excluded for 45 days for publicly calling for an immediate ceasefire

## Voices that must never be silenced

The systematic attempt by Israel's ultra-right government to shut out, submerge, forcibly silence, and criminalise the voices of progressive individuals and organisations within Israel's borders and the occupied Palestinian lands which seek to challenge the IDF's genocidal attack on Gaza is surely one of the greatest affronts to democracy in Israel's history,

writes **Liz Payne**



ABOVE: Aida Touma-Suleiman and Ofer Cassif in Sheik Jarrah, East Jerusalem



A PROMINENT FEATURE for the duration of the Israeli Defence Forces' genocidal attack on Gaza and its people has been the systematic attempt by the ultra-right which controls the state of Israel to shut out, submerge, forcibly silence, and criminalise the voices of progressive individuals and organisations which seek to challenge it. In what is surely one of the greatest affronts to democracy in Israel's history, the war machine has been put into ideological overdrive to ensure that all such voices from within Israel's borders and the occupied Palestinian lands cannot be heard - not only in Israel but by the world public.

One such voice is that of the MAKI Party's Ofer Cassif, the only Jewish member of the left Hadash-Ta'al coalition (The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality) in the Knesset. Cassif is currently the subject of impeachment proceedings for signing a petition supporting South Africa's bid to have the Israeli government charged with genocide in the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

A year ago, in January 2023, Cassif was in London, speaking at the Marx Memorial Library at a meeting organised by Liberation. Here he gave a stark prophetic warning. For the first time, Israel had a fully-fledged fascist government with neo-Nazi elements and a supremacist vision and plan to match. It was moving at break-neck speed to concentrate all power into the hands of the executive. We stood on the brink of a bloodbath, he warned. Palestinians in the occupied territories and state of Israel would be the first victims and they would be "butchered". The cry for a second Nakba was already being raised. But they would not stop with the Palestinians. The fascists would come for all "liberal" Jews followed by the Jewish socialist left in Israel. The conflict would then spill out of Israel's borders, drawing in the whole Middle East. The world would pay the

price - unless, that is, the international movement of peoples, not governments, could stop them. They had to be stopped.

Immediately the war on Gaza started, the Movement of Democratic Women in Israel (MDWI) spoke out. This affiliate of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), whose membership brings together progressive Jewish and Palestinian Israeli women, had no hesitation in describing the 7 October attacks on civilians as a "bloody assault". But they said it was nonetheless crucial to view what happened within the context of "the ongoing occupation, blockade on Gaza, and the daily transgressions of settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem". The statement, which circulated around the world, accused the "pro-fascist [Israeli] regime" of having led attacks on Palestinians "amounting to ethnic cleansing" with hundreds already dead and thousands injured in the very first days. They condemned the US role in arming Israel and sending battleships to the Mediterranean and said that only a two-state solution, including an independent Palestine with 1967 boundaries, could possibly bring peace.

Once the assault on Gaza had begun, the Knesset was quick to move against prominent opposition voices, signalling loud and clear that, even though they were in a tiny minority in the house, no challenge could or would be tolerated. Hadash-Ta'al MK, Aida Touma, renowned campaigner for women's rights, was banned from for two months. Her crime had been to speak out via social media against Israeli attacks on Gazan medical facilities. Ofer Cassif's simultaneous exclusion was for 45 days - for publicly calling for an immediate ceasefire.

But the coalition has continued to refute the ultra-nationalist rhetoric of 'war to obliteration of the enemy' and has asserted at every opportunity that the

Israeli government is "an enemy of the people of Israel" as well as of the Palestinians and that ceasefire and peace are essential to both.

"The assault on Gaza," Ofer Cassif told Truthout in December 2023, "has nothing to do with security. It has nothing to do with the well-being of Israelis. It has everything to do with revenge, a realisation of the subjugation plan, and preserving this fascist government in power."

The People's Party of Palestine (PPP), representing left-wing forces and in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, has stated that the Israeli government has moved from tactics of daily repression and subjugation of Palestinians in the occupied lands to brute force "to the point of genocide and ethnic cleansing" as a means of "liquidating" the Palestinian issue.

In an 11 December 2023 interview with *People's Dispatch*, Bassam Al-Salhi, the PPP's general secretary, was critical of official Arab reaction, stating that it was "not at the required level". This contrasted with Arab popular positions as expressed in huge demonstrations in major cities.

Meanwhile, said Al Salhi, the West, with all its talk of human rights, freedoms and democracy has been "completely exposed". The US, Britain and France have made certain that the UN has been unable to halt Israel's aggression.

The PPP calls for international unity, including by boycotting and isolating Israel, to stop the aggression and siege, "ending the occupation and guaranteeing the rights of the Palestinian people to liberation and establishing their independent state, as well as to return in accordance with UN Resolution 194."

Cassif has also expressed disappointment at the lack of response from some international quarters - including progressives in the Democratic Party in the US and others in Europe and the Arab countries. However, there are exceptions, and he has praised, for example, the US-based Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) which works to end "US complicity in the genocide of Palestinians - and all US support for Israel's apartheid regime".

One of the most powerful messages of condemnation, as 2023 drew to a close, came from the community of Palestinian Christians which makes up 2% of the West Bank. In a sermon in Bethlehem on 23 December, Palestinian pastor, Rev Munther Isaac, said: "If Jesus were born today, he would be born in Gaza amid the rubble... Stop this genocide now! This is our call, this is our plea, this is our prayer." In his church, the nativity tableau showed the baby wrapped in a kaffiyeh in a pile of debris. Beside him burned a single candle. The image was seen across the world.

For those everywhere who support peace and justice, a great task is to ensure that the voices featured here are not suffocated by intimidation, force, nor any other authoritarian tool. Another is to demand an immediate halt to the genocide in Gaza and to state and settler brutality in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, a permanent ceasefire, and the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state in accordance with UN resolutions and international law. Nothing less will bring peace and freedom.

The last words must be Ofer Cassif's as he awaits the Knesset's impeachment vote:

"We are under persecution, but we shall never surrender and give up. We will continue our struggle for the benefit of both peoples of the land, of Palestinians and Israelis, of Arabs and Jews, of everyone. I'm sure that we will win eventually. I'm just afraid of how many people are going to pay the highest price before."

**Liz Payne** is convenor of the British Peace Assembly and member of Liberation's Education Committee



# British bases/Cyprus

British bases are a remnant of colonial times. Their very existence and use against other peoples of the region constitutes a threat to our country and people and their security. We demand that the bases in Cyprus are left out of the war-games of Israel, US UK and allies, and be dismantled



## Bridge of peace

Israel's assault on Gaza has prompted a resurgence of the issue of the presence of 'the sovereign' British military bases in Cyprus.



**Vera Polycarpou** writes on the struggle for a reunified, demilitarised Cyprus

**A**FTER MORE than four months of relentless bombing of the Gaza Strip UNCTAD, on the basis of analysis, reports that unprecedented level of destruction renders the area, inhabited by 2.3 million Palestinians, uninhabitable. More than 80% of the buildings have been destroyed or damaged, a staggering destruction mostly of housing units, but also of all civilian infrastructure, hospitals, schools. Practically no water, electricity or fuel supplies are available. The area of 365sq km has been subjected to one of the most intense bombing campaigns against a populated area; Israeli planes have been unleashing hell dropping thousands of bombs - according to reports ranging from 150kg to 1000kg - that killed over 27,000 and wounded over 65,000 Palestinians, mostly children and women. Almost the entire population has been displaced.

Facts speak of gross violations of International Humanitarian Law, of war crimes tantamount to ethnic cleansing. The case brought by South Africa against Israel is before the ICJ. Subsequently other cases have been presented in the ICJ for complicity against countries supplying Israel with bombs and explosives in the course of Israel's war against Gaza.

It is against this background that the issue of the presence of "the sovereign" British military bases in Cyprus have once again surged to the forefront. Cyprus is only about 400 km away from the Gaza Strip, making the RAF military airport at Acrotiri a 40-minutes-long flight (if not less) from the war zone. In other words, Acrotiri is the nearest base of a NATO member to the region. Residents of the area around Acrotiri have been reporting intense activity at the airport as well as increased presence of military personnel. Such activity is not unprecedented, as similar situations were observed in the past during the US and allies' wars against Iraq, Afghanistan and more recently Syria.

