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# PERMANENT REVOLUTION

# PALESTINE

## 75 YEARS OF STRUGGLE





# PERMANENT REVOLUTION

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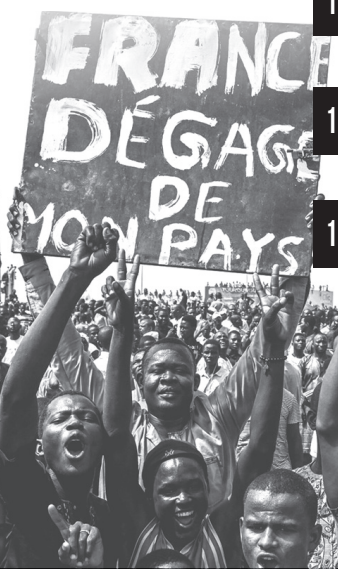
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# Palestine: 75 YEARS of heroic resistance

On October 7, the world was shocked by news from the Middle East. Hamas militias and militants of other Gaza organizations managed to tear down the segregationist wall built by Israel, storm military detachments and take control of a vast swath of Israeli territory. One of the most powerful and sophisticated armies in the world was overpowered by the Palestinian resistance and its artisanal methods.

Zionism was dealt a monumental blow. Its supposed invulnerability was forever pulverized. The response of the terrorist State of Israel, when it managed to come out of its stupor, was brutal. Weeks of bombing the defenseless civilian population of Gaza, blockade of food, electricity, drinking water and medicine. Tens of thousands dead and missing, many of them children. A genocide in the plain view of all humanity, supported by the imperialist powers that continues still as we write this text to denounce it, try to stop it and contribute our perspective on what paths there are towards the definitive freedom of the Palestinian people.

The action carried out by Hamas and Israel's response caused profound changes in the region and around the world, opening a new international situation, one of greater polarization and social mobilization. The agreements that Israel and US imperialism had been weaving with Saudi Arabia with the aim of definitively burying the Palestinian cause in the Arab world were frozen. The US was forced to reorganize its forces, weakening its presence in other regions in conflict, to prevent the crisis from spreading to the rest of the Middle East, while also supporting and containing the fascist Netanyahu in the hope that he



pour the least amount of gas on a fire that was already intense. But perhaps the most important consequence is that, after many years, the Palestinian cause was once again placed at the center of the world situation. An enormous movement of international solidarity has surged, defying prohibitions and censorship, and growing to such a magnitude that it began to damage the governments that support the new genocide that Israel is committing. It is particularly significant that the most important mobilizations, in addition to those taking place in the Arab world, are happening in the United States and Europe, in the heart of imperialism. Undoubtedly, the unmasking of the State of Israel, with increasingly broad sectors of society seeing its true face, has dealt Zionism another defeat, also of historical characteristics.

As revolutionary socialists, we deeply regret the loss of civilian lives. But we defend the right of all oppressed people to take up arms against their oppressors. And we repudiate all who cynically use certain deaths and the repugnant Nazi genocide while not showing the slightest human

sensitivity for the tens of thousands of victims of the indiscriminate massacres that Israel has been committing. The responsibility for what is happening is not on Hamas, an organization with which we have fundamental differences. The responsibility lies entirely in Zionism, which has spent the last 75 years massacring the Palestinian people, stealing their land and property, forcing millions to live in open-air prisons or overcrowded refugee camps in neighboring countries, where they were forced to move, or as citizens with no rights within the terrorist State that they artificially implanted with blood and fire in 1948.

Zionism is an extreme right-wing, racist and colonialist political current, which emerged at the end of the XIX century, created and led by the most affluent Jewish sectors to prevent impoverished Jewish workers and young people, victims of constant racist attacks, from turning en masse to the revolutionary parties that were in full growth at the time. The bureaucratization of the Soviet Union and the Third International and the use of the aberrant crimes of Nazism allowed Zionism to implement, with the support of Stalin and British and American imperialism, its plan to build an enclave in the Middle East by displacing the Palestinian people, who lived peacefully in that territory.

The current Israeli government, under Netanyahu, represents the most extreme, ultra-religious and fascist wings of Zionism. This self-admitted racist had been intensifying the *apartheid* regime and violence against Palestinians, to colonize more territories and keep 100% of Jerusalem. But along with this, he was attempting to impose a series of authoritarian reforms against the Israelites themselves, which caused a division like never before in Israeli society. For months, massive demonstrations have been held in Tel Aviv, where the demand for his resignation had been growing. Battered and humiliated by Hamas, he will have a hard time retaining power once military actions end. The brutality of Israel's current attack is also explained by Netanyahu's desperate attempt to recover some of the credibility he has lost.

Hamas carried out the October 7 action to reposition itself toward the Palestinian youth who had been questioning its passivity in the face of the desperate situation in Gaza, the constant arrests, and the increasingly blatant provocations of Netanyahu's government, like the attacks

against people praying at the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem or the advances of settlers in the West Bank. Hamas is an Islamic fundamentalist organization, which grew to electorally win the government of the Gaza Strip. For a long time, it received aid from Zionism, which aimed to divide the Palestinian Authority and knew how to take advantage of the space left vacant by the debacle of Arafat's PLO. For many years, the PLO had been the recognized leadership of the Palestinian people, but it ended up betraying them and recognizing the terrorist State of Israel in the 1993 Oslo Accords. Similar stories explain the rise of this type of sectarian religious leaderships across much of the Arab world.

Throughout 75 years of occupation, the Palestinian people have proven to be one of the most heroic in the world. Zionism has never been able to break them. Generation after generation, they have redoubled their fighting spirit, which we are convinced will continue until they recover all the land that belongs to them, "*from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.*" There was never any possibility of living together in two States, and history has proven this. Zionism's plan is to take over all of Palestine and complete its project of extermination and ethnic cleansing that began in 1948. The only possibility of a just peace will come from the defeat of Israel and the reconstruction of a single, secular, non-racist, democratic and socialist Palestine. At the service of this strategic objective, we promote the construction of revolutionary parties throughout the Middle East. Because it can only become a reality if the socialist revolution advances in the region and around the world.

While we continue to support the Ukrainian resistance against Russian imperialist aggression, the heroic people of Haiti threatened by a new military intervention, the peoples of Africa rebelling against French domination, the heroic Sahrawi people in the struggle against the Moroccan monarchy, and the workers, women and youth who struggle against exploitation and oppression throughout the world, we raise the call to continue mobilizing in solidarity with Palestine and in repudiation of the crimes against humanity that Israel is committing. To develop all types of initiatives to counteract the campaigns of lies and slander that aim to victimize the perpetrators. To demand that all governments break commercial and diplomatic relations with Israel. ✊





**ISL Declaration**

# Solidarity with the Palestinian masses. For a **SINGLE, SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST PALESTINE**

On the morning of this Saturday, October 7, Hamas fired thousands of missiles at Israel and broke into Israeli towns and cities around the Gaza Strip with numerous armed commandos attacking military bases and taking soldiers and civilians hostage.

The Palestinian people, fed up with years of genocidal oppression, responded with enthusiasm, mobilizing massively as thousands of young people spontaneously joined the assault on the barbed wire fences and walls of shame that surround Gaza.

Israel's response was an immediate bombing of civilian targets in Gaza, including hospitals, and a statement from Netanyahu asserting that they are at war and that the Palestinians will suffer an unprecedented attack. The head of the Zionist army announced massive bombings and cynically asks the civilian population to leave Gaza, knowing

that its more than 2 million inhabitants have nowhere to go and no possibility of crossing the siege imposed by the Zioist State of Israel.

Since its founding by blood and fire in 1948, the State of Israel has been a colonial imperialist enclave. It has perpetrated a genocide and ethnic cleansing on the Palestinian population, who have been forced to abandon their land massively, go into exile in neighboring countries, and live as second-class citizens in the apartheid of the West Bank and as prisoners in the enormous concentration camp that is the Gaza Strip.

Israel has ignored every United Nations resolution, continuing and deepening its colonial extension with illegal settlements in the increasingly reduced Palestinian territories, provoking, attacking and massacring the civilian population.

In recent years, the Israeli State has shifted considerably even more to the right and intensi-

fied its genocidal actions. It has not only legalized torture but institutionalized apartheid and its ethnic cleansing plan with a law that defined Israel as a Jewish State, limited self-determination exclusively to Jews, eliminated Arabic as an official language, declared illegal settlements of national interest and moved its capital to Jerusalem and appropriated it entirely, contrary to the peace treaties that determined the city as shared with Palestine and prohibited the establishment of either's capital there.

Since Netanyahu took office for his third term as prime minister in December 2022, there has been a new escalation in Israeli attacks. New settlements were legalized and tens of thousands of new homes and colonies were planned, the death penalty was imposed for Palestinian "terrorists", a definition that includes anyone who even throws a stone at a tank, and increased bombings have killed more than 200 Palestinian civilians so far this year, including the elderly, women and children.

Among the attacks that have generated the most indignation in the population, along with the escalation of violence in the illegal colonies, are the repeated raids of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the latest of which occurred in April of this year, with Israeli police shooting into the mosque and beating and arresting people indiscriminately.

In all these Zionist actions, we must seek the causes of what has happened today, with the regrettable result of hundreds of civilian deaths and thousands of people injured. While we express grief over the loss of the lives of ordinary Israelis, we also clarify that such losses suffered by the Palestinians at the hands of the Zionist State of Israel over the last several decades are incomparably higher, and the so called international community, particularly the Western imperialism, has mostly kept mum about it. Violence by the oppressed can't be judged with the same standards as the violence by the oppressor, in this case Israel, which is a nuclear state, armed to the teeth by the US.

Irreconcilable differences separate us from Hamas and Islamic fundamentalism in general, which we consider a totally reactionary ideology and a product of imperialism itself, but our support for the Palestinian people to resist their oppressor, the racist, genocidal and colonial State of Israel, is unconditional. Every oppressed people has the right to defend themselves and fight to recover what has been taken from them. And it is a duty, not only

of those of us who are revolutionary socialists, but of all who love freedom and defend the rights of people to self-determination, to support the Palestinian people.

Israel has the explicit financial, military and diplomatic support of the US and all of Western imperialism, and the complicit silence of powers like Russia and China and also of a large part of the Arab bourgeoisies and pro-imperialist governments of the world. Similarly, regional powers like Iran, which oppress their own people at home, defend their own interests and are no friends of Palestinian people. The so-called Palestinian Authority is also corrupt to the core and plays a collaborationist role. The primary victims of this process spanning over 70 years have been the Palestinian people. But they are not alone as they have the sympathy of millions of workers and young people throughout the Middle East and the entire world.

After so many years, it has been demonstrated that there will be no peace possible while the oppression of an entire people at the hands of an oppressive and terrorist state, artificially created by imperialism, continues. Peace will come from the defeat of the oppressor and the construction of a single, secular, democratic and socialist Palestine in the framework of a voluntary federation of socialist republics throughout the Middle East.

After the Zionist state is able to restore its senses from the surprise attack, which reflects the biggest military and intelligence failure for Israel in decades, it will intensify its attacks on Gaza and other regions, and increase its oppression of the Palestinian masses. The armed conflict, relatively limited at the time, may also escalate into another regional war. It is the duty of working masses and revolutionaries not only in the Arab region but all over the world to agitate on streets, work places, social media and elsewhere against Israeli oppression and occupation of the Palestinian lands, and force the Zionist state backed by the imperialists into a retreat.

The International Socialist League (ISL) calls for the broadest international mobilization in defense of and solidarity with the Palestinian people against the new slaughter that is coming, and until putting an end to the apartheid they have suffered for decades.

**Executive Committee of the International Socialist League – 10/07/2023** ✊





# Netanyahu, REJECTED OUTSIDE AND INSIDE Israel

BY MAHER KHAZAAL

The anti-Palestinian offensive that the Israeli premier unleashed since he took office at the end of 2022, plus the deep internal rift caused by his judicial reform, without a doubt paved the way for Hamas' response. For now in Israel, a certain climate of "national unity" prevails in the face of the military conflict, although at the same time, this adds fear and social insecurity to a political crisis that remains open.

Benjamin Netanyahu won the election with his party's coalition, the far-right and anti-Palestinian Likud and five other ultra-Zionist and ultra-religious forces<sup>[1]</sup>. He received a large amount of votes that sought to punish the previous government - secular center-right - and its austerity policies. It was the fifth election in three years, due to the great

instability. the Knesset (parliament) appointed Netanyahu prime minister with 64 MKs out of 120<sup>[2]</sup>.