Confirmation of the above has come from "Declassified UK" which has been reporting of the involvement of the RAF Acrotiri in Israel's war on Gaza. These reports speak of surveillance flights over Gaza, and I quote: "The British plane used is the Shadow R1, which is known as an intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) aircraft. The Shadow R1 is operated by the UK military's No.14 Squadron, which is based at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire, east England." More reports reveal multiple flights from Acrotiri to Tel Aviv, transporting military equipment. These have been resourced from US bases around Europe where war material is stockpiled, and transferred through the British bases in Cyprus to Israel.

Evidently the British base of Acrotiri, near Limassol, is been used also by the US, both for flights to Israel and for the stationing of troops. Of particular concern is the information that the US also flew war material to Acrotiri from its Incirlik base in Turkey. Of course, NATO-member Turkey is a US and Britain's close ally but it is also the country that is occupying 37% of our island's territory since 1974. This act alone shows the utter disrespect of both Britain and the US to Cyprus' sovereignty.

Over this period, Members of the House of Commons have questioned the relevant members of the British Government over the use of the British base in Acrotiri for the supply of war equipment to Israel since the start of the war on Gaza in October 2023. Although these were faced with refusal to respond, the very fact that the questions were made bears its own significance: it brings to the light Britain's complicity with the genocidal war against the Palestinian people. However, on the other hand, the same Government members did not hide the fact that the British planes that bombed the Houthis in Yemen had flown out of Acrotiri.

It has also to be said that Government officials of the Republic of Cyprus alleged ignorance of the use of Acrotiri in support of Israel, stating that according to the Treaties (that granted Cyprus independence from Britain in 1960) Britain was not obliged to inform the Government. Such statements in no way absolve the Cyprus Government from its responsibilities and it may well be considered a complicit.

It might not be known that Britain has two and not just one "Sovereign" British Bases in Cyprus: one in Acrotiri & Episcopi near Limassol, and another in Dhekelia near Larnaca comprising around 3% of the island. Britain has military and intelligence installations also on the highest peak of the Troodos Mountain, eavesdropping on the whole region and further out. Obviously, the geostrategic location of Cyprus between three continents, central in the energy routes and energy resources of the Eastern Mediterranean made it, as they say, "vital" for Britain's "national interests". Thus, Britain granted Cyprus independence without ever leaving.

The British "sovereign" bases in Cyprus represent a remnant of colonial times, hence an anachronism in the 21st century. Their very existence and use against other peoples of the region, constitutes a threat to our country and people and their security. In the current conjunction, when the constant escalation of tensions and provocations by Israel, the US, Britain and some

of their allies against countries of the region threaten to cause a regional conflagration, we demand that the bases in Cyprus are left out of their war-games and be dismantled.

Recently, European and international media "discovered" that there are Cypriot political forces and organisations protesting the presence of the bases and demanding their dismantling. However, the Cyprus Peace Council as well as AKEL, have been protesting against the presence of the bases since 1964, when the 1st Peace March was held. For AKEL, after almost 50 years of occupation and artificial division, the solution of the Cyprus problem remains the priority; AKEL is leading the struggle to reunify Cyprus and its people -Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots- under a Bizonal Bicomunal Federation with political equality, and the demilitarization of the island. This of course means the withdrawal of the over 30 thousand Turkish troops, but also the dismantling of the recently opened drone base in the illegal airport of Lefkoniko, and the planned naval base near Trikomo. By all means, this also means the dismantling of the British bases. Only then Cyprus will have full sovereignty and will be the bridge of peace with the peoples and countries of our region and not a launchpad for wars against them.

Now that the thousands of people came time and again out in the streets of London and other cities demanding "Ceasefire Now" and "Stop the Genocide", it is timely that they should take up the demand of the peace movement in Cyprus and of AKEL and demand the dismantling of the British bases in Cyprus and all other bases. Demand to put a final end to their country's colonial past which is perpetuated through the anachronistic presence of military bases around the world. Demand an end to the fueling of conflicts and wars that destroy human lives as well as endanger the future of life on our planet.

**Vera Polycarpou** is a member of the central committee and head of International Relations and European Policy of Cyprus' AKEL party

2024 demonstration against the British bases in Cyprus. There are more photo from a major demonstration against the bases in 2018

RAF Akrotiri is used as a base for armed incursions in the Middle East. Picture shows an RAF Tornado

# Liberation

## 70 Years 1954–2024

**Liberation**, founded as the Movement for Colonial Freedom is one of the oldest human rights organisations in the UK. Next year we will be 70!

We aim to mark the occasion by:

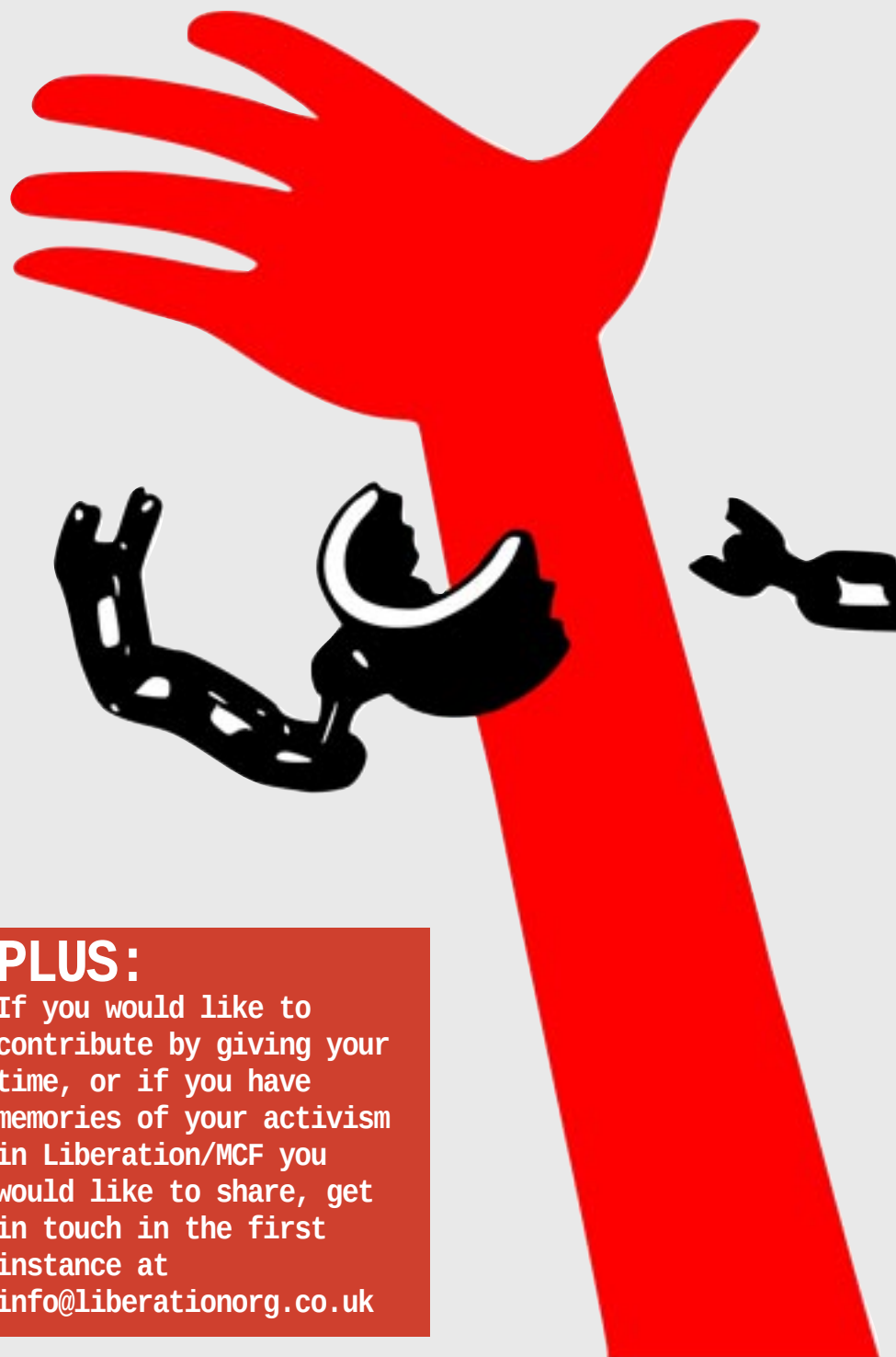
- Publishing a book on the history of Liberation since our founding as Movement for Colonial Freedom in 1954, covering key developments and highlighting the movers and shakers. Written by authoritative authors and will include the years leading up to MCF, right up to the present day.

- Producing print and digital educational materials and conduct outreach on our history and the continuing threat today of neo-colonialism in the Global South

- Holding a lively in person event, with food, culture and politics

- Making investments to put the organisation on a firmer footing to support our everyday activities

In order to achieve our ambitions we need to raise funds. Please give as generously as you feel able to (any amount large or small is gratefully received) and pass it on!



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**CODIR warmly congratulates Liberation  
on the occasion of its 70th anniversary  
year and wishes it continued success in  
its struggle for peace, human and  
democratic rights, and social justice!**

**CODIR, the organisation for solidarity  
with the Iranian people, established in  
1981 in Britain, is proud of its affiliation  
and close working with Liberation and  
looks forward to carrying it forward in  
the years to come!**

Gawain Little General Secretary  
Alex Gordon President  
Jamshid Ahmadi Assistant General Secretary



# Sudan/analysis

In the face of the failure, or paralysis, of international and regional efforts to reach a durable ceasefire, new ideas and new forces must be advanced to alleviate the suffering of the people and stop the war. Foremost, the broadest possible popular front of the Resistance Committees, the trade unions, the political parties, and the civil society organisations



## Stop the war, regain the Revolution

Stopping the war and regaining the revolution can only be achieved through the mass mobilisation of the people and securing their active and unfettered participation in all decision-making institutions,

writes **Fathi El-Fadl**



ON MONDAY 18 December 2023, when the commanding Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) general ordered his troops to leave Wad Madani, he surrendered the second largest Sudanese city to the advancing militias of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Wad Madani had been a safe haven for hundreds of thousands of people previously displaced from Khartoum, the capital, as well as other cities and villages. However, knowing and having experienced the brutality of the RSF militias, majority of those people began their second journey fleeing south and east out of the city. Since 15 April 2023, the former allies and main supporters of the previous regime, led by Omar al-Bashir, have been engaged in a bitter and catastrophic war. Both sides are accused of committing grave crimes, including ethnically motivated killing and detention, torture, and sexual violence. The SAF, led by the al-Bashir security committee and controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood, is accused of the indiscriminate bombardment of civilian areas in Khartoum, Niala, and other cities, which has killed hundreds of innocent civilians. Meanwhile, the RSF militias continue to commit heinous crimes that include the forced occupation of civilian homes, rape, murder, and the stealing of property. It is suffice to state that both sides have committed crimes against humanity not only in the capital and El Gezira region, but also in Darfur and Kordofan. Over 15,000 people from the Masalit African ethnic group have been murdered by the RSF militia in El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur. It is estimated that over 20,000 civilians have lost their lives as a result of the military confrontation between the two sides in Sudan so far. More than 7.7 million people have been displaced both inside and outside of the country. There have been 1,678,000 cross-border movements into neighbouring countries according to the International Organisation of Migration (IOM). The sufferings of the Sudanese people continue, while both international and regional organisations stand by and look on. The shy statements of condemnation uttered by their officials do nothing to

stop the killing of innocent people. Both the Jeddah and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) regional bloc talks led to nothing. In fact, foreign intervention and support for the various fighting factions is increasing. Türkiye is replacing Egypt in supporting the SAF generals, while the UAE and Russia (via the Wagner military group) continue to back the RSF. Without such support and direct intervention, the war would have ended during the first few months. The brutality of the war is coupled by direct action on the part of both belligerents to curtail the rights and the movement of the people. Initiatives by the Emergency Committees, the Resistance Committees, and other civil organisations to help reduce the suffering of the people in the capital and other cities under the control of either the SAF or the RSF militia are being met with detention, torture, and even murder. The de facto governments are maintaining their power and authority through the barrel of the gun. Hundreds of activists are in prisons and scores of active members of the Resistance Committees have been disappeared. Against a backdrop of international and regional players looking to secure their interests in Sudan and make sure they are carried by seeking out amenable civilian fora and organisations to facilitate the creation of a new political dispensation in the country - just as happened during the talks in Addis Ababa last November - the RSF have issued a decree establishing their own 'Political Relations Committee'. The intention behind this move is clear... The RSF is attempting to present itself as a bona fide political entity with its own articulated agenda with the aim of legitimising its forced presence in the political domain, in line with the objectives of its international and regional sponsors. It should be noted that the RSF, as per its own founding charter, is a military force and is therefore precluded from engaging in political and economic activities. It is imperative that the RSF be prevented from assuming any future political role and that its leadership - along with that of the SAF - be pursued and ultimately held accountable for the crimes they have perpetrated

continuously since 1989. Indeed, it is the position of the mass democratic and revolutionary forces, including the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP), that the RSF and all other militias in Sudan be demobilised and disarmed. In the face of the failure, or paralysis, of international and regional efforts to reach a durable ceasefire, it is imperative that new ideas and new forces be proposed and advanced to alleviate the suffering of the people and stop the war. The first to this end is the establishing of the broadest possible popular front involving the representatives of the Resistance Committees, the trade unions, the political parties, and the civil society organisations. Indeed, such efforts have already begun. Meetings between the Resistance Committees and the trade unions are underway. Last month, representatives from the SCP and the Resistance Committees met and ideas for a joint programme were identified and articulated. Efforts to organise and involve workers' and peasants' organisations must also be intensified. Thus, the nucleus of the broad popular front is already there. The main general outlines for its programme are being discussed and developed. The progressive Forces for Radical Change (FRC) alliance has published the footnotes of its programme. They call for a people's alliance to stop the war and regain the revolution. This alliance is based on the rich and revolutionary experiences of our people's struggle. The aim is to defeat the present de facto ruling circles and establish a civil democratic alternative authority. Its objectives and tasks include the following:

- To stop the war in Sudan through the gaining and representing of the majority of the population in international and regional fora. Following the attaining of a durable ceasefire, a civilian authority must be established to open and oversee safe corridors for the smooth handling of humanitarian aid to reach those in need as well as to help and facilitate the safe return of those forced to leave their houses, cities, and villages during the fighting.
- To restore and support the role of the state in education and healthcare provision as well as the restoration of the various agencies of government.
- To establish an independent judiciary and put all of those who have perpetrated crimes against the people to fair trials. To hand over al-Bashir and his clique to the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- To draft a new constitution that defends and promotes democratic values.
- To guarantee women's representation at all levels, including parliament and government.
- To achieve peace in all regions of the country.
- To reconsider all agreements and treaties with other countries, as well as international and regional institutions, to defend and secure Sudan's national sovereignty and control over the country's natural resources.

Stopping the war and regaining the revolution can only be achieved through the mass mobilisation of the people and securing their active and unfettered participation in all decision-making institutions. It is through the arduous struggle of the Sudanese people, organising the masses to prepare and realise a general political strike and campaign of civil disobedience, and with the support and solidarity of the country's democratic, patriotic, and revolutionary forces, that democracy, peace, and justice will be reached and prevail in a new Sudan.

**Fathi El-Fadl** is a member of Forces for Radical Change in Sudan, opponents of the current civil war, and a vice president of the International Centre for Trade Union Rights (ICTUR). He was previously – in the 1970-80s – a student leader in Sudan and leading member of the International Union of Students. He is based in Khartoum and thus a witness to the ongoing conflict.