Before the current conflict, Netanyahu encouraged new illegal settlements in the West Bank, he demolished Palestinian homes, he banned the display of the Palestinian flag and subordinated the police to the racist Minister of Security, who, in turn, controls the national guard (Zionist civil reserve militia). He also plans to strip Israeli citizenship or residency from anyone who receives subsidies from the Palestinian Authority and impose the death penalty on Palestinian "terrorists," a figure that includes anyone who even throws a stone at an Israeli soldier.

Domestically, Netanyahu plans to tax foreign donations to Palestine from solidarity civil entities. He also plans to prohibit any candidacy "that denies the existence of Israel as a Jewish and democratic State" and enable those that defend Jewish suprem-

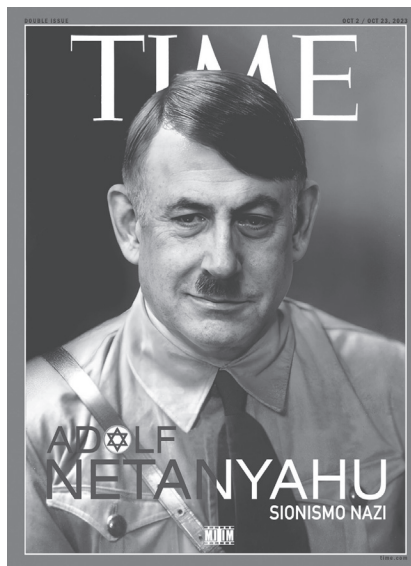


acy, and -due to his pact with ultra-religious organizations- increase the state subsidy to Jewish schools, prohibit LGBT couples from adopting, allow subsidies for events segregated by sex and refuse to sign the international Istanbul Convention against gender violence.

### REFORM, CRISIS AND AFTER...

The measure that sparked massive protests for more than eight months was Netanyahu's judicial reform. Since the Supreme Court, though still obviously Zionist, declared several settlements illegal and enabled some candidates that the extreme right does not tolerate to run, Netanyahu intends to enable the parliament to have the power to annul the Supreme Court's rulings or enact laws that it considers unconstitutional by a simple majority. In addition, the reform would provide the government greater power to appoint judges and eliminate the position of attorney general: this would benefit Netanyahu, who is being prosecuted for corruption.

In July, with 64 votes of the ruling coalition's MKs, the Knesset approved a first item of this reform, which limits the power of the Court to revise laws. But the heart of the reform is yet to come. Before the military conflict, more than 100,000 people protested every Friday in Tel Aviv and other cities. There were Palestin-



Cartoon depicting Netanyahu as a Nazi

ian flags, rainbow flags and anti-Zionist signs. This serious crisis lowered Israel's credit rating and alarmed its allies and even foreign companies, such as technological innovation firms, a key branch whose workers participated in the protests.

The pro-American theocracy called Israel rules through *apartheid*, perpetrates state terrorism and genocide against Palestinians and discriminates the Israeli Arab minority, 20% of

its population. Netanyahu seeks to crush the Palestinians and harden the very relative "democracy" that is exclusively for Jews. The recent protests demanding his resignation for his government's failures in intelligence, security and its mismanagement of the military conflict, especially with the hostages, were repressed, and harassment of critical sectors has grown. The internal crisis in Israel will have new chapters and will help weaken the far-right government and the Zionist State. ✎

[1] Shas (Sephardic), United Torah Judaism (Ashkenazi), Religious Zionism and Jewish Power (racist and anti-Muslim), and Joy (anti-LGBT).

[2] The three centrist Zionist parties have 42 MKs, the two Arab groups have 10, Labor has 4, the social democrats and Islamists did not reach the threshold of votes to enter parliament.





# WHAT IS Hamas?

BY PABLO VASCO

- This ultra-Islamist organization was born in Gaza in the early 1980s, as a Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. As Zionist military and politicians recognize<sup>[1]</sup>, Israel financed Hamas for over a decade to use it in its fight against the secular PLO, just as the US supported the Afghan Taliban to fight Russian influence there. This *modus operandi* can be seen in the histories of most Islamic fundamentalist sects.
- In 1993, the PLO signed the Oslo Accords with Israel, abandoning its historic struggle to dissolve the Zionist State and replace it with a secular and democratic Palestine. That betrayal and then Israel's violation of the agreements strengthened Hamas, which maintained its refusal to recognize Israel.
- The Intifadas further strengthened Hamas. In 2006, it won the legislative election with 44% of the votes, clashed with the PLO, broke its co-government with the PLO in the West Bank and formed its own government in Gaza. Hamas controls social assistance in Gaza and has repressed protests demanding salaries and against taxes and corruption.
- Around the world, Hamas is only considered a *terrorist* organization by Israel and its imperialist partners: the US, Great Britain, the European Union, Japan, Australia and Canada. Perhaps now other countries will follow suit, to provide cover for Israel's *state terrorism*.
- Although civilian deaths in these conflicts are regrettable, international legislation recognizes that all peoples under occupation have the democratic right to resist their occupiers arms in hand. The action that Hamas carried out on October 7 is not divorced from the Palestinian masses, it is one component of their resistance, which also includes other groups.
- We have fundamental differences with Hamas. Their project is an Islamic capitalist Palestine and since 2017 they accept the pre-war borders of 1967, that is, coexistence with Israel. Even so, their nationalist and anti-Zionist positions at certain times play a contradictory role, leading them to spearhead the resistance against Israel.



## SOME DEBATES

Politics in regard to the Palestinian struggle and its current leadership, Hamas, generates debates in the world's reformist and revolutionary left. For example, the French Trotskyist party *Lutte Ouvrière* criticizes Hamas almost at the same level as they criticize Netanyahu and proposes the Palestinians take up “*a national existence alongside the Israelis*”<sup>[2]</sup>: the same failed two-state trap that the UN supports.

In Italy, *Lotta Comunista* (Communist Struggle) is even worse. They speak of a “*symmetry of horrors*” and “*reactionary terrorism*” by Hamas. They don't even show solidarity with Gaza and, as a solution, they propose an abstract “*working-class internationalism*” that is out of touch with reality.<sup>[3]</sup> In fact, both positions benefit Israel.

Equating a process of struggle with its leadership leads to two symmetrical unilateral errors. Valuing a leadership as much as the struggle that it leads usually leads to opportunistically ceding to that leadership. And relativizing a struggle because it is led by a non-revolutionary sector leads to sectarian positions towards that struggle.

For example, though they claim to do so “with their own politics”, the Argentine PO refuses to include even the slightest criticism of Hamas in any unitary statement, alleging that “*it is an elementary revolutionary obligation to unconditionally support—that is, under its current leadership—the Lebanese and Palestinian war of liberation*” and

that they “*support to death the armed struggle of Hezbollah and Hamas*”<sup>[4]</sup>.

In turn, the Trotskyist Fraction, led by the Argentine PTS, holds that “*the course of action pursued by the Hamas militias, which attacked military posts and civilians alike, has been easily instrumentalized by Netanyahu and the imperialist states to try to legitimize their declaration of war. It has allowed the Israeli government to rally the opposition and critical sectors behind support for a military offensive against the Gaza Strip... the methods of Hamas, which impede the necessary unity in struggle between the Palestinian population, Arabs who live in Israel, and sectors of the Jewish working class who break with Zionism*”<sup>[5]</sup>. In fact, for the FT, it was a rather negative event... 🇵🇸

[1] <https://diariored.canalred.tv/internacional/hamas-de-aliado-de-israel-a-grupo-terrorista/>

[2] <https://www.union-communiste.org/en/2023-11/the-palestinians-are-being-sacrificed-for-the-sake-of-imperialism-7197>

[3] *Lotta Comunista*, Year LIX, No. 638, October 2023.

[4] <https://revistaedm.com/edm-23-10-21/cual-debe-ser-la-posicion-de-la-izquierda-frente-a-la-estrategia-y-los-metodos-de-hamas/>

[5] <https://www.leftvoice.org/declaration-stop-israels-airstrikes-and-military-intervention-against-the-palestinian-people/>

Read The menace of Islamic fundamentalism and the hypocrisy of imperialism .







# The fascist disguised as David WHAT IS ZIONISM?

BY VERÓNICA O'KELLY

**Israel dedicates enormous resources on spreading the idea that Zionism and Judaism are one and the same and that, consequently, any opposition to Zionism is anti-Semitic and racist. It is one of the biggest and most sustained lies in the world today. Zionism is a reactionary, racist and colonial political movement that was held, until relatively recently, by an insignificant minority of the Jewish community.**

Zionism emerged as a political and ideological current in central and Eastern Europe at the end of the XIX century, as a reactionary response to the anti-Semitism of European governments, but it was not the only response. In fact, it was the least representative one among the massive Jewish working class of the time.

## THE ORIGIN OF MODERN ANTISEMITISM

Karl Marx and Abraham Leon<sup>[1]</sup> analyzed the material causes of the historical development of the Jewish population. Under feudalism, Jews were mainly dedicated to commerce and financial transactions, constituting a *people-class*. When the material bases that gave them cohesion disappeared with the fall of feudalism, capitalism, in its regressive stage, failed to assimilate them and launched Jewish merchants and artisans into competition with non-Jews at the same time that it also destroyed the artisanal economy. In less than 50 years, these processes created a massive Jewish working class in Eastern Europe, where the majority of Jews lived. They became an easy scapegoat for the Russian and German monarchies, who promoted po-



David Ben-Gurion reads the Declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel at the Jewish People's Council.

groms so that non-Jewish workers would blame Jews for their problems. Many migrated to the West, where they were received to fulfill the same role. This is how modern anti-Semitism emerged, as a reactionary bourgeois ideology aimed at dividing the working class and sinking one sector of it into higher levels of oppression and exploitation.

## THE BIRTH OF ZIONISM

It is in this context that the main founder of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, wrote in 1895: *"I achieved a freer attitude toward anti-Semitism, which I now began to understand historically and to pardon. Above all, I recognized the emptiness and futility of trying to combat anti-Semitism."*<sup>[2]</sup> Two years later, he would found the World Zionist Organization with the goal of creating a Jewish State in Palestine.<sup>[3]</sup> That is, their starting point was accepting the racist lie that Jews and non-Jews cannot co-exist. From then on, Zionists and anti-Semites would find significant common interests.

The most precise definition of "Zionism" is a political movement that, in response to the anti-Semitism of European governments, proposes the establishment of a Jewish nation-state.

## A MARGINAL AND BOURGEOIS MOVEMENT

The problem that Zionists ran into was that their ideas were marginal within the Jewish community. Jews had been living in their countries for generations and had no interest in moving to a distant and unknown country. In fact, given their status as a particularly oppressed sector of the European working class (which in those decades was massively organizing Marxist socialist unions and parties), the majority of Jewish workers joined or sympathized with the socialist parties or socialist Jewish organizations, and

fought against anti-Semitism and for the unity of the working class against its exploiters.

Some of the most important revolutionary leaders of the time came from Jewish families, such as Rosa Luxemburg and Leon Trotsky (as well as Marx himself, a few decades earlier). From its beginning, the Zionist project was linked to the interests of the Jewish bourgeoisie, not to the millions of Jewish workers who were fighting for their emancipation. The former wanted a State of their own to exploit and plunder with, like the European bourgeoisies, the latter fought for social assimilation in each country and as part of the revolutionary working class that would take power to build socialism.

This is how Lenin explained it in a polemic with the socialist Jewish Labor Party, the Bund: *"Absolutely untenable scientifically, the idea that the Jews form a separate nation is reactionary politically... Hostility towards non-native sections of the population can only be eliminated when the non-native sections of the population cease to be alien and blend with the general mass of the population. That is the only possible solution of the Jewish problem"*<sup>[4]</sup>

## AN IMPERIALIST AND COLONIAL PROJECT

The Zionists knew from the beginning that their only hope for achieving their objective was to gain the support of one of the main imperialist powers that at the time were distributing the world among themselves in a colonialist race. They sought the support of the anti-Semitic monarchs of Germany, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire. But they achieved a qualitative advance when, in 1917, the British government took interest in the prospect of having an unconditional ally in the Middle East, whose existence would depend on its military support.

With the *Balfour Declaration* issued that year, the British government began to support and fund Jewish emigration to Palestine, which was then a British protectorate. However, imperial support was not sufficient to convince the Jewish masses to emigrate to Palestine. Only the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust would achieve this, with the help of the United States and other countries that closed their doors to the millions of Jewish immigrants who sought asylum there before ending up, with no other alternative, in Palestine.



## NAZI COLLABORATORS

The reactionary, racist and colonial nature of the Zionist project reveals itself most starkly in its leaders' dealings with Nazi Germany, where it found a great common objective with Hitler, in the pursuit of which they collaborated: transferring as many Jews as possible from Germany to Palestine.