# Interview/Peter Mertens

A new generation is standing up to put pressure and achieve peace and justice for Palestine. Millions are taking to the streets for peace, bread and justice. But there is also the mutiny on the upper deck. States are looking for a new form of non-alignment, away from the unipolar world under the yoke of Washington, the IMF, and the World Bank



## Mutiny

**Peter Mertens** is a Belgian MP and leader of the Workers' Party of Belgium. He has authored numerous books, on the Euro, trade unions, fascism, class and capitalism. His latest book "Mutiny" is to be published in English soon. Liberation was particularly interested in the book's analyses of popular struggles against imperialism and capitalism and, as one authoritative reviewer put it, "his compelling case for a joint mutiny of people in the North and the South" to promote "sovereignty, dialogue and cooperation rather than confrontation in international politics

**Liberation** What motivated you to write *Mutiny* at this particular time, to whom is it directed, and why?

When I heard the story of Kath, a nurse from the Royal Berkshire Hospital, taking action for the first time in her life. Kath has been a nurse for thirty years and never thought about going on strike before. "It's just not me," she said. But that changed. There are stories at Kath's hospital about people wearing two sweaters to save on heating or colleagues calling in sick because they can't afford transportation to work. This changes something in Kath. She can't just stand by anymore. She joins the strike for better pay. By the end of December 2022, half a million nurses are on strike. It's the start of a historic social movement, on of summers and winters of discontent. There's mutiny, also in the north of our planet. The class struggle ebbs and flows like the waves of the sea. But it's definitely there.

*Mutiny*, much like all my previous books, is intended for as wide an audience as possible. I firmly believe that individuals are eager to comprehend how the world works. Understanding the underlying narrative of history is crucial, acknowledging that our world has been interconnected for centuries. Trade, maritime routes, and ports bind us together. Events in Indonesia or Bolivia hold significance for us in Belgium, just as developments here resonate with Brazil.

**Liberation** Why the title "Mutiny"?

While writing my book, I heard Fiona Hill speak, a former member of the U.S. National Security Council. Her response to the 127 countries that did not support the sanctions against Russia was: 'this is mutiny'. Apparently, it is considered mutiny when countries no longer follow Washington. That resonated with me. If that's mutiny, let's embrace it. As a sobriquet, with a bit of a rebellious character.

Mutiny for me is also a metaphor, a symbol of disobeying the established order. This image carries a long maritime history, with mutiny representing various forms of collective resistance. From singing together below deck, to petitions and work refusal, to sabotage and the overtaking of the ship. It was not all calm on the water, quite the contrary, resistance was more common than not. Mutiny occurred in one in ten slave ships.

Today too, there is mutiny, both in the north and south. Look at the biggest social protest in human

history in India, where peasants and workers mobilized together. Or how large popular movements from Bolivia to Chile, lead to the first democratic reforms in Latin America. In the north, the class struggle ebbs and flows like the waves of the sea. But it exists, and it fights against the same world order, the same monopolies, the same system of exploitation.

**Liberation** Since you wrote *Mutiny*, a series of horrendous events has unfolded in the Middle East, with the blatant disregard of the Israeli government for international law and the complicity of the US, EU and UK. Were you able to include these events in the French, English and Spanish editions of your book?

In my book, I discuss five watershed moments that left Washington vulnerable and pushed an increasing number of countries in the South to seek an alternative. Just think of the illegal war in Iraq in 2003, the global financial crisis of 2008, and the Ukraine war of 2022. Israel's terrible war of destruction against Palestine is without a doubt a sixth, decisive tipping point. This war rips off the emperor's clothes. The axis of war fuelled by Washington is resorting to extreme violence and still believes that it is above all laws.

But that same axis is more isolated than ever. The double standards and hypocrisy are being exposed all over the world. After Russia invaded Ukraine, it immediately faced swift economic and military sanctions. However, Israel remains untouched by such measures. The EU's Association Agreement with Israel still grants full access to European resources, while the US supplies weapons used in Gaza.

From Jakarta to Brussels, London to Johannesburg, Istanbul to Washington, a new generation is standing up to put pressure and achieve peace and justice for Palestine. Millions are taking to the streets for peace, bread and justice. This offers perspective.

**Liberation** What does the history of US - China relations tell us about the potential for fair and respectful trading relationships in the Pacific region and across the world?

Since the 1973 oil crisis, the United States lost much of its manufacturing industry, shifting focus to the financial sector, while China emerged as the world's factory. Washington wants to put an end to that today, through protectionism and an escalating trade war, branding China as a "systemic rival."

This has major implications for a world in the midst of a large-scale energy transition. Those transitions always tend to disrupt social order: that was the case with coal in the 18th and 19th centuries, with oil in the 20th century, and it is today with the transition to a fossil-free economy. It triggered a race for precious resources like lithium, cobalt and nickel, and led to the development of major infrastructure projects for wind and solar parks, hydrogen pools and new transportation routes. Meanwhile, a digital upheaval is driving rapid development in machine learning, artificial intelligence, data and data protection, hardware accelerators, 5G and 6G communications networks, and the semiconductors needed to do it all. The growing rivalry with China plays a role in every aspect of this transition.

The White House views the conflict with China as a zero-sum game, requiring choosing sides. They're playing with fire. Bloc thinking, which reduces the world economy to two large rival blocs, does not benefit the planet. Countries with large economies have a responsibility to respect other countries and treat them as equals. Large countries should be the first to base their relations with other countries on dialogue and partnership rather than confrontation or opportunistic alliance politics.

**Liberation** he peoples of the global south are looking to achieve political, economic and social justice in their differing circumstances, but their governments are not in all cases capable or willing to come up with alternatives. You speak about a "double mutiny" to describe this tension. What do you mean by this?

Those who might expect the ten countries of BRICS-plus to share a common leftist agenda will indeed be disappointed. However, that doesn't mean we should suddenly lose interest in this renewed southern cooperation. Within the global south, mutiny has a twofold character.

On the one hand, grass-roots movements try to impose a progressive agenda, from the bottom up. They each do so in their own context: there is the movement for landless farmers, MST in Brazil, the great women's movement AIDWA in India, and the struggle of the metal workers' union NUMSA in South Africa. That's the mutiny below deck. And it calls loudly for democratic rights, land reform, and well-paid labor. It's this yearning for freedom against reactionary and dictatorial regimes that deserves our support.

But there is also the mutiny on the upper deck, at the level of states. They are looking for a new form of non-alignment, away from the unipolar world under the yoke of Washington, the IMF, and the World Bank. The BRICS countries have established their own investment bank. Countries can now, when they want to take out a new loan, choose not to turn to the IMF anymore but to the BRICS bank. This is a game changer in neocolonial world relations, and one many metropolises in the West did not see coming.

**Liberation** What are the prospects for world peace and what can the peoples of both the global south and global north do together to secure it?

We are living in a polarizing world that can tilt in all directions. The monsters are never far away. But you see how people, both in the north and the south of the planet, come together, organize, and rise up. For simple things: a decent income, a healthy meal, a roof over their heads, affordable energy. My call: if we can let the mutiny of the north shake hands with the mutiny of the south, and vice versa, we can tilt the world in the democratic, social, and ecological direction that this planet needs. Capitalism is not the future, socialism 2.0 is.



# new world order/analysis

Nations of the Global South increasingly see trade and investment with China as a more productive and sustainable option than dealing with Western backed corporations. This has led to the concept of a Chinese ‘threat’ which lies behind the justification of the US and its NATO allies in increasing military expenditure and adding to the level of Western military presence in Southeast Asia



A global  
realignment  
is underway

There are increasing indications that the world order is changing and that the changes are not to the liking of the US and its NATO allies. The most obvious of these is in relation to China, writes **Steve Bishop**, who traces the origins of this global geopolitical realignment



THE CONCEPT of the ‘new world order’, as coined by US President, George Bush, in January 1991 was an attempt to shape the post-Cold War era, following the defeat of the Soviet Union, in the image of the United States. The phrase emerged in a speech Bush made announcing the launch of Operation Desert Storm, following the Iraqi intervention in Kuwait which precipitated the first Gulf War. It was quickly seized upon by US neo-cons in particular as shorthand for US imperialism’s justification for playing the role of global policeman, justifying military intervention wherever and whenever deemed necessary.

With the strategic counterbalance to US expansionism, which the Soviet Union represented, having been taken away the only acceptable interpretation of the world for the US was one with it on top. The so-called Monroe doctrine, where the US since the 19th century saw Latin and South America as its ‘backyard’ in which to intervene as it wished, had now gone global.