*“At the time, collaboration meant that major Zionist organizations worked against the global anti-German boycott that had been called to denounce Nazi anti-Semitism. Instead, the World Zionist Organization drew up a ‘Transfer Agreement’ whereby money from German Jews could be sent to Palestine to finance imports to Germany. Meanwhile, in Germany, the Nazis banned all socialist and Jewish resistance organizations and arrested their leaders. But they allowed the Zionists to continue functioning.”<sup>[5]</sup>*

For Zionists, moving Jews to Palestine always stood above the possibility of saving Jewish lives from Nazi concentration camps. In justifying his opposition to a plan for German Jewish children to immigrate to Britain, Ben-Gurion said: *“If I knew that it was possible to save all the children of Germany by transporting them to England, and only half by transferring them to the Land of Israel, I would choose the latter, for before us lies not only the numbers of these children but the historical reckoning of the people of Israel.”<sup>[6]</sup>*

## A COLONIAL, RACIST, GENOCIDAL IMPERIALIST ENCLAVE

Zionism was conceived as an inherently colonial, racist and reactionary project. To achieve its objectives, it would commit genocide, establish an imperialist gendarme enclave and a racist and reactionary State. Understanding this reality and defending it against the Zionists' massive international campaign of organized lies is essential because no solution for Palestine will be possible without completely dismantling that project. No democratic or egalitarian society is possible without replacing the current State of Israel, constituted with that matrix and only capable of serving those objectives, with a single, secular, democratic and socialist Palestine. 🐞

## Solidarity with ISL leader facing Zionist persecution

Around the world, Zionism seeks to silence voices of solidarity with Palestine and criticism of Israel and its genocide. Among other cases, the DAIA (Delegation of Argentine Israeli Associations), which hypocritically equates *anti-Zionism* and *anti-Semitism*, presented a criminal lawsuit against Alejandro Bodart, ISL coordinator and leader of the Argentine MST. Since the court upheld the lawsuit, he will stand trial on February 27, 28 and 29. As part of an international solidarity campaign, we ask human rights organizations, political parties and social organizations from around the world to sign a petition in defense of the democratic freedom of expression and press of comrade Bodart, addressed to the court, at the following QR code. 🐞



- [1] Abraham León was born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1918. He was a leader of the Belgian section of Hashomer Hatzair, the left wing of the Zionist youth movement, with which he later broke, became a Marxist and joined the Belgian section of the IV International. In his work *The Jewish Question*, he analyzed the socio-economic role of Jews throughout history with a Marxist method and formulated the thesis of the people-class. He was captured by the Nazis in June 1944 and deported to the Auschwitz extermination camp, where he died a few months later.
- [2] *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl.*
- [3] It is worth mentioning that before deciding on Palestine, which they evaluated would entail the difficulty of facing resistance from the people established there, the Zionists considered Uganda, Angola and the Argentine Patagonia as options. The movement adopted the religious propaganda of the “promised land” only after deciding, for entirely different reasons, to establish Israel in Palestine.
- [4] *Iskra*, 1903.
- [5] Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators.*
- [6] *Ibid.*

# The COLONIZATION of Palestine

BY RUBEN TZANOFF AND VICENTE GAYNOR



The founding of the State of Israel is hidden behind what may be the greatest campaign of lies ever organized in history. It was the execution of a premeditated plan of ethnic cleansing that was coldly carried out against a defenseless people. The Palestinians call it Nakba, catastrophe. It was genocide.

In 1922, Palestine had a population of almost 760,000 people, 89% of whom were Palestinian Arabs. The Zionist leaders clearly knew that Palestine was not “*a land without a people for a people without a land*” as they said to justify their colonial project.

The first head of state of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, did not hide this: “*There is no room for both peoples together in this country. We shall not achieve our goal of being an independent people with the Arabs in this small country. The only solution is a Palestine, or at least a Western Palestine, without Arabs. And there is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries. To transfer all of them; not one village, not one tribe should be left.*”<sup>1</sup>

A Zionist document of the time, the “*Koenig*

*Report*”<sup>2</sup> foresaw how the “transfer” of Palestinians that Ben-Gurion intended would be carried out: “*We must use terror, assassination, intimidation, land confiscation and the cutting of all social services to rid the Galilee of its Arab population.*”

## THE RACIST “SOCIALISTS”

The colonial project of Zionism was launched long before the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. The first Zionist settlements in Palestine date back to the 19th century, but after the British support they achieved with the *Balfour Declaration* in 1917 the process accelerated considerably. Jewish organizations purchased large tracts of land from absent owners, displacing large numbers of Palestinian farmers. The Zionists also began to build an exclusively Jewish “enclave” economy, organized around the Histadrut, the general confederation of Jewish workers in Palestine. They presented themselves as supporters of labor who were building a socialist cooperative society around the *kibbutz* (agricultural communes), but it was exclusively Jewish. In reality, they functioned as thugs and strikebreakers against Palestinian workers:



“...[they] would picket and stand guard at Jewish orchards to prevent Arab workers from getting jobs. Squads of activists stormed through markets, pouring kerosene on tomatoes grown in Arab gardens or smashing eggs that Jewish housewives might buy from Arab merchants.”<sup>3</sup>

## THE REBELLION OF 1936

In 1936, Palestinian workers launched a general strike against increasing poverty and against the advances of the Zionists and their British associates. The Histadrut organized its workers as strikebreakers, coordinating with British employers to replace Arab strikers with Jewish workers in the port of Haifa and on the Palestinian railways. The general strike lasted six months and the uprising, with ebbs and flows of armed confrontations, strikes and mobilizations, continued for three years. But Zionist and British repression eventually defeated the heroic rebellion, which lacked political leadership and international support. The neighboring Arab governments feared the uprising of the workers that they exploited more than the Zionist offensive.

The intensity of the revolt was due to the fact that the Zionist threat to Palestine was becoming more evident. Between 1931 and 1945, the Jewish population in Palestine increased from 174,000 to 608,000. Thousands of Jews fleeing persecution in central and eastern Europe and rejected by Britain, the United States and other Western countries ended up in Palestine. Although Jews represented only a third of the population of Palestine on the eve of the declaration of statehood in 1948, they were a powerful and well-armed minority. As the Jewish population increased, so did Zionist provocations against the Palestinians.

## IMPERIALIST GENDARME

After World War II, the United States emerged as the largest imperialist power and Zionism recognized the necessity of changing its major partner. Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion put it clearly: “*For my part, I had no doubt that the center of gravity of our forces had to shift from the United Kingdom to the United States, which was on its way to securing the leading position in the world...*”<sup>4</sup>

The Zionists would take decades to “earn” the unconditional support of Yankee imperialism,

but they did achieve a crucial gain in the postwar period: the United States adopted the cause of the founding of the State of Israel, agreed on the matter with the USSR at the Yalta and Potsdam summits and led the effort to get it approved at the United Nations.

## THE LESSER KNOWN AND CRUCIAL SOVIET SUPPORT

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly approved Resolution 181, which sanctioned the Partition Plan for Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab State, endorsing the sending of European Jewish settlers as a *fait accompli*. Zionism achieved its objective with the support of US imperialism, the UN and the USSR. The significance of that Soviet support is hardly known today, but the founding of Israel in 1948 would have been impossible without it.

The Palestine Communist Party (PCP), which had been founded in 1924 with the help of the Communist International, fought to unite Arab and Jewish workers and build a socialist Palestine. However, the PCP became bureaucratized along with the rest of the International after the rise of Stalin. Its orientation was based on the needs of Russian foreign policy and the strategy of building “popular fronts” with national bourgeoisies.

In 1943, the PCP split along national lines. The Jewish members, accusing the party leadership of having an “ultranationalist” policy linked to the Arab bourgeoisie, reoriented the party towards accepting the Zionist idea that the Jewish community of Palestine constituted a *national group* with the right to self-determination. The abandonment of the struggle for a single, socialist Palestine led the majority of Arab cadres to abandon the party and found the National Liberation League (NLL). When the Soviet Union announced its support for the formation of Israel, the PCP, which until then had opposed partition, followed suit and its militants joined the Zionist militias in fighting against the Arab resistance. The NLL, for its part, fell apart, with some leaders supporting the partition and others opposing it.

On May 14, 1948, when the last British soldier left Palestine, Ben-Gurion and the Jewish military declared the creation of the State of Israel in Tel Aviv. Three days later, the USSR became

the first State in the world to recognize Israel diplomatically. In December 1948, the USSR voted against UN Resolution 191, which proposed the *right of return* of Palestinian refugees. The following year it militarily supported Israel in its war of colonial conquest, sending weapons via Czechoslovakia. In stark contrast, the Trotskyist Fourth International and its Palestinian group rejected partition, imperialist intervention and the Israeli State.

As public as the Zionist quest for American support was, Stalin was convinced that he was disputing the role of overseer of the unconditional gendarme that Israel intended to be. Only in 1950, with Israel's alignment with the Western camp becoming clearer and seeing greater opportunities among the Arabs, did Stalin suddenly withdraw his public political support for the State of Israel, although he would always maintain a deep level of collaboration.

## THE NAKBA

The systematic plan for the mass expulsion of the Arab population from Palestine and its replacement by Jewish settlers was put into action immediately after the approval of the UN Partition Plan in November 1947.

Zionist military forces and terrorist militias launched a large-scale military offensive against an unarmed and defenseless population. They devastated hundreds of villages. They massacred Palestinians including children, women and the elderly in village after village to impose terror and generate a mass panicked exodus.

The accounts describe their methods. In Khisas *"Jewish soldiers attacked the village on December 18, 1947, and began blowing up random houses in the middle of the night while their occupants were still deep in their slumber. Fifteen villagers, five of them children, died during the attack."*<sup>5</sup> In 1948, their actions became more offensive, in order to conquer and "cleanse" all of Palestine.

To do this, they designed Plan Dalet or Plan D, prepared and executed by Ben-Gurion and his clandestine advisory committee, which established: *"These operations can be divided into the following categories: -Destruction of villages (setting fire to, blowing up and planting mines in the debris), especially those population centers which are difficult to control continuously. -Mounting*

*combing and control operations according to the following guidelines: encirclement of the village and conducting a search inside it. In the event of resistance, the armed force must be wiped out and the population must be expelled outside the borders of the State."*<sup>6</sup>

Each brigade received a list of the villages or neighborhoods to occupy, destroy and empty, and the dates for each attack. Plan D was executed between April and May 1948. The rural villages of the Jerusalem mountains were taken as a model: *"the main objective of the operation is the destruction of Arab villages... [and] the expulsion of the villagers so that they become an economic burden for the Arab forces"*<sup>7</sup>. According to official propaganda, the villages would have the option of surrendering, but that was not the case.

One of the worst massacres was carried out in Deir Yassin. The soldiers arrived at the village, machine-gunned the inhabitants, rounded up the survivors, killed them in cold blood and raped some women before killing them. There were 170 deaths, including 30 babies. Survivor Fahim Zaydan, then 12 years old, remembers: *"They led us one after the other; they shot an old man and when one of his daughters screamed, they shot her too. Then they called my brother Muhammad, and shot him in front of us, and when my mother, who was carrying my sister Hudra in her arms, as she was still breastfeeding, threw herself on him crying, they shot her too."*

The cities were victims of the same fate as the villages. In fact, the operatives first attacked the surrounding villages and then headed to the nearest urban center. After being evicted, homes were looted and demolished or occupied by settlers. In his *Diary*, Ben-Gurion describes the Zionist offensive: *"When I go to Jerusalem now, I feel like I am in a Jewish city (Ivrit). This is a feeling I previously only had in Tel Aviv or on an agricultural farm. It is true that not all of Jerusalem is Jewish, but it already has a huge Jewish block: when you enter the city through Lifta and Roma, through Mahaneh Yehuda, King George Street and Mea Shearim you do not see Arabs. 100% are Jews... In many of the Arab neighborhoods in the west it is not possible to find even one Arab... If we persist it is quite possible that in the next six or eight months there will be considerable changes in the country, and for our benefit. Without a doubt, the changes in the demographic composition of the country will be notable."*<sup>8</sup>



## THE “WAR OF INDEPENDENCE” AND THE BETRAYAL OF THE KINGS

For five long months after the UN approved the partition of Palestine and Zionist forces launched their genocidal assault on the defenseless population, Arab governments did nothing but issue statements. While the Palestinian resistance, weakened by the defeat of the 1936-9 uprising, dispersed, unarmed and lacking leadership, was exterminated, while massacres were committed in village after village, these reactionary governments speculated and negotiated.

Only on May 14, 1948, with the proclamation of the State of Israel (and realizing that the Zionists were advancing on much more of their territory than the UN had provided for), did they feel compelled to intervene. The following day, they went to war against Israel, first Transjordan, then Egypt and to a lesser extent other Arab countries. Even then, they did so with minimal commitment, mobilizing less than 25,000 soldiers among them, against a much better equipped Israeli force of between 60,000 and 70,000 soldiers.

The weak facade of a military intervention foreshadowed the betrayal that was already being prepared with the secret agreement that King Abdullah of Transjordan negotiated with the Israeli government. They divided up Palestine in the same way that the Europeans had divided up the Middle East 30 years earlier. Abdullah accepted that the State of Israel extended its area beyond what was granted by the UN partition and annexed the West Bank for himself. King Farouk of Egypt betrayed the Palestinian people for even less. He entered the pact in exchange for keeping control of a reduced Gaza Strip.

This betrayal by those who presented themselves as the “representatives of the Arab nation” would be the first of many that would confirm time and again that class interests always prevail over nationalities. The Arab bourgeoisie is a junior partner of imperialism in the colonial and semi-colonial plundering of their lands and people. For them, the Palestinian people are nothing more than an asset, a bargaining chip, while Israel is simply another capitalist State, with which it may be more or less convenient to compete or collaborate with in capitalist business.



## ETHNIC CLEANSING

The State of Israel was founded through a conscious and deliberate plan of *ethnic cleansing*, a crime against humanity. The Zionists destroyed 531 villages and 11 Palestinian neighborhoods. More than 750,000 people were expelled from their homes and forced to migrate. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), there were 5.4 million registered Palestinian refugees in 2020. Most residents of Gaza and the West Bank are internally displaced. There are Palestinian camps in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, where refugees live in miserable conditions, and there are also numerous refugees in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria and Iraq.

Despite current Zionist propaganda denying this atrocious fact, the founders of Zionism themselves never hid it.

Theodore Herzl described the general outline of that plan in his *Diary*: “When we occupy the land... we will gradually expropriate private property in the States assigned to us. We will try to discourage the poor population by moving them beyond the border, finding employment for them in the intermediate countries and denying them any employment in our country. Both the process of expropriation and elimination of the poor must be carried out discreetly and with circumspection.”<sup>9</sup>

## THE PALESTINIAN KEYS

In November and December 1948 the *ethnic cleansing* continued in Galilee, with “sweeping operations” against the villages that had not yet been evicted, using a repressive method that still persists in Gaza and the West Bank: the raid. Is-

Changes in the distribution of territory between Palestine and Israel



raeli troops close off a village or city, break into houses, select “suspicious” people and transfer them to a special operations center or a prison camp to use them as labor, in inhumane conditions. Then they demolish the “terrorist’s” family home.

Zionism also implemented an efficient policy to prevent the repatriation of Palestinians: it accelerated demolitions, installed new Jewish settlements and planted forests on land where there had been villages. Its diplomatic offensive helped to hide this and avoid all international pressure for the return of the refugees.

After the 1948 war, Israel adopted regulations to legalize dispossession in response to foreign criticism and requests for the return of refugees. According to the *absentee property law*, the property of any Arab who was not present is considered abandoned and the colonizers become its owners. Beyond the law, those who dared to return even to recover some items, were murdered in cold blood. At the same time, the *law of return* granted any Jew in the world the right to “return” to Israel as a citizen. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians still have the keys to their homes, which have become a symbol of their struggle and persistence.

## CONTINUOUS COLONIZATION AND RESISTANCE

The Arabs who remained within the limits of the State of Israel still represent 20% of the population. Although they are Israeli citizens, they are second-class citizens, permanently oppressed

and humiliated. Laws were established placing Arabs under the conditions of a military government, enabling the government to expel them, confiscate their property, search their homes, limit their movement, impose labor restrictions, imprison them, deport them, stripping them of their most basic democratic freedoms. UN reports indicate that repression is not only used “in exceptional circumstances”, but “has arbitrarily become a definitive norm of conduct or policy”<sup>10</sup>.

In 1948, the Zionists occupied 78% of Palestine although the UN had granted them 54%. This would only continue with a systematic plan of expansion over the years. Maps speak clearer than words. So document events. Both the Zionist genocide and the resistance of the heroic palestinian people have continued throughout these 75 years and continue today. There is no doubt about which side of that struggle we are on. 🇵🇸

1. Quoted in Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*
2. *The hidden history of Zionism*. Ralph Schoenman
3. John Rose, *Israel: The Hijack State*
4. “Israel. Historia de una Colonización”, in *Revista América* No. 12, Edit. Pen (Buenos Aires: 1973-74), p. 24.
5. In Pappé, Ilan; *The ethnic cleansing of Palestine* Edit Criticism (Barcelona 2008), p. 89..
6. *Ibid*, p. 120.
7. *Ibid*, p. 128.
8. *Ibid*, p. 103.
9. <https://rebelion.org/israel-y-los-derechos-humanos-in-termitentes>
10. *Ibid* endnote 4, p. 29.





# From the NAKBA to OSLO

BY CELE FIERRO

**After the founding of Israel and the war of colonial expansion in 1948-1949, which the Arabs call the Nakba, or catastrophe, the Zionist State kept 78% of Palestinian territory. It expelled 85% of the population, most of which ended up in permanent refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Some 156,000 Palestinians remained within Israel's borders, as second-class citizens. Of the Palestinian territories that Israel did not usurp, Gaza came under Egyptian control and the West Bank was annexed by Jordan.**

The Zionist colonization of Palestine continued after the Nakba. Between 1948 and 1967, lands belonging to Palestinian Arabs continued to be expropriated and handed over to Zionist settlers. But the priority of the Israeli State at the time was to ensure the imperialist patronage it needed to ensure its colonial enclave's perma-

nence. The rise of Arab nationalism gave it an opportunity that it would not pass up.

The rise to power of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt in 1952 neared France, which was then waging its own colonial war in Algeria and had Arab nationalism as a common enemy with Israel. France became the main arms supplier to Israel, which, in return, supported French colonialism in Algeria and Vietnam.

In an attempt to provoke Western intervention against Nasser and expand its imperialist support, Israeli spies detonated bombs at the American and British embassies in Egypt in 1954. The plot failed and Egyptian authorities arrested, tried, and executed the Israeli agents the following year. In response, Israel attacked Gaza, then under Egyptian rule, killing 37 people.

When Nasser nationalized the Anglo-French Suez Canal Company in 1956, Israel saw a new opportunity. It joined France and the United Kingdom's invasion of Egypt, quickly occupying the entire Sinai Peninsula and declaring its intention to annex it.

In the Suez War, Israel managed to demonstrate its military prowess and usefulness as a local gendarme, but to the wrong imperialist boss. France and the UK were exhausted as colonial powers. The United States was not amused by their clumsy attempt at a comeback and decidedly thwarted it, forcing them to withdraw without recovering the canal. Israel was also clearly instructed to withdraw from its conquests, which Prime Minister Ben Gurion had hastened to declare “*part of the Third Kingdom of Israel.*”



The Zionists nonetheless achieved significant gains. In the secret Sèvres negotiations, where the resolution of the conflict was agreed, Israel obtained from Egypt the commitment to stop financing the Palestinian guerrillas and from France the promise to build a nuclear reactor in Israel and to supply it with fissile material. This eventually allowed Israel to become the world's fifth nuclear power.

Though not yet decisively, Israel did make progress in courting US imperialism. A 1958 National Security Council also stated that Washington should “*support Israel as the only strong pro-Western power left in the Middle East.*” But the Zionist state would consolidate its status as the privileged ally in the region, above the Shah of Iran, Turkey and the Persian Gulf monarchies, with the Six-Day War in 1967.

## THE SIX-DAY WAR

Aiming to strangle Nasserism and conquer the parts of Palestine that it had failed to take in 1948, Israel carried out a series of provocations

over a few months before attacking Egypt, Syria and Jordan in June 1967. In six days, Israel crushed the military forces of the three countries. It seized the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt.

The Israel Defense Forces perpetrated a new Nakba by expelling another 325,000 Palestinians from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, mostly to Jordan. In the West Bank, 55% of the land and 70% of the water were confiscated for the benefit of Jewish settlers, who made up only a small fraction of the population. In Gaza, 2,200 settlers were given more than 40% of the land, while half a million Palestinians were confined to overcrowded camps and slums.

Unlike 1956, this time Israel made sure to obtain prior US approval for its attack on Egypt and Syria. This provided it with a formidable propaganda apparatus to present itself to the world as a “victim,” as a small, weak country threatened with extermination by more powerful neighbors who wanted to “*throw all the Jews into the sea.*” So far was this from the truth that it took Israel less than a week to crush its “powerful” neighbors.

Israel's devastating blitzkrieg finally established it as the indispensable and privileged imperialist enclave in the Middle East. Since then, it has enjoyed the unconditional political, military and economic support of the United States and has done the dirty work of Yankee imperialism in the Middle East and many other corners of the world.

The Six-Day War completely reconfigured Palestine. From 1948 until then, the Palestinian territories were under the control of neighboring Arab countries, the West Bank and East Jerusalem under Jordanian rule, and Gaza under Egyptian administration. After the war, all Palestinian territories came under Israeli military occupation. This also modified the character of the Palestinian resistance, both in the consequences of life under the direct oppression of Zionist occupation and in the verification of the Arab regimes' complete incompetence and lack of interest in the struggle for the liberation of Palestine.

## THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE PLO

The Palestinian liberation movement Fatah was founded in 1958 and adopted a policy of guerrilla armed struggle inspired by the expe-



rience of Algeria's war of independence against France. After Israel's victory against the Arab countries in 1967, Fatah became an attractive alternative to carry out the struggle. Its popularity and growth took another qualitative leap after the 1968 Battle of Karameh, where poorly equipped Palestinian guerrillas repelled an attack by the Israel Defense Forces near the Jordanian city.

The prestige it gained there allowed Fatah the following year to take control of the PLO, an organization that the Arab governments had founded in 1964 to divert growing Palestinian radicalism that was threatening the internal stability of several of these countries. Fatah turned the PLO into a dynamic mass organization and achieved, through it, greater legitimacy as representative of the Palestinian people.

Under the leadership of Fatah, the PLO continued to identify Palestine as the "*indivisible territorial unit*" within the borders of the British Mandate prior to Israel. Furthermore, it maintained that "*armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine*" and that Palestinians "*reject all solutions which do not postulate the total liberation of Palestine*".<sup>[1]</sup> Fatah's ideology attracted Palestinians who wanted to fight, not continue waiting for results from the diplomacy of the Arab regimes. However, Fatah did not transcend the limits of class conciliation, maintaining that any class differences between Palestinians must be put aside to wage a successful struggle.

This limitation, also expressed in the PLO's relationship with the Arab regimes, locked the organization in a contradictory strategy from which it would never escape. The PLO's international prestige depended largely on the diplomacy of these regimes, who secured the PLO's observer status at the United Nations and allowed Fatah's top leader, Yasser Arafat, to speak at the General Assembly in 1974. The significant flow of money into Fatah's coffers from these regimes also made the PLO increasingly dependent on them. But the more Fatah grew, the more it came into conflict with these regimes: "*Because they acquired a great deal of arms and began rapidly to organize themselves into political and military groupings, and of course because this always took place not in Palestine, but in a fraternal Arab state, the new*

*militant Palestinian appeared to be a challenge to the central state authority.*"<sup>[2]</sup>

By the late 1960s, the PLO had established itself as the leading political and military force in Jordan, eclipsing the hated regime of King Hussein. It had the political support of the Palestinian refugees, who made up 70% of the Jordanian population. Still, time and again, Arafat rejected calls from Palestinian activists, and even some Jordanian army officers, to depose the king and replace his regime with a democratic one. The PLO's hesitation proved costly. In September 1970, King Hussein used the crisis over plane hijackings by Palestinian leftists as a pretext to launch an all-out military attack against the PLO. Arafat once again refused to enter into confrontation with the king's regime, fearing that it could generate political instability in the region and endanger support for the PLO from other Arab dictators. The PLO's passive resistance allowed the king's army to massacre hundreds of Palestinian activists while subjecting the refugee population to a reign of terror.



In the end, Arafat agreed to transfer PLO institutions and militias from Jordan to Lebanon. Fatah's inability and unwillingness to confront the reactionary capitalist Arab regimes that were hated by their people allowed one of the region's weakest countries -whose population was mostly Palestinian- to expel the PLO at the same time it could have taken power.