While the US has undoubtedly flexed its economic and military muscle in a series of scenarios since 1991, things have not always gone according to plan. Overt and covert activity in the Middle East, previously aimed at curtailing Soviet influence, translated into attempting to stem the tide of Islamic fundamentalism resulting in the calamity of the Taliban and al-Qaeda. The origins of both can be traced back to CIA funded covert operations. In addition, the adventurist foreign policy pursued by the Iranian dictatorship, to fund a network of resistance across the region, including Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, is a direct response to the failures of US Middle East policy.

The attack upon the Twin Towers in New York in 2001 sent a message to the world that the US was not invulnerable, while the disastrous invasion of Iraq in 2003, under the fictional pretext of identifying weapons of mass destruction, undoubtedly made the US and its NATO allies more enemies than friends in the Middle East. The intervention in Libya has

resulted in an ongoing civil war between rival factions; the retreat from Afghanistan has left the population at the mercy of the medieval Taliban; while the covert intervention to try and unseat Bashir al-Assad in Syria has more than backfired, with unsuccessful military action leading to the reality of a major refugee crisis for Western Europe.

The US still has too much military and economic might for these scenarios to be described as US imperialism’s death throes but there are increasing indications that the world order is changing and that the changes are not to the liking of the US and its NATO allies. The most obvious of these is in relation to China.

While China has no military designs other than to defend its own territory, anti-Chinese rhetoric has been growing amongst Western politicians and media in recent years. Much of this is in response to the exponential growth in China’s economic power and its increasing influence with developing nations. Investments made on the basis of joint co-operation, collaboration and mutual trust are a far cry from the asset stripping and plundering which characterises the economic relationship of the West with the developing world.

Nations of the Global South increasingly see trade and investment with China as a more productive and sustainable option than dealing with Western backed corporations. Such successes are as a result of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched 10 years ago, with the aim of creating a network of mutually supportive economic relationships, not based upon exploitation and not based upon the expropriation of one state’s assets by another.

BRI is inspired by the concept of the Silk Road, established during the Han Dynasty 2,000 years ago, an ancient network of trade routes that connected China to the Mediterranean via Eurasia for centuries. The aim of BRI is to connect Asia with Africa and Europe via land and maritime networks along six corridors.

That such a strategy is a threat to the dominance of

US economic imperialism, there can be no doubt, hence the increasingly vitriolic rhetoric aimed at painting China, not only as an economic danger, but also a military threat. Much of this rhetoric focuses upon the relationship of China to Taiwan, recognised in international law as Chinese territory, but increasingly used by the West as leverage with which to ‘justify’ its designs on restraining China’s economic growth.

The concept of a Chinese ‘threat’ also lies behind the justification of the US and its NATO allies of pushing to increase military expenditure and add to the level of Western military presence in Southeast Asia.

There is also concern in Western capitals that China plays a key role in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) group, which is increasingly attracting the attention of nations of the Global South, looking to find ways to break with the US led global order.

The establishment of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) in 2015 was a major step forward in opening up the possibility for developing countries, and those of the Global South, to take a step towards controlling their own development programmes and reduce reliance on international finance institutions dominated by the US dollar.

In January last year South Africa’s Foreign Minister, Naledi Pandor, indicated the group’s intention to “develop a fairer system of monetary exchange”, with a view to weakening the dominance of the US dollar.

“The systems currently in place tend to privilege very wealthy countries and tend to be really a challenge for countries, such as ourselves, which have to make payments in dollars, which costs much more in terms of our various currencies,” she said.

Brazilian President, Lula de Silva, said the NDB’s goal is “creating a world with less poverty, less inequality, and more sustainability”, adding that the bank should play a “leading role in achieving a better world, without poverty or hunger”.

Former Brazilian President, Dilma Rousseff, is the new President of the NDB. In an interview following her inauguration Ms. Rousseff stressed the role of the NDB in supporting countries with regards to climate change and sustainable development goals; promoting social inclusion at every opportunity; and financing the most critical and strategic infrastructure projects.

While the BRICS countries are by no means a homogeneous group in terms of their political outlook the initiative remains an important one. The stranglehold of imperialist designed institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, both of which are US dominated and controlled, has tied developing nations to Western economies in ways which have thwarted, rather than encouraged, their economic independence.

The tools of the imperialist banking sector are there precisely to generate dependence and keep former colonial nations within a neo-colonial orbit. The deployment of Western corporations, infrastructure and technology only serves to reinforce those dependencies over the long term. Inevitably there is often a military pay off too, with arms contracts being tied into economic support and the stationing of military bases and US hardware as part of the deal.

The fact that the concept of “de-dollarisation” is even on the agenda of developing nations, and that there is an emerging investment network which it does not control, is of concern to the US. Also, there can be no doubt that much of the current US provocation towards China stems from the fear that the unipolarity it has enjoyed, since the defeat of the Soviet Union, is not only being questioned but is being actively challenged.

**Steve Bishop**, is a regular contributor to Liberation Journal.



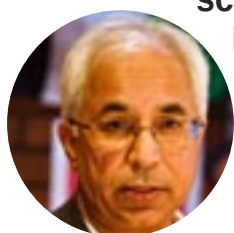
# new world order/india

In the ever-evolving dynamics of the emerging world order, the ascendancy of the Global South emerges as a defining feature. From a geopolitical standpoint, Modi's administration endeavours to position India as a pivotal player in this evolving global order, fostering economic ties and strategic alliances. However, the implications of his potential victory extend beyond economic considerations



## The political landscape under Modi

The potential inevitability of Modi's triumph in elections this summer necessitates a closer examination of its potential ramifications for peace, social justice, and human rights within India and on a broader international scale, writes **Harsev Bains**



**I**N THE EVER-EVOLVING DYNAMICS of the emerging world order, the ascendancy of the Global South emerges as a defining feature. Against this backdrop, the discussions surrounding the re-election prospects of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have become a focal point of discourse among pundits and analysts. Delving into the potential inevitability of Modi's triumph necessitates a closer examination of its potential ramifications for peace, social justice, and human rights within India and on a broader international scale.

Modi's political journey is a tapestry woven with fervent support and vehement criticism. While some laud his leadership for fostering economic growth and national development, others raise poignant concerns about the impact on social cohesion, religious harmony, and democratic values. The question of whether Modi's victory is genuinely inevitable calls for a nuanced analysis of India's political landscape.

From a geopolitical standpoint, Modi's administration endeavours to position India as a pivotal player in the evolving global order, fostering economic ties and strategic alliances. However, the implications of his potential victory extend beyond economic considerations, impacting peace, stability, and diplomatic relations in the region.

The tenets of social justice and human rights occupy a central role in evaluating Modi's potential re-election. Concerns regarding religious intolerance, freedom of expression, and minority rights have ignited impassioned debates. Understanding how these factors intersect with the evolving world order is imperative for gauging the impact of Modi's continued leadership.

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA), spearheaded by the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, following the directives of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), stands today as a substantial challenge to the unity and

integrity of India, as defined by its constitution as a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular Democratic Republic.

Drawing parallels between historical instances of totalitarianism, such as Nazi Germany, and the current Indian political landscape underscores the need for international solidarity against rising authoritarianism. This solidarity is crucial, given the potential implications for India's democracy.

Comparing the paths of the Nazi Party and the RSS reveals intriguing similarities:

- The German Workers' Party, formed in 1920 and led by Adolf Hitler a year later, initiated the process of replacing senior government officials with allegiance to the Nazi Party upon Hitler's appointment as Chancellor.
- The Nazi Party, a propagator of Nazi ideology, functioned as both an ideology and a political party.
- The Nazi Party had militia-style trained paramilitary groups, organized as Sturmabteilung (SA), and later the Schutzstaffel (SS), under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler, who quashed dissent and achieved subordination.
- Complete media control was a hallmark of Nazi Germany, with Joseph Goebbels appointed as the Reich Minister for Propaganda and Public Enlightenment in 1933 to rally support for the Nazi Party's ideology.
- Pursuing the Nazi ideology, which described Jews as impure, led to the systematic planning and execution of the genocide of Jews and other minorities.