During the 1970s, the PLO began to move away from its historical position for the liberation of all of Palestine and, in practice, came to accept the idea of a Palestinian mini-state in Gaza and the West Bank.



## THE YOM KIPPUR WAR AND THE INVASION OF LEBANON

In 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel, not to advance the liberation of Palestine but to recover the territories they had lost in 1967. The Arab-Israeli war of 1973, also known as the Yom Kippur War, allowed Egypt to recover the peninsula of Sinai. In exchange, it betrayed the Palestinians by *normalizing* its relations with Israel and becoming the first Arab state to recognize it at the Camp David agreements led by the United States.

During the negotiations, the Arab regimes, eager to establish closer relations with the United States, pressured the PLO to abandon its radical goals. “*Fatah accepted, abandoning its main goal (the liberation of all of Palestine) in favor of the mini-state perspective that the United States would pressure Israel into conceding.*”<sup>[3]</sup>

In fact, in 1974, Arafat officially called for a *two-state* solution and accepted the UN resolutions that divided Palestine. In a famous speech to the General Assembly, Arafat offered Israel a “historic compromise,” as he waved a gun in one hand and an olive branch in the other, essentially recognizing the State of Israel.

In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon with the aim of definitively breaking the PLO, with a criminal toll of between thirty and forty thousand Palestinians and Lebanese killed, one hundred thousand seriously injured and half a million left homeless.

With the city of Beirut surrounded and besieged, an agreement was negotiated between the United States, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and Arafat, for a multinational force to guarantee 8,300 PLO fighters safe passage from Beirut to Tunisia.

## INTIFADAS

In 1987, a new local Palestinian leadership in the Occupied Territories began the first intifada (*uprising*, in Arabic) in response to the worsening economic and political conditions of the Palestinian people. The protests were heroic and they captured international media attention, showing the world the systematic colonization of Palestine.

At the time, Arafat was practically irrelevant in Tunisia, as local activists and politicians led the fight on the ground. However, the intifada was contagious, and the protests spread to Algeria and Egypt, where they represented a threat to the regimes of those countries. So Arafat was called upon to help dismantle the intifada, negotiating in secret with the United States and Israel while using his credibility to convince Palestinians that he was negotiating a *final solution* for Palestine. Of course, he only achieved another great disappointment for the Palestinian people.

The PLO completed its evolution toward peaceful coexistence with Israel at the nineteenth meeting of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) in 1988, where Arafat issued a Palestinian *Declaration of Independence*. Meeting while the intifada confronted Israeli troops in the Occupied Territories, the CNP recognized Israel, endorsed the 1947 UN resolution that divided Palestine, proposed that the independent Palestinian state be located in the West Bank and Gaza (barely 23% of Palestine before 1947), renounced “terrorism”, that is, armed struggle, and supported diplomacy to achieve a mini-State.

These significant concessions paved the way to Oslo, the agreements that the United States led in the Norwegian capital in 1993 between Israel and the PLO, which led to the definitive recognition of the prior by the latter. In effect, Oslo ended the popular intifada that began in 1987 and sealed the bankruptcy of Fatah and the PLO as the genuine leadership of the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. 🇵🇸

[1] Palestinian National Charter, revised in 1968.

[2] Said, Edward; *The Question of Palestine*, Ed. Romanyá Valls S.A. (Barcelona: October 2013), p. 220.

[3] Marshall, Phil; *Intifada: Zionism, imperialism and Palestinian resistance*, Red Flag Books (Victoria: 2019), 1st ed. 1989.





# From Oslo to today, WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

BY ALEJANDRO BODART

**“We are the people of light, they are the people of darkness—and the light will prevail over the darkness. With shared forces and a profound belief in justice, a profound belief in the eternity of the Jewish people. We shall realize the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘Violence shall no more be heard in your land, desolation nor destruction within your borders!’”**

This is what Netanyahu said on TV at the end of October this year, while announcing a new attack on Gaza. Days before, he had tweeted a similar message, which he later deleted: *“This is a struggle between the children of light and the children of darkness, between humanity and the law of the jungle.”* Appealing to such rhetoric in the XXI century takes us back to sinister times and regimes. It shamelessly

expresses the alleged national, racial and/or religious superiority of a *chosen people*, who are *luminous, eternal and human*, in contrast to an oppressed and inferior people, who are instead dark and savage thieves.

With nothing to envy of the supremacism of German Nazism or South African *apartheid*, Netanyahu’s message is the ideological, moral and even celestial justification of the anti-Palestinian genocide that the State of Israel has committed since its beginnings. He had already recognized his will to annihilate last September, at the UN assembly, while showing his map of the “new Middle East” with an extended Israel and no Palestine. He literally erases it from the map.

## THE BETRAYAL OF THE PLO, THE RISE OF HAMAS

The PLO emerged in 1964 as a nationalist front with an armed wing, with support from

Egypt. It proposed defeating Israel and replacing it with a secular and democratic Palestine in the entirety of the former territory. As the majority-backed Palestinian leadership, it maintained that correct slogan, which we supported, for almost a decade. But from 1973, when Egypt recognized Israel, the leadership of the PLO began to adapt, lower its program and accept the Zionist State. This capitulation also led to them increasingly containing or repressing popular struggles, generating more discontent among their base.

The intifadas, started in 1987 by rebellious Palestinian youths against constant Zionist attacks, overpowered Fatah's bureaucratic apparatus. In this process of radicalization, the



jihadist organization Hamas gained strength maintaining the founding slogan abandoned by the PLO: destroy that oppressive and terrorist State called Israel.

Pressed by the intifada on one side and the Zionist State on the other, the PLO committed a historic betrayal in 1993 by signing, under American tutelage, the Oslo Accords. According to that pact, the PLO recognized the State of Israel and accepted a supposed Palestinian “provisional government” in Gaza and the West Bank, two areas isolated from each other. But this government was never established as such. The Gaza Strip is an actual open-air prison, and the West Bank is fragmented by 175 Israeli checkpoints and more than 250 illegal Zionist colonies.<sup>[1]</sup>

## “TWO STATES”, ONE FAILURE

The Oslo Accords led to a new jump in the PLO's discredit and a growing strengthening of Hamas. The Palestinian leadership's acceptance of the misleading *two-state* policy did not appease the conflict. In subsequent years, clashes between the Israeli offensive and the Palestinian resistance continued.

While negotiations stalled, Palestinian youth began a second rebellion against Israel in 2000: the *Al-Aqsa intifada*, sparked by a Zionist provocation at the sacred Al-Aqsa mosque. The death toll was 5,000 Palestinians and a thousand Israelis. It had a significant impact worldwide. In 2002, Israel began walling off the West Bank. The rebellion lasted until 2004, when Israel withdrew some settlers from Gaza but maintained control of its airspace and coastline.

The *third intifada* occurred between 2008 and early 2009. Hamas attacks caused 11 military deaths and three civilian deaths, while the Israeli bombing in response caused 1,300 Palestinian deaths and more than 5,000 injuries, in addition to destroying numerous residential buildings and infrastructure. In 2014, there were new clashes in Gaza.

In 2011, strong protests against price increases arose within Israel, which spread through social networks. It was called the *cottage cheese boycott*, a very popular food. Some 400,000 people demonstrated in Tel Aviv. The debate reached parliament and the three dairy firms had to lower their prices.

At the end of 2017, when Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as the Israeli capital and moved the US embassy there, a new intifada broke out, the fourth one, called the *Day of Rage*. Israel had already annexed the city to its jurisdiction in 1980. The Zionist repression resulted in several Palestinian deaths in Gaza and Ramallah.

In 2018, Israel toughened one of its basic laws, of constitutional rank, defining the country as the *national State of the Jewish people*, on the basis of the lie of equating *religion* and *nation*. The reform made Hebrew Israel's *only official language*, removing Arabic. It limited the right to self-determination, recognizing it *only* for Jews. It provided further protection to illegal Zionist settlements, considering them



to be of *national interest*. And it designated *all* of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, violating the UN resolution that established the city be shared with Palestine.

This permanent supremacism is in the DNA of Zionism. Just as Israel began its violent expansionism in 1947, even before emerging as a State, after it was founded, it continued its attack and usurped parts of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, some of which it retains to this day. Most of these military operations have been condemned by UN resolutions, which Israel violates without receiving any sanction.

## WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

The Israeli policy of *apartheid* and colonialism that has carried on for 75 years, and is evident in a simple look at Israel's expansion and Palestine's retreat on a map, demonstrates the resounding failure of the *two-state* fallacy, which is still repeated by G20 countries, Lula da Silva, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Bernie Sanders and their respective parties.

Just as it is impossible to live with a serial killer as a neighbor, there is no possible peace between an oppressive State and the people who are oppressed by it. By its very nature of

origin, Israel is a genocidal state. If it is not defeated and dismantled definitively, it will not leave a single Palestinian alive on Earth.

It should be noted that neither Russia nor China, which some consider "progressive", have shown solidarity with the Palestinian struggle.

There are sectors of the PLO-Fatah and the Palestinian Authority that accept with resignation an *Israel with equal rights for Palestinians* as a "solution." In turn, the UN, many bourgeois governments and political currents, the Socialist Party, Communist Party and other reformists around the world continue to insist on the old and failed formula of *two neighboring states*. On the left, there are some currents that even propose *two socialist states*, capitulating to the existence of Israel by another path. However, would it be possible to achieve a *free and democratic Palestine* or a *secular binational State* within the framework of capitalism? Or, as we believe, does this national liberation struggle, which has to face the presence of imperialist troops and Arab bourgeois armies to survive, require a dynamic of socialist revolution? Furthermore, in what Middle Eastern context is a definitive solution for Palestine possible?





## FOR A SINGLE, SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC, NON-RACIST AND SOCIALIST PALESTINE

In so far as the PLO maintained, over almost three decades, the struggle against the State of Israel in favor of a secular and democratic Palestine as the axis of its political program, it was appropriate for revolutionary socialist currents to support that objective, certainly always conceived as a transition towards socialism in the country and the region.

It was also correct to maintain that banner for some time after the PLO abandoned it, since it was a demand deeply felt by the Palestinian people. However, the passage of time has modified the political panorama, making it incorrect for Marxist revolutionaries to continue repeating the same thing as 30 years ago, under very different situations, as the Trotskyist currents of the UIT, the IST and the LIT mistakenly do.<sup>[2]</sup>

Since the Oslo Accords in 1993, the PLO finally capitulated to Israel, recognized it and, even though it cannot say it out loud now, given the Zionist massacre, it even backed away from the fictitious *two-states* solution and some sectors accept the minimum alms of an Israel with equal rights for Palestinians. The USFI proposes the same thing: “Our goal is a political solution that puts an end to colonization and guarantees the right of return of those expelled and equal rights of people of all origins on the land.”<sup>[3]</sup>

A hybrid variant between the policy of *two*

*States*, one Jewish and the other Palestinian, and the policy of one State with equal rights for all is that of *one binational secular and democratic State* proposed by the Israeli CP (Maki) and some center-left intellectuals. It is mistaken, because it attributes a *national* entity to what is actually essentially a *religious and inserted* community, in this case the Jewish one. In a more radical line, some sectors of European Trotskyism, like the ISA, propose *two socialist States*<sup>[4]</sup> or a *binational socialist State*, ambiguities that fail to point out the need to put an end to the State of Israel. These positions also hide a strong pessimism, since they consider the Palestinian people’s struggle to recover their territory and build their State a lost cause, something that recent events have succeeded in refuting.

Meanwhile, Hamas still maintains its struggle against the State of Israel and does not recognize it, but we have irreconcilable differences with their strategy. Their political project is to replace Israel with a capitalist and just as theocratic Palestinian national state, governed under Islamic law or *Sharia*, which we believe is reactionary. This is confirmed by Islamic fundamentalist states and regimes like Iran and Qatar, whose governments exploit the Palestinian conflict for their political interests while repressing their own working class and oppressing women, LGBT+ people and other minorities. Furthermore, part of the Hamas leadership recognizes the borders that existed before the 1967 war,



which would *de facto* imply *two States*, a plan that has long failed.

This being the case, and because, for some time now, there has been no Palestinian organization with mass influence that raises the historic slogan, building a revolutionary socialist leadership implies a strategic political dispute with those projects that we understand to be mistaken. That is why our ultimate solution is the struggle *for a single, secular, democratic, non-racist and socialist Palestine*, as a factor of revolutionary change throughout the Middle East. To summarize the content of this slogan:

- **Single**, because it is necessary to recover the original Palestinian territory as a whole that existed before 1948, when Israel was founded on the basis of usurpation, forced exodus and massacre. This and none other is the authentic meaning of the popular expression *from the river to the sea*, that is, all of Palestine from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Secular**, because it would bring no real progress to replace the current Jewish theocratic State that is Israel with another equally theocratic one, but of Islamic confession. Every State must respect freedom of religion, but be totally secular and without coercion or privileges in favor of any religion.
- **Democratic**, because Palestine must not establish another totalitarian or authoritarian State or regime, but rather a fully democratic one. For example, a representative republic or, much better, through the organizations of popular self-determination, that is, of the *dual power* that could arise from a revolutionary liberation movement.
- **Non racist**, implicit if it is democratic, but to highlight that the new Palestine to be built must exclude all forms of supremacism or discrimination of the majority against any other religious or linguistic community or minority. In order to win over non-Zionist Israeli workers and youths to this political solution, it is an express guarantee that the new Palestinian State will provide full equality of rights for everyone who lives there.
- **Socialist**, because, as we have pointed out in previous texts, *“the consistent struggle for Palestinian national liberation initially includes the link with the struggles of the Arab masses in the region and anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and socialist tasks. There are no separate stages between national liberation against the oppressor and*

*social liberation, of class, against the exploiters. For example, a revolutionary government will have to dismantle the Zionist State of Israel and its entire repressive apparatus; recover and expropriate land to guarantee housing for any returning resident or refugee; recover and expropriate lands to ensure that every peasant can cultivate and produce; nationalize under social control every imperialist or Zionist company and bank; democratically plan the entire economy at the service and under the control of the working people...*



*“A Palestine that recovers all the territory before 1948, that is secular, non-racist and democratic, will not be achieved within the framework of capitalism, but rather in a break with it and as part of a local and regional socialist revolution.”*<sup>[5]</sup>

At the same time, the question of the human right of refugees to return to their original land in Palestine demonstrates the strategic need to unify the Palestinian-Arab masses of the region in the same process of struggle.<sup>[6]</sup> Apart from those who live in Gaza and the West Bank under permanent Zionist aggression, there are dozens of other Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan (10 camps, with 2,000,000 people), Syria (12,





with 550,000), Lebanon (12, with 470,000) and other countries. 20% of the Israeli population is also Arab or of mixed origin, who call themselves *Palestinians in Israel* and are second or third category citizens under that State, now harassed even more by Zionism.

This essential Palestinian-Arab regional unity, whose goal must be to overcome and tear down the artificial borders imposed by the imperialist partition, entails a political struggle against the Arab capitalist governments, which, in general, are more or less explicitly allies of Israel, the United States or other imperialist powers. We are referring - among others - to the monarchies of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the governments of Egypt and Sudan. All of them now call *normalization* their complicit recognition of the oppres-

sive Israeli state and the reestablishment of their relations with it.

In summary, *“Palestine can only move towards emancipatory and revolutionary change as part of the push for socialist revolution throughout the Middle East, with the strategy of building a free federation of socialist republics there. As confirmed by the wave of contagion during the first and second Arab Spring, the communicating vessels are many. What is needed is a revolutionary leadership so that these popular rebellions do not stagnate and retreat, but rather advance towards the true and definitive Arab Spring: a socialist Palestine and Middle East.”*<sup>[7]</sup> 🌟



[1] The West Bank is subdivided into three areas: A, with only Palestinian control; B, with Israeli military and Palestinian civilian control, and 60% is area C, under exclusive Israeli control.

[2] Unidad Internacional de los Trabajadores (International Workers' Unity), International Socialist Tendency and Liga Internacional de los Trabajadores (International Workers' League).

[3] At <https://fourth.international/es/566/asia/546>.

[4] International Socialist Alternative: <https://international-socialist.net/en/2023/11/middle-east-2>

[5] <https://lis-isl.org/en/2023/10/26/unica-laica-no-racista-democratica-y-socialista-palestina-cual-es-la-salida-de-fondo/>

[6] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in its article 13, establishes the right to move freely, reside in another country, leave one's own country and return to it. Israel does not recognize that right of the Palestinians.

[7] <https://lis-isl.org/en/2023/10/26/unica-laica-no-racista-democratica-y-socialista-palestina-cual-es-la-salida-de-fondo/>



# The I ISL PAN-AFRICAN Congress

Between August 28 and September 1, 2023, the I ISL Pan-African Congress was held in Kenya. It was organized by the coordination of the International and its section in Kenya, the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL), which hosted the event. Representatives of organizations from 14 African countries participated, in addition to Haiti and Brazil, and comrades of the ISL coordination from Argentina and Pakistan.

All the African delegates who participated are young activists from socialist, student or feminist organizations, revealing the widespread eagerness that exists among the African youth to organize to fight to transform their reality. They are part of the generation that was inspired by the Arab Spring that shook the continent and beyond last decade. They see how their countries' immense wealth is plundered by imperialism and a few local capitalists, they have seen that it is possible to take down the tyrants and they want to organize to do so.

A central debate at the Congress was the rebellion against French imperialism that has led to coups in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in recent months. A high level of agreement was reached around the need to support the masses' anti-imperialist rise, without giving political support to the capitalist military leaders and warning about the danger of replacing one master with another by ousting France but opening the door to Russia or China.

Another central discussion was about gender issues, particularly the grave and widespread violence suffered by women in Africa. The Congress resolved to promote various ongoing campaigns and struggles and to coordinate international campaigns with the ISL Gender Commission. It was also resolved to



extend the Hunger Revolution campaign that the RSL carries out in Kenya and the struggle against imperialist military bases and plundering across the continent.

The congress was a great step forward for revolutionary organization in the continent and a starting point to move forward. We have since begun a process of coordination and common action with the ISL to advance together. At the same time, the impact of the event has also led several other organizations that we had no previous contact with, to approach the ISL.

Everything indicates that there is an enormous space for building revolutionary organizations in Africa with thousands of young people, if we are willing to build a tool with healthy and democratic methods, based on a program with clear principles and joint action in the struggle for a socialist world. This is what the ISL has been doing and what we intend to do in Africa as in the rest of the world.

On the following page is the Manifesto adopted by the I Pan-African Congress of the ISL. 🐜

# MANIFESTO

## of the First Pan-African Congress of the ISL



Africa is one of the richest continents, yet concentrates the extreme levels of poverty and inequality in the world. The plundering of our lands and the genocide of our peoples perpetrated by colonial and imperialist capitalism did not end with the formal independence achieved in the last century. Multinational corporations and a handful of local capitalists (the “comprador bourgeoisie”) own our best lands, extract our resources, exploit our working masses and plunge our people into poverty and hunger. African governments are accomplices in the plunder, they are associates of the imperialists in the theft of our resources and labor power, they implement the policies that facilitate that theft and plunder, and they repress our peoples to keep them oppressed and exploited.

Imperialist states and their multinational organizations manage our economies, promote coups d'état and civil wars, and even invade and massacre us directly, to ensure their looting. When many Africans, pushed by the result of these policies, seek a way out by migrating, they receive us with discrimination, repression and violence. Thousands of lives are lost simply attempting to seek a better future for our children.

Despite winning formal independence from colonial powers in the mid-twentieth century, many African countries have faced substantial hurdles in establishing full sovereignty and self-determination. Most gained their “independence” a few decades ago and are still tight in the jaws of their former colonial masters.

Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and others waged an armed struggle with little or no success. Most African states negotiated their independence, thus all the plunder.

Neocolonialism is frequently exhibited through economic exploitation, political involvement, and cultural hegemony. Multinational firms, many of which are based in former colonial countries, have tremendous sway over African economies, exploiting natural resources, markets and labor power, and creating economic reliance. Furthermore, foreign countries maintain political clout through supporting, controlling or influencing domestic leaders and policies, so determining the course of national development.

There is no possibility of putting an end to this neocolonial misery without standing up to all imperialists, be they old Western powers like France, UK or the US, or new powers like Russia and China, from Africa. **We must fight to put an end to all imperialist masters, not to exchange one for another.**

This anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle necessarily implies standing with our Saharawi comrades in the struggle for the liberation of our continent's last colony, **Western Sahara**, from an associate of European imperialism, the Kingdom of Morocco.

Likewise, we stand in solidarity with the heroic **Haitian people** against the complicit attitude of some African governments that join the game of Western imperialism to the point of offering to intervene militarily in its service.

We stand with our brothers and sisters in **Niger** against French imperialism and will defend them with every method at our disposal if the threats of invasion by the colonialists materialize. At the same time, we clearly affirm that the new government is not our government. In Niger, in all of Africa and around world, we are not only fighting against imperialism, but also to defeat capitalism and for workers to rule through democratically elected councils.

**The only path towards the liberation of Africa is the unity of the African peoples**, who have been artificially divided by capitalist imperialism and its local associates in the bourgeoisie and complicit governments. For this reason, we are not united by our ethnic or national identities, but by the social class.

The workers and peasants, the exploited and oppressed of Africa, have no common interest with the rich African associates of imperialism. We have more in common with the workers of the rest of the world than with them. The liberation of Africa will not be achieved with the local associates of imperialism. It will be achieved with the unity on class lines of the African peoples and the support of the workers of the entire world. That is why we are building an anti-colonial, anti-imperialist movement, in the perspective of **revolutionary pan-Africanism**, for a united socialist Africa in the framework of a socialist world.



Our movement is **class based** because workers produce all the wealth in the world and thus hold the social power and the ability to stop production and reorganize it under their democratic control. We strive to build the subjective factor of the revolution, the social force capable of leading all the oppressed of the world to change everything for good.

Our movement is **internationalist** because workers around the world have the same interests and face the same enemies that exploit and oppress us. The bourgeoisie has institutions that defend its interests throughout the world, like different imperialist blocs, and the UN, the IMF and the World Bank. Only a united movement of the workers of the whole world can successfully confront the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Our movement is **anti-capitalist** because



this decadent, crisis-ridden capitalism in crisis has nothing left to offer humanity but more exploitation, oppression, hunger, war and environmental destruction. This system, trying in vain to overcome its crisis and stagnation, attacks labor, social and democratic rights, imposes bloody dictatorships, stirs up ethnic and religious massacres and armed interventions, and advances in the destruction of the planet to ensure its profits. There is no real democracy under this system. The only possible democracy will arise from the working class and its own institutions. That is why we fight for the destruction of this system and the construction of world socialism.

Our movement is **revolutionary** because capitalism cannot be reformed. Only the mobilized masses with the workers in the lead and a revolutionary leadership can overthrow it. All across the world, the masses time and again take the path of rebellion and revolution. But every time they find themselves blocked by reformist leaders and bureaucracies. For this reason, the historical crisis of humanity has been reduced to the crisis of its revolutionary leadership.

Today the central task of revolutionary socialists is to **build revolutionary parties and an international** with mass influence to promote permanent mobilization to defeat capitalist governments, fight for the overthrow of bourgeois order, and the establishment of workers' **governments and socialism around the world.**

We stand for the expropriation of all big capital, whether foreign or local. We stand for the distribution of the land among the ones who till it and promotion of collective agriculture with the modern techniques. We stand for the right of self-determination for all the oppressed nationalities. We stand for democratic control of workers on production and commerce. We stand for the planned allocation of resources for the needs and benefit of all rather than the profits for the few. We stand for decent employment, food, healthcare, education and housing as a right of every member of the society. We stand for an end to all imperialist military bases in Africa and other parts of the world. We stand for equal rights for women and against all kinds of violence and discrimination. All foreign in-

vestment must be conditioned with total transparency and permission and supervision of a democratic workers' government. We stand for the abolition of all visa regimes and travel restrictions for the working masses. We stand for a world without class and national exploitation, oppression, unemployment and misery.

These are our historic objectives and strategic tasks. Contrary to past experiences marked by bureaucratism and imposition, we unite on the basis the aforementioned political, ideological and action principles, **with absolute political independence** from all bourgeois forces. But with tactical flexibility to connect with the real processes of the class struggle and in an environment of fraternal debate and joint action. We build an international organization for concrete intervention in the global class struggle, internationalist campaigns and mutual collaboration in the construction of instruments of struggle. We do so with the method of a healthy democratic centralism to discuss and resolve among all and act as a single fist in the class struggle.

This is the project that the **International Socialist League** is building, bringing together dozens of organizations and thousands of militants on five continents, to unite the world's revolutionaries across national, ethnic or identity divisions with the aim of leading the working class in its struggle for world socialism. The **Revolutionary Socialist League** embodies these principles and has hosted this event.

This is the project that this congress seeks to expand in Africa. We call on organizations and individuals who wish to join this new revolutionary building in Africa to take up this challenge together and fight for a socialist future. This is a significant opportunity to build and extend the ISL throughout the African continent

Class brothers and sisters in all Africa, unite! We have nothing to lose but our chains. We have a continent and a world to win!