In response to India's first war of independence in 1857, British colonialists, disturbed by the unity of Hindus & Muslims, introduced the instruments of divide and rule aiming to exploit and amplify differences. Encouraged by the British, the Muslim League formed in 1906, and Hindu Sabhas and the Hindu Mahasabha formed in 1913.

The 'Hindutva,' a book by Hindu Mahasabha leader Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, published in 1923, serves as the driving ideology for communalists.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), formed in 1925 by Dr. B.K. Hedgewar, is considered the Indian equivalent of the Nazi party. While borrowing from Nazi teachings, its modus operandi is different, featuring over 60,000 military drill units.

The RSS operates as a paramilitary organization with various branches, and the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), its public political arm, is the most well-known. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and many members of the Indian Parliament align with the RSS and the Hindutva ideology.

For the purposes of political and social violence, intimidation, and the prevention of electoral franchise, RSS paramilitary troops are deployed. The dedicated information technology department, known as the IT Cell, directly reporting to the leadership, pushes propaganda, rallies people behind its ideology, isolates moderates, neutralizes opposing media, and targets human rights activists and minorities for the promotion of the BJP and its political aspirations in India and abroad.

The BJP holds 10,000 social media cell meetings to ensure constant propaganda, and a majority of mainstream media outlets are owned and run by individuals sympathetic to the BJP agenda.

Following the General Elections in 2014, the BJP commenced the process of replacing senior government officials with allegiance to the RSS, further escalating after 2019. Many government officers either voluntarily or through fear of Enforcement Directorate (ED) intimidation subscribe to the combined power of the BJP and the street power of the paramilitary RSS, defining the forces of Hindutva.

In the opposition block, the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPIM] central drivers of the opposition coalition I.N.D.I.A., play a pivotal role. They counter the narrative presented by the NDA, emphasising democratic values, secularism and social justice. Their stance is crucial in shaping the discourse on India's political trajectory.

For progressive freedom-loving socialists who are part of Liberation in Britain, focusing on a specific aspect or dimension of the situation in India is a strategic consideration. Campaigning could centre on issues related to social justice, inclusivity, and human rights, aiming to raise awareness and advocate for change. By collaborating with like-minded organizations and leveraging international solidarity, British progressives can contribute to the global dialogue on democratic values and social equality.

In conclusion, as the world witnesses the rise of the Global South and grapples with the challenges of an evolving international order, the analysis of Narendra Modi's political trajectory becomes integral. While the inevitability of his victory remains a topic of debate, the implications for peace, social justice, and human rights underscore the need for a vigilant and engaged global community. For Liberation in Britain, a focused campaign on specific issues aligns with the values of progressive socialism, fostering dialogue and advocacy for a more just and inclusive India and a world at large.

**\*Note:** Hindutva is a political nationalist ideology seeking to establish Hindu supremacy in India. The term is distinct from Hinduism, the religion practiced in India, and not all Hindus follow Hindutva ideology\*

**Harsev Bains** is Chair of Liberation's Education Committee and National Vice President of the Indian Workers' Association GB



# Liberation/history

The MCF was never naive about political independence because we knew even then that when British troops were withdrawn the real economic power in those countries remained with those who owned the land and factories as well as the multinational companies that operated there. Indeed, we saw in neo-colonialism the continuing domination of capital even when the political leaders had been elected locally (Tony Benn)



## Liberation celebrates 70 years

While the struggle continues, the 70th anniversary celebration, later this year, will enable us to assess our successes as well as articulate strategies to develop more effective campaigns and partnerships. We quote extensively here from a pamphlet celebrating an earlier anniversary, written by one of the giants in our organisation's history.

Above: **Liberation heroes**

Above: Group picture: Front from (left to right) Tony Gilbert, Kay Beauchamp, Monty Goldman, Stan Newens MP

Roundels: Kay Beauchamp, Tony Benn MP, Trevor Carter

RIGHT: Liberation Journal December 1977 January 1978

**T**HE MOVEMENT for Colonial Freedom (MCF) started its journey campaigning for the liberation of the colonies in 1954. The struggles of the 1960s and 1970s earned the MCF a well-deserved reputation as the champion of the people of the colonies. Leaders of the national liberation movements in every corner of the world acknowledged the role played by the MCF in their independence speeches as they welcomed.

By 1970, having celebrated the liberation of most British colonies in Asia, Africa, the Americas, and even in Europe, MCF changed its name to Liberation. Liberation committed itself to continue the struggle for the economic, social, and cultural emancipation of the former colonies, as well as the campaign for Britain to adopt a progressive and independent foreign policy. While the struggle continues, the 70th anniversary celebration, later this year, will enable us to assess our successes as well as articulate strategies to develop more effective campaigns and partnerships.

Tony Benn, a giant of the struggle for the liberation of the colonies and a leading voice for our movement summarised 50 years of MCF/Liberation work in a report he delivered on 4 April 2004. We reproduce the report below:

The Movement for Colonial Freedom, now Liberation, was founded fifty years ago and is still engaged in a world-wide campaign against imperialism.

Socialists inside and outside the Labour Party have always been opposed to imperialism, had a strong internationalist tradition, and worked with national liberation movements against the European powers which had built their empires over many centuries.

Indeed, not only were those empires oppressive by their very nature but they were the cause of wars between them motivated by their competing determination to gain control of natural resources and dominate world trade.

Fenner Brockway was one of the most outstanding leaders of the anti-colonial movement in Britain and his Congress of Peoples against Imperialism was the most important organisation that came to form the MCF. But it included other single-issue organisations like the Seretse Khama committee which had been set up by him when he was exiled as chief of the Bamangwato in Bechuanaland because he had

married Ruth, a white woman from England.

I was the first treasurer of the MCF and like all progressive organisations we always had acute financial problems but survived with the help of very dedicated people who worked around Fenner.

The MCF set up a number of committees which dealt with issues from the control of the White Highlands in Kenya through the struggle for Algerian independence and gave support to all the liberation leaders who came to London to seek backing.

As chair of the North Africa committee, we worked with the FLN in Algeria taking up the case of Ahmed Ben Bella kidnapped by the French on his way to Egypt, held in the Bastille in Paris and later becoming the first President of a free Algeria.

And during those years we worked with Habib Bourguiba and the Tunisians who were caught up in the same struggle.

We also had links with the Indian National Congress under Pandit Nehru and the issue of Goa, a Portuguese colony, was only resolved when India intervened after a massive demonstration in Bombay in 1960 attended by 400,000 people and addressed by Nehru and Krishna Menon.

India then played a very significant role in the Non-Aligned Movement which played an important part in defending the developing world at the time of the cold war and advancing the liberation struggle.

Hastings Banda, then a doctor working in Brixton, used to turn up at our meetings up after his surgeries, wearing a homburg hat and carrying a Gladstone bag, who, on his return home was greeted by a huge crowd of Africans as the only university graduate they had, later becoming the first president of Malawi and ending up as a dictator.

On another occasion we had a visit from Kenneth Kaunda, who later went back to become president of Zambia and was later subsequently overthrown in a coup. Another friend was Cheddi Jagan after US pressure had persuaded the British to remove him from office, who later went back to be president.

Tom Mboya from Kenya kept in touch with us as did Joshua Nkoma from Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, and we supported Mugabe when he was imprisoned by the Rhodesian government and was not even allowed to visit his dying son.

MCF organised a big demonstration in support of Nelson Mandela in 1964 at the time of the Rivonia Trial and maintained a long campaign with the ANC and others against apartheid.

At the time of Suez, it was the MCF that booked Trafalgar Square and then handed the booking over to the Labour Party where Aneurin Bevan spoke most powerfully at a time when Hugh Gaitskell, then leader of the party, denounced this aggression because it broke the UN charter.

We also took up the case of Cyprus when the British were repressing the Cypriots in their demand for independence, and we had a Middle Eastern

committee which worked with the Palestinians and Yemenis and others when Britain still held a powerful position in the Middle East.

This was an ongoing campaign and although the MCF had wide support in the Labour movement, the Fabian Colonial Bureau, whose leading light was Dr Rita Hinden, took a more paternalistic view of our colonial responsibilities and was critical of our support for those engaged in direct action.