Africa moja, Africa huru, Africa ya Kisosialisti!

One Africa, Free Africa, Socialist Africa

*Nairobi, 30 August 2023* ✊



# Instability and **COUPS** in Africa are fueled by Capitalism

BY EZRA OTIENO

**The current increase in revolts in Africa, like previous surges, has a strong connection to the cyclic crisis of capitalism, in which the continent is especially vulnerable, exacerbated by inadequate decolonization and structural adjustment programs imposed by economic globalization leaders. Analyzing colonial power dynamics' structural violence from a Marxian viewpoint exposes the polar opposite of passivity for those concerned.**

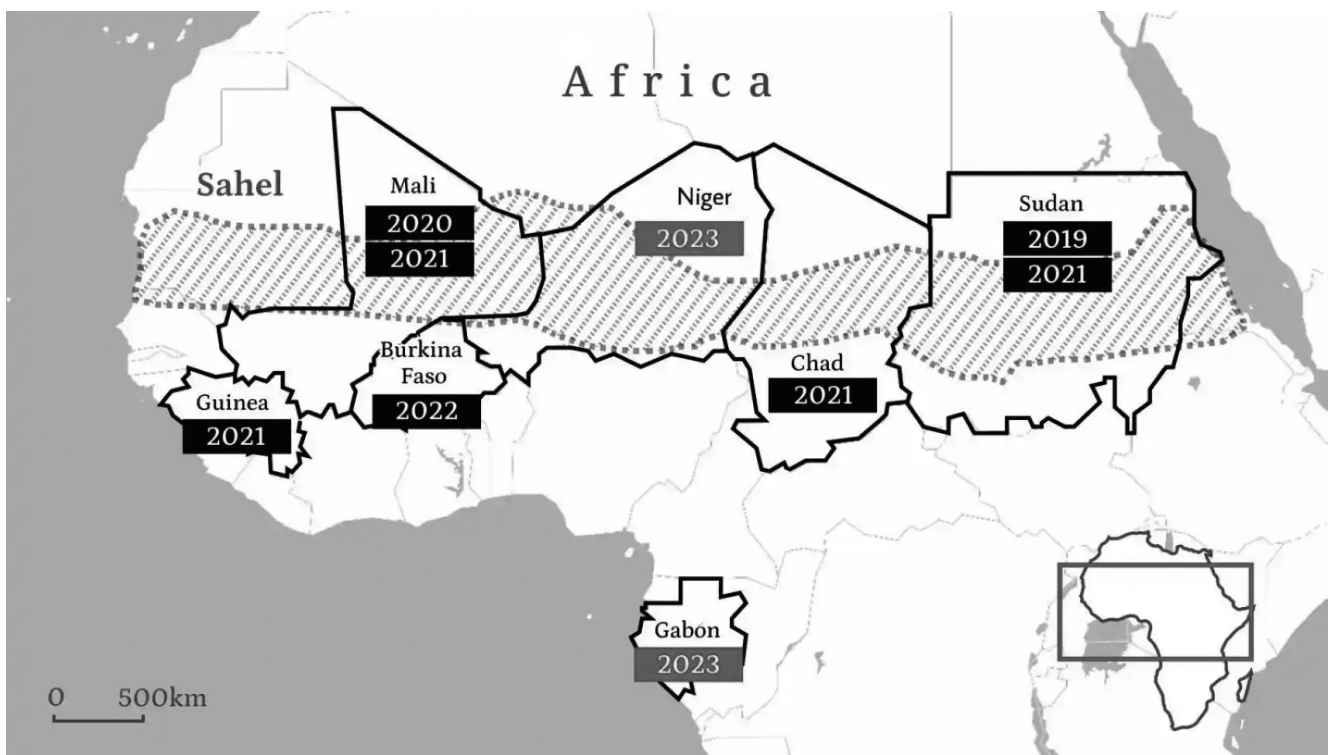
The colonial powers sought profit, intellectualized the necessity of profit, and constructed and sustained a dialectic of social connections that corresponded to profit. These deliberate

acts transformed desire, joy, and terror into profit-driven social relations.

Although history has inertia and velocity, the movement of these problems is dialectical and leaves the possibility of choice open, thus different players have followed different pathways. Some post-colonial African leaders entered the realm of profit and led their countries to conflict and violence. Others tried to resist but were crushed by the democratic tyranny of commerce.

Warfare and widespread violence in Africa are the outcome of both colonial structural violence motivated by commerce and the decisions taken by many African leaders to pursue merchandised sorts of relationships with their own people.

The advent of military authority in Niger marks a watershed moment in the Sahel. The



swift collapse of the French-backed administration in Niamey, considered an essential bastion of stability by Western powers, is simply the latest in a succession of anti-French coups in a region racked by instability and imperialist intrusion. While utilizing anti-colonialist rhetoric that is resonating strongly across Africa, these new governments are looking to Russia for backing, establishing a new and significant front in the conflict between western imperialist and Russia.

The incarceration of Niger's president, Mohamed Bazoum, on July 26, followed by the declaration of military rule, triggered an immediate rise in regional tensions. After suffering blows across the so-called "coup belt," which stretches from Guinea in the west to Sudan in the east, western imperialism and its local allies are visibly panicking and seeking for ways to safeguard their interests in the region.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), led by Nigeria and backed by the West, imposed harsh sanctions and even threatened military involvement if Bazoum is not returned to power by the end of this week. Nigeria has already shut off Niger's electrical supply, affecting 70% of the country's power, in an attempt to exert more pressure.

This has prompted the governments of Mali and Burkina Faso to declare that "*military intervention against Niger would be tantamount to a declaration of war*" against those countries, while

Guinea has backed the coup and refuses to impose sanctions. Two regional blocs have now established, bringing more war and instability.

Emanuel Macron, the French president, reacted angrily, saying he would "*not tolerate any attack against France and its interests*" and threatened "*immediate and uncompromising*" action in the case of such an attack.

Despite the heated rhetoric, France and the EU have so far confined their response to the termination of financial help and the evacuation of European people. The French Foreign Minister has rejected any intention of intervening militarily.

Protests and laments in the Western media about 'democracy' in Africa ring hollow. In actuality, decades of imperialist exploitation and intervention in the region have laid the groundwork for the current catastrophe.

Since it became a French colony in 1922, Niger has been forced to live in great poverty and economic reliance. Over 41% live below the World Bank's absolute poverty benchmark of \$2.25 per day. Only 11% of the population has access to adequate sanitation.

The great majority of Nigeriens live in extreme poverty, relying on nomadic pastoralism and agriculture for subsistence in the countryside or working in the undefined 'informal sector' in cities. Slavery is still practiced in some sections of the country, with an estimated 7% of the population enslaved to forced work.



At the exact same time, Niger is the world's seventh-largest uranium producer. It also trades in gold and oil. And yet, as is often the case in impoverished, controlled societies, not a single cent of this money reaches the people.

The vast bulk of Niger's uranium mines are owned and managed by foreign firms, with France's Orano playing a significant role. Meanwhile, over \$2 billion in international development 'assistance' is devoured by a bloated and corrupt state bureaucracy in the capital, which essentially constitutes a dependent elite that dominates the country in the interests of its paymasters.

The plague of Islamist banditry, a monster created of, and sustained by, imperialist actions in the Middle East and North Africa, has been added to the country's growing desertification as a result of climate change. NATO action in Libya in 2011, supported mostly by France in the name of "democracy," plunged the nation into savagery, marked by fights between competing warlords and slave markets on the Mediterranean coast.

But foreign imperialism's destabilization did not stop there. The fall of the Libyan state pushed guns and fighters directly into the Sahel area across the Sahara. Boko Haram, an Islamist terrorist organization, is establishing a permanent foothold in Northeast Nigeria, while ISIS and al-Qaeda-linked forces have swarmed over Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

In 2013, Francois Hollande's 'Socialist' administration dispatched 1,700 French troops to Mali at the behest of the Malian government, which had been founded in a coup a year previously. In the years that followed, this became a permanent occupying force of around 3,000 men, working alongside American forces in five nations.

Yet, far from reducing the terrorist danger, Western imperialism has exacerbated it. According to one former Islamist fighter quoted by *The Economist*, the region's poverty and volatility make a good recruiting ground for Islamist organizations, which promise needy young men "money, women, meat, and a motorcycle." Meanwhile, French and American forces are widely perceived as serving simply to safeguard their own capitalist interests, and with cause.

As a result, profound anger has built progressively throughout the area, not just as a result of

French intervention's failure to defeat Islamist terrorists, but also as a result of a strong hate of French colonialism, symbolized in the presence of French troops. Demonstrations have been recorded around the area, demanding for the French military to withdraw and frequently recalling their own nations' fight for independence.

These demonstrations were frequently crushed by governments that were armed and sponsored by Western help. For example, in Niger, which had been lauded as a "haven of stability" by the EU's senior diplomat, Josep Borrell, the 'democratic' government used force to suppress anti-French protesters. But, as Marx long ago observed, when armed groups of men are constantly relied on to maintain 'order,' what is to stop them from finally deciding to dominate society themselves?



Mass unrest, political instability, and coups were unavoidable in this setting, and are a direct result of French imperialism's desire to entrench itself in the Sahel. Since 2020, multiple coups have occurred in Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso.

In the absence of a revolutionary leadership capable of channeling the growing attitude of rage and hostility toward western imperialist, military commanders have acted over the heads of the masses in the guise of preserving 'sovereignty' and 'order,' capitalizing on this feeling to rise to power.

The coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and now Niger have been welcomed with pro-coup protests, with hundreds carrying anti-French placards.

French troops have been removed from Mali and Burkina Faso's territories. Mali has even dropped French as an official language.

Captain Ibrahim Traore, the temporary leader of Burkina Faso, has consciously chosen to honour Thomas Sankara, his country's renowned leader of the anti-colonial battle. Apollinaire Joachim Kyélem de Tambèla, his Prime Minister, is a notable 'Sankarist,' and all MPs have agreed to take a 50% wage reduction.

Certainly, none of these regimes has defied capitalism by expropriating the international corporations that continue to abuse the region. Nonetheless, the anti-imperialist rhetoric employed by these governments resonates with the broader revolutionary attitude that prevails among vast sections of the African people, as well as their deep-seated loathing of Western imperialism.



## NEW AGE IMPERIALISM

The 'alternative' provided by Russia, which is filling the void left by the West in portions of Africa, is a new and vitally crucial factor in the equation. Each coup regime in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger has coupled anti-colonialist rhetoric with pledges of fealty to Russia. Pro-coup protestors are frequently seen waving the Russian flag. This reality is critical for the shift in global relations that has been intensifying since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine a year ago.

On the African continent, the relative collapse of US and European imperialism is especially visible. China has become Africa's single greatest commercial partner, while Russia has steadily established points of support in a number of

countries, notably those influenced by French imperialism.

Russia's economic involvement in Africa remains limited in comparison to China, but its assistance in the shape of Wagner weaponry and warriors has earned it some crucial allies. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, it is already the major arms exporter to Sub-Saharan Africa.

Russia's Wagner mercenary outfit has been utilized to prop up the existing dictatorship in the Central African Republic. In exchange, it has gained ownership of an array of gold mines, most notably Ndassima, as well as logging contracts. The Malian government has now publicly welcomed Wagner to aid it in its fight against terrorism.

Russian imperialism, for its part, has shifted gears to take full advantage of the situation. Putin has made a cynical display of his newly discovered 'anti-colonial' credentials. In a speech in September 2022, he connected the Ukrainian conflict to the battle against western colonialism, noting its involvement in "*slavery, genocide of Indian tribes in America, plunder of India, plunder of Africa...*"

He quoted Nelson Mandela and listed a number of notable individuals from Africa's struggle for liberation against imperialism, including Congolese prime minister Patrice Lumumba, who was assassinated with the involvement of Belgium and the United States, at the recent Russia-Africa summit in Moscow, which was happening as the coup in Niger unfolded.

The Western media has been quick to dismiss the summit because fewer nations attended than the previous one in 2019, but this purposefully hides the fact that 19 African heads of state attended in defiance of heavy Western threat, making addresses that clearly criticized the West and applauded Russia. Aside from rhetoric, Putin has offered African countries weaponry, cheap grain, and debt write-offs to help them deal with rising costs and interest rates.

## WHY ALL THIS?

The military takeover in Niger was a humiliating loss for French imperialism and a significant setback for the West in Africa. After France was compelled to transfer soldiers from Mali and Burkina Faso into Niger, it was termed the





'final domino'. Only Chad remains as a basis of support, and it is far from certain that it will stay so, given the mounting anti-French riots there and the conflict in Sudan to its east. The loss of Niger would not only jeopardize European access to gold and uranium in the area, but it would also jeopardize the construction of a gas pipeline from Nigeria to Algeria, which had begun last year, endangering the EU's energy security.