For example, in Kenya, the Mau Mau were denounced as terrorists and that word was widely used to describe all those who had chosen to fight British Imperialism by taking up arms.

The parliamentary leadership was always more cautious protesting publicly its commitment to transform the British Empire into a Commonwealth of Nations more slowly, but we did have the satisfaction of seeing former "terrorist" leaders whom we had imprisoned end up at Buckingham Palace having tea with the Queen as head of new independent nations.

The MCF was never naive about political independence because we knew even then that when British troops were withdrawn the real economic power in those countries remained with those who owned the land and factories as well as the multinational companies that operated there.

Indeed, we saw in neo-colonialism what is now called globalisation that reflected the continuing domination of capital even when the political leaders had been elected locally.

Looking back on those campaigns now provides a very important historical perspective against which the new American empire can be seen and understood. For empires are very [much] like each other in the sense that they're motivated by the demand for resources, made possible by industrial and military strength and just as they rise, they inevitably decline.

The decline of the American Empire will follow a similar pattern made up partly of resistance in the occupied countries and partly as a result of opposition in America itself where the peace movement is growing rapidly and could even lead to a regime change in Washington this autumn as Bush faces a backlash from those whose living standards and public services are threatened by the cost of the war and who see the rising number of casualties suffered by American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What is different is that the methods of communication are so much better now than they were when the MCF was founded. And, with the internet, coordinated international campaigns are possible as we have seen with the anti-globalisation campaigns and the peace movement itself.

Although the internet is not available to everybody it is widely available to those who organise liberation movements and we are no longer dependent on the media which has always rallied to the imperial cause and denounced its critics as troublemakers and terrorists.

The victory of the left in Spain and in the French regional elections and the growing strength of the progressive movement in Britain and America may usher in a new era in world politics.

Indeed, any sensible forward look at the world we live in should remind us that the human race faces massive problems with a rising world population and strictly limited resources.

We are, in a sense, like shipwrecked sailors in a lifeboat with a single loaf of bread and there are only three ways of distributing it.

The loaf can be auctioned so the rich get all the bread, or we can fight for it so the strong get all the bread, or we can share it so everyone gets a bit of bread.

That is the choice we have to make and it gives fresh relevance and meaning to what Rosa Luxembourg said when she argued that we must choose between socialism and barbarism.





# Liberation hero/Haydar Khan

"I had only one purpose in mind, which was to show the people of Khorasan [Iran] who had little to no education or [political] consciousness that [the official] was also just an ordinary human being."



## Forefather of Iran's modern progressive movement

Over one hundred years on from his tragic and untimely demise, the legacy of Haydar Khan, as well as that of the movement he helped to found and lead, remain alive and well in Iran. Furthermore, the ideals and vision for which he fought and gave his life still hold true and arguably remain as pertinent today as they did back then, writes **Payam Solhtalab**

**H**AYDAR KHAN (also known as Haydar Amu-Oghli) was a leading left-wing revolutionary and key presence in the early 20th century Constitutional Revolution of Iran, a major figure in the country's history, and widely regarded as the forefather of the modern left and progressive movement that abides there despite the horrific repression meted out by successive ruling regimes.

Haydar Khan was born on 20 December 1880 in Orumiyeh, West Azarbaijan province, Iran (then Persia), to Afshar Turk parents. In 1886, his family moved to Alexandropol (present-day Gyumri), in Armenia, which was then part of the Tsarist Empire. Haydar Khan received training in electrical engineering in Yerevan and Tbilisi. It is believed that he became acquainted with socialist politics while he was a student at Tbilisi Polytechnic University in 1901.

He was invited to work in Iran on the setting-up of an electrical plant that would service the Imam Reza shrine in Mashhad, one of the holiest sites in Shia Islam. Having arrived back in the country of his birth as a relatively inexperienced young man with a limited command of Farsi (Persian), his political awakening continued apace – spurred on by his profound sense of affinity with the ordinary folk of Iran with whom he broke bread, as well as his growing indignation at their condition and the terrible injustices they faced on a daily basis under what essentially remained a situation of feudalism. Witnessing a local Agha, Saham-ol-mulk Motavalibashi, humiliating a peasant in public, Haydar Khan gave the official a dressing-down in front of a crowd of stunned onlookers. He recalled the incident in his memoirs, stating, "I had only one purpose in mind, which was to show the people of Khorasan [Iran] who had little to no education or [political] consciousness that [the official] was also just an ordinary human being."

Following this incident, Haydar Khan relocated to Tehran in 1903 to work at the capital's first electricity plant owned by Qajar businessman, Haj Amin al-Zarb. He arrived in a city the air of which ran thick with radical fervour, with the Constitutional Revolution of Iran about to get underway. This revolution, between 1905 and 1911, led to the establishment of a parliamentary system, constitutional monarchy, and the abolition of the model of absolute monarchy. The revolution was also the first of its kind in either the Middle East or Islamic world.

Throughout the course of the Constitutional Revolution, Haydar Khan, by now more experienced and resourceful, campaigned on the side of those advocating for the curtailment – if not complete abolition – of monarchical rule, the supremacy of the parliamentarians, as well as an equitable and just political order in Iran. He stood firmly against the various conservative forces that sought to reinstate an absolute monarch, otherwise roll back on the advancements and gains made by the revolutionaries, or else service their own private interests – whether they were envoys of the shah, reactionary clerics, or turncoat former constitutionalists. Indeed he was implicated in the neutralisation of several of these counterrevolutionary threats. The end of the revolution came in December 1911, when the shah's loyalists expelled all deputies from parliament reportedly with the assistance of some 12,000 Russian troops.

The tumult that greeted the 1917 October Revolution provided Haydar Khan and his supporters with the opportunity to regroup. That same year, the Edalat (Justice) Party was formed in Baku by pro-Bolshevik members of the Social Democratic Party of Iran. Edalat soon established branches in several Iranian cities, attracting a significant following.

Meanwhile, the defeat of the Constitutional Revolution served to heighten the resolve of several of its former participants – some of whom concluded that the reforms they envisioned might be more effectively pursued at a provincial level, serving as a springboard for revolutionary change countrywide. Provincial movements emerged led by Mohammad Khiabani in

Azarbaijan, Mohammad-Taqi Khan Pesyani in Khorasan, and Mirza Kuchak Khan in Gilan.

Having formed an alliance with Mirza Khan's Jangali (Foresters) movement, Edalat convened a congress in Anzali, Gilan, in June 1920 at which the party's name was changed to the Communist Party of Iran\* (CPI, also known as the Communist Party of Persia). While Haydar Khan was not at the congress, he nonetheless exerted significant influence as the leader of the internal current that argued for a more careful, moderate, and pragmatic line – based on Iran's material pre-capitalist condition – in contrast with the stress on an immediate and outright socialist revolution advocated by the other tendency. He correctly concluded that the conditions were not yet ripe for a socialist revolution, as opposed to a national revolution, and thus Iranian progressives ought to support the national bourgeoisie – and even the zamindars (landowners) – for the time being, provided they opposed British imperialism.

Within barely two months, a catastrophic split had taken place within the Jangali movement between its more conservative-oriented wing, led by Mirza Khan, and its left wing, which had close ties to the more radical tendency within the CPI. Divisions had been particularly sharp over the question of agrarian reform and land redistribution. This led to Mirza Khan abandoning the provincial government and withdrawing with his men to the forests to rally in anticipation of a showdown.

Then, in September 1920, the Congress of the Peoples of the East was held in Baku. The events in Gilan were much in discussion and the Iranian delegation was significant, comprising 202 out of the 2,050 delegates in attendance. The delegation was led by none other than Haydar Khan, who greatly impressed Lenin. The hitherto more radical faction of the CPI's leadership was sidelined at the congress and a second Central Committee, to be led by Haydar Khan, was elected in its place with its immediate priority being to end the standoff in Gilan and rebuild the progressive coalition with the Jangali movement.

Haydar Khan was tasked with personally overseeing the rapprochement with Mirza Khan. Despite jubilant public announcements of the proposed reconciliation, the internal distrust and infighting in Gilan continued – fuelled further by British imperialist black propaganda. Mirza Khan became increasingly wary of the growing popularity of Haydar Khan as well as his calls for a programme of nationalisation in favour of the peasantry. In late September 1921, Haydar Khan was invited to meet with Mirza Khan. However, enroute to the proposed meeting, his convoy was ambushed. Having survived the initial attack, Haydar Khan was captured and murdered during the fall of Rasht on 15 October 1921. (It remains debated as to whether this was ordered by Mirza Khan.)

The cowardly betrayal was the green light for Reza Khan Mirpanj, who had seized power in Tehran in a British-backed putsch just months earlier, to send his forces to crush the movement in Gilan. The event served as a precursor to his consolidation of power and subsequent declaring of himself as shah in 1925, beginning the 'Pahlavi' monarchical dictatorship that would continue until February 1979.

Over one hundred years on from his tragic and untimely demise, the legacy of Haydar Khan, as well as that of the movement he helped to found and lead, remain alive and well in Iran. Furthermore, the ideals and vision for which he fought and gave his life still hold true and arguably remain as pertinent today as they did back then.

\* The CPI leaders who survived Reza Khan's dungeons would later go on to form the CPI's successor organisation, the Tudeh (Masses) Party of Iran, on 2 October 1941.

**Payam Solhtalab** is a campaigner for peace and détente in the Middle East



# book review/Legacy of violence

Caroline Elkins draws out a pattern of sanctioned violence, inflicted on numerous communities, over two hundred years. What began as a study of latter-day imperialist Britain in Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus and Aden eventually tracked back to the precursor ventures in India, the Caribbean, South Africa and Iraq. It is a fundamental background to many of the conflicts in today's world.

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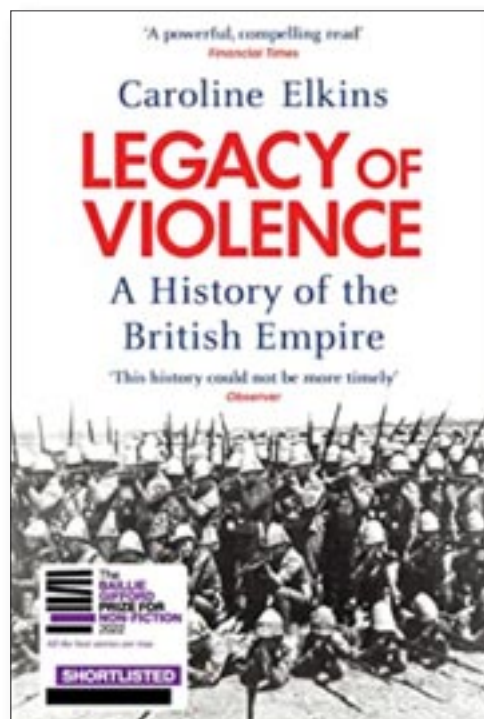
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**Caroline Elkins' assiduous labour is another step in the revision of our understanding of our imperial past and challenges attitudes that underwrite our current society, and a spur to continue the fight that has to be maintained today and tomorrow to hold those in power to account, writes Martin Jones**

IN THIS EXTENSIVELY researched perspective on British imperialism, Caroline Elkins draws out a pattern of deliberate and sanctioned violence, inflicted on numerous communities, over a period of two hundred years. What started as a study of latter-day imperialist Britain in Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus and Aden eventually tracked back to the precursor ventures in India, the Caribbean, South Africa and Iraq. Elkins documents how, under the banner of a liberal imperialist enterprise to civilise and bring good governance, not only have individuals and societies around the world suffered sustained violence under British colonial rule but the legacy continues to work its effects today.

Elkins' thesis explains how there were two contradictory forces at the heart of the liberal imperialist endeavour: reform and coercion. Violence, claims Elkins, 'was endemic to the structures and systems of British rule; violence 'resided in liberalism's reformism, its claims to modernity, its promises of freedom, and its notion of law – exactly the opposite places where one normally associates violence.' On the one hand was the imperial "civilizing mission," on the other, the implementation of the necessary force to propel forward these "backward" cultures towards the ideal that Britain, it was claimed, embodied. Thus Kipling's framing of the "White Man's Burden," to serve the needs of "Your new-caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child." Tracing the continuities of these forces of coercion



through the British imperial endeavour, Elkins demonstrates how systems and processes were developed to cope with particular imperial crises and subsequently deployed in other locations facing similar conflicts. In Malaya, for instance, to counter insurgents utilising support of local communities, Britain, in 1950, launched the Briggs Plan to forcibly relocate the rural population. "New Villages" were created, surrounded by barbed wire and watchtowers and controlled by the police. The original villages of the displaced peoples were burned down. A similar approach, named "villagisation," was subsequently implemented in Kenya in 1954, relocating over one million Kikuyu over a period of eighteen months. In fact this same approach, under the advice of Robert Thompson who had worked on the counterinsurgency plan in Malaya, was adopted by the South Vietnamese government in 1962; the "Strategic Hamlet Program" corralled over 4 million people into more than 3,000 hamlets. These approaches have echoes of the concentration camps of women and children masterminded by Kitchener in South Africa in the early 1900s, rounding up more than 100,000 Afrikaners, of whom over 30,000 died through malnutrition, starvation and disease. This development of techniques and their transfer across locations, along with experienced personnel, was typical as crises developed throughout the history of the empire.

Forced location was but one of the many actions based on coercion and violence. Elkins documents the multiple horrors carried out. Villages were burnt down or subjected to aerial bombings, as in Iraq in the 1920s and the North-West Frontier; collective punishment was implemented, including twenty-two-hour curfews, "food denial" and destruction of crops. Thousands were deported, while individuals were subjected to physical and sexual violence, numerous forms of torture – on occasions leading to death – and arbitrary killings. In order to absolve the individual decision-makers in civil and military authority and those executing these atrocities on the ground, existing laws were amended or new laws introduced, on occasions enacted in retrospect. Elkins terms this 'legalized lawlessness.' When called to account, authorities would justify their actions on the basis of maintaining law and order, claiming the "moral effect" of violence. Or they would proceed as Churchill did when, as secretary of state for war, he described the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre (the Amritsar massacre) as "an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation" – thus excusing the occurrence as exceptional and untypical and in consequence of no ongoing concern.

In addition to the identification of violence as endemic to liberal imperialism, key aspects of Elkins' work are her archival research, discovering original correspondence from the 1950s, and her role in providing evidence in the Mau-Mau compensation court case which drew on the research for her 2005 book 'Imperial Reckoning'. This led to the British government announcing the existence of previously unacknowledged documents, neglected due to 'administrative mismanagement.' Elkins' research and that of her team in assiduously accessing and interrogating documentation provide the means for opening up new perspectives on British imperialism. Of course her work has been challenged and has been subject to criticism from other academics. But what is evident is that Elkins has provided a distinct perspective of British Imperialism, one that has produced concrete outcomes. In 2013 the British Government agreed compensation to over 5,000 Kenyans who "were subject to torture and other forms of ill treatment at the hands of the colonial administration" during the Mau-Mau insurgency.

Elkins makes a persuasive case for the contradictions of the liberal enterprise. The history of the trail of conflicts that British imperialism propagated is a fundamental background to many of the conflicts in today's world, while the techniques of violence that were used and developed can be seen as progenitors of what we hear about and see in contemporary conflicts. Elkins' work shines light on these histories, a work of assiduous labour that should be widely recognised; it is another step in revising our understanding of the British imperial past, challenging the attitudes that underwrite our current society, and a spur to continue the fight that has to be maintained today and tomorrow to hold those in power to account.

*Legacy of Violence: A History of the British Empire* by Caroline Elkins (2022)  
Penguin (Vintage)

Martin Jones is a Liberation member.

Interested in reviewing a book? Or a film, play or exhibition? Contact: [info@liberationorg.co.uk](mailto:info@liberationorg.co.uk)

IMAGE: *The Graphic* 1879  
The Zulu War, Isandula, the dash with the colours, Lieutenants Melvill and Coghill cutting their way through the Zulu Army with the colours of the 24th Regiment.