Furthermore, France and the EU were depending on regimes such as Niger's to try to halt the influx of Sub-Saharan African migrants into Europe. It's no surprise that the West and its allies are putting as much pressure on the former government as they can.

This has ramifications not only for Africa but also for the global capitalist crisis. Any expression of the African masses' struggle for independence from centuries of Western domination ought to be taken seriously by every worker in the world, and we should weep no tears for the corrupt charade of Western-backed "democracy."

Beyond the Sahel and the African continent, this change represents an additional phase in the crisis of western imperialism and the division of the world into contending powers, 'multipolarity,' as it is commonly referred to.

Russia has decided to describe its own aspi-

rations in terms of 'anti-colonialism' and 'sovereignty,' much as the West has done with flowery rhetoric about 'democracy,' 'progress,' the 'rule of law,' and so on. However, neither Russia nor China plan to let Africa's tremendous natural resources fall into the hands of its workers and peasants.

## THE WAY FORWARD

The African people's strong yearning to oust Western imperialism is completely progressive, and it will be a driving factor in the African revolution. But, in order to win this battle, they must rely only on their own strength and the backing of the global working class, not on the help of competing imperialist states.

Only an independent and internationalist working-class movement can demolish the reactionary regimes foisted on the people of Africa, transfer the continent's riches directly into the hands of society as a whole, and manage the economy democratically for the benefit of everyone. In Africa and across the world, the option is clear: Socialism or barbarism. 🇸🇪

Read *The Coups in Africa*.







# STRUGGLES OF WOMEN in Ghana

BY ESTHER YIADOM

The web of oppression entangles the peoples of Ghana and working class women are those most burdened. Right from slave-owning society, through feudal society to capitalism, nothing has changed in terms of social conditions of women.

The plight of women today and its root cause of patriarchy can be linked to property-owning ideologies of these societies, capitalism not being an exception. Today, women in most parts of Africa are directly or indirectly counted as private property and so suffer several forms of oppression. In Ghana, right from childhood, through youthful age and to old age, the vestiges of problems created by retrogressive societies, including capitalism still loom, and that has contributed to their malignancy, discrimination, and vulnerability. The struggles of women manifest in different forms ranging from socio-cultural to economic issues. Some of them have been discussed below.

## SOCIO-CULTURAL STRUGGLES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN GHANA

### • CHILD MARRIAGE

West Africa in general is noted to record highest rates of child marriage. Niger, Mali, Senegal, are among those countries with the highest numbers. But Ghana is not left out of the prevalence of child marriage. The challenge is that a lot of the issues of child marriage which occur in most parts of the country, especially the northern belt, are not reported. The highest rates of child marriage reportedly occur in the Northern, Upper East, Volta, Western and Upper West Regions of Ghana.

What could influence parents' decision to trade their young girl for a common dowry if not because women are considered inferior? But, one of the major reasons given by parents for underage marriage is poverty. Amidst difficulties in providing for the family, parents prefer to trade off their girl so that they can obtain dowry from the marriage and use it to feed the rest of the family. The dowry is the

## Ghana's demography

- Population of Ghana: 16.38 + 16.46 (2021 Statistics)
- Female Population: 16.46million
- Females outnumber males by 2.8%, and also in urban areas by 5.0%. In rural areas, males outnumber females by 0.3%.
- The working age category of 30-64 years is dominated by male (in Western North, Ahafo and Bono Ahafo Regions of Ghana).
- Age dependency ratio is 66. Thus, there are 66 persons in the dependent age bracket (0-14years and 65+) for every 100 persons in the working age bracket.

According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census General Report

sum of money or prescribed cattle paid by the groom to the girl's family. Cows are very expensive in Ghana and so when a father sells the cow obtained from giving out the girl's hand in marriage, he feels can get a lot of money. Also, he can have the opportunity to depend on his son-in-law from time to time for financial support. Another reason is due to the traditional belief that irrespective of how high a woman climbs the socio-economic ladder she will definitely end up in a man's home. Therefore, the family will be better off giving out the girl in marriage early. That underscores the misconception that women are the private property of their male counterparts.

Child marriage drastically affect many girls. They drop out of school and that alone has dire consequences. Once they are deprived of education, then they are likely to face the problem of unemployment in the future. Also, since their bodies are not mature enough to carry out pregnancies, their health is affected. Those who are married as second, third or fourth wives face a lot of maltreatment from the first wives. Others are traumatized and live unhappily for the rest of their lives.

### • **TROKOSI**

Ghana has not fully surmounted the hurdle of barbaric cultural practices. Could it be that little is being said and done about the practice

of *trokosi* because it affects only girls? The word *trokosi* is a term which means *slave of the gods*. But I thought Ghana has signed and ratified many treaties which have abolished all forms slavery! Government claims it prefers to end the practice by persuasion instead of force.

It is one of those age-old religious practices which has become almost impossible to stamp out. *Trokosi* occurs in very remote communities in the Volta Region of Ghana where young virgins are sexually enslaved to pay for the crimes and offences committed by their family members. According to practice, the girls are sent to serve at the shrine in order to appease the anger of the gods. These poor girls are married to the fetish priest and since they are many, they see each other as rivals who have to compete for basic needs such as food from their 'husband'. When the girls give birth, those children also remain in servitude to the priests.

### • **WITCH CAMPS**

A lot of people wish to grow old while enjoying a life of comfort, but I doubt if that is the dream of some women in the Gambaga community.

In July 2023, in Kafaba, a remote community in Savannah Region, one Akua Denteh, believed to be about 90 years old, was heartlessly beaten to death by members of her community, including two female perpetrators who led the attack on Akua. Fortunately, the incident was filmed by some onlookers who shared it on social media and that is how it got the attention of the public. Inhabitants of the community, including the traditional leaders of Kafaba had accused Madam Akua of witchcraft and causing misfortune in that rural community and that was the reason for the old woman's painful torture and murder.

Lynching and ostracizing people, accusing old women of witchcraft and segregating them is a major problem in Ghana, specifically in the north of the country. Hundreds of old women including widows have been confined into a secluded area in Gambaga in the North East Region of Ghana. These victims have been accused of 'witchcraft' and using 'black magic' to cause misfortune to their family and community and have therefore been banished by

their family members. In the camps, they live in about twenty-five round huts hosting about 100 inmates, with no access to healthcare, food, water, and basic social amenities. They depend mostly on donations from people and organisations who visit the area. Apart from Gambaga, other witch camps exist in Kukuio, Gnani, Kpatinga and Bonyase, all in the northern part of Ghana. The backward cultural and religious belief of the people has shackled the life of these old women and it is very shameful and disheartening to endanger the lives of our old population. But different governments have come and gone, yet none has been able to curtail this menace nor help reintegrate the poor old women back into their communities.

### • DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

On 20th April 2020, one married police inspector shot his 26-year-old girlfriend Victoria Dapaah, in Kumasi for alleged cheating with another man. The following month, a man murdered his 25-year-old wife at Nungua, in Accra, after she asked for a divorce. This incident has become rampant in Ghana. Physical violence, murder, rape or penetration of women with objects against their will, recording and broadcasting a girlfriend's nude pictures, intimidation and other forms of violence are some of the bizarre quandaries brought upon women by patriarchy. The Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit's (DOVVSU) Accra Regional Office indicated in its 2020 data that, as of August that year, 31.9% of women have experienced domestic violence. These are reported cases of women who had the courage to speak up. It will be interesting to note that there are so many victims of domestic violence out there who cannot open up on sexual abuse, harassment, severe beatings and other terrible encounters from their partners, spouses, other family members and unfamiliar people. This is due to the fear of being stigmatized, losing their partners, and the reason that even if they report it will be futile, nothing good will come out of it. At home, women are raped by their male counterparts, while at school, they have to deal with unscrupulous teachers who pressure them into transacting sex for grade. At the workplace the least said, the better. While a woman has all the qualifications and skills, she

still has to pay the price with her body for a job offer and for promotions. Hardly will women open up on these issues for fear of being ostracized. Sometimes, for those who muster the courage to do so, the family will interfere with the judicial process under the guise of settling the matter out of court.

### ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

A great deal of women are more vulnerable in employment and hence the majority live off informal work. Thus, the majority of women, both young and old, are actively involved in peasant agriculture and petty trading in order to feed themselves and their families as well as make some amount of income. In addition to that, women in agriculture contribute to feeding Ghana's hungry population and the economy as a whole. While 52 % of Ghana's labour force is engaged in agriculture, about 39% of the farm labour force is made up of women. This suggests that women are the actual backbone of Ghana's economic growth and development since the agricultural sector alone contributes to about 54% of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

Despite these immense contributions from women, their efforts and potential are saddled with barriers. One of these roadblocks include the gender division of labour. In this categorization, women are compelled to grow subsistence crops such as cassava, plantain, cocoyam, while men focus on cash crops such as cocoa and cashew. This is because men are considered the breadwinners and so need to invest in crops which will fetch more money for them to be able to provide for their families; whereas women who are considered the home makers target subsistence crops so that they can always feed the family. Coupled with this, access to farmland, credit facility and farm inputs put women at a great disadvantage. In some communities, women can only access the farmlands through their husbands or family heads due to the culture and tradition of those areas. Since women do not own lands which could have been used as collateral, they find it difficult to secure loans to invest in their occupation. They are compelled by these barriers to rather farm on a small scale, consequently they do not get enough income.



Hawking on the street and petty trading on pavements, inside the market either on tables or on the ground is a common occupation for the working class, especially women in Ghana. In the urban and peri-urban areas of Accra, Kumasi and the major cities, it is a common sight of young girls and women with their babies at the back hawking along the highways under the scorching sun and on cold nights. Those who ply their on pavements and ‘un-authorized areas’ are often chased by officers from the District Assemblies, yet those women risk their lives and continue trading. They sell foodstuffs, water and imported groceries. Street hawking and petty trading are a source of livelihood for the low income and poor urban dwelling young women. Without it, they will not have any means of survival.

Although women in hawking and small-scale trading also form a major segment of the labour market in Ghana, they face so many challenges. Majority of them do not reap enough financial benefits from the trade and so they live from hand to mouth. Also, others become prey to crimes, sexual abuse, accidents and ill-health. One of the major factors for this plight on women is financial constraint. In the midst of harsh economic conditions and high cost of living, young women cannot sit aloof but to engage in hawking for survival. Also, in a country where there is so much emphasis on formal education in order to land formal and well-paid jobs, women who lack education become victims of unemployment. They therefore have to opt for petty trading so that they can earn some money to cater for themselves and their families. Also, there are no job opportunities in rural Ghana, so the majority of the young women drift to the cities to seek sort of greener pastures, thereby resorting to trading so that they can cater for their accommodation, food and also send some money back home to their families.

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES

Women’s full and equal participation in the different spheres of society has not materialized. At home, the man is the head and in the local community of leaders, the chief is the ruler. Even in some of the communities where they are privileged to have a queenmother, her lead-

ership is subjected to the chief and his elders. At the workplace, many men prefer not to have a woman in the lead because they cannot submit to her leadership. They feel they are superior to women. In the 2020 Parliamentary elections, out of the 275 seats, women had only 40 of them. And society is clapping because that is an improvement from 35 seats in the 2016 elections. Others do not care and give the excuse that even if they support women into Parliamentary positions, they will only go and serve their party’s parochial interest and not necessarily the interest of women. Perhaps this is the argument of reactionary forces. Underrepresentation of women persists in the country and this is a consequence of patriarchy, male domination and imperialist ideologies.



In conclusion, there is a need for the creation of progressive political instruments to guide women and the country as a whole towards creating awareness on the root causes of the struggles of women, their empowerment towards the creation of a social order which typifies the dignity and development of women. 🦋

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# AFRICA, an overview

BY PABLO VASCO

Obviously, one article is far from sufficient to go over an entire continent and its history. Here, we attempt to broadly describe, in nine thematic items, a basic framework of Africa to help to understand its structure and dynamics.

## 1. AFRICA, CRADLE OF THE HUMAN SPECIES

Annoying as it may be to racists and sexists, all humanity comes from an African woman. Five million years ago, the first hominids emerged there. Then *Australopithecus* walked on two feet, *Homo habilis* made simple tools and began to eat meat, and *Homo erectus* improved their dexterity and controlled fire. Finally, *Homo sapiens* inhabited the fertile region of Botswana and several centuries later spread throughout the Old World.

Other tribes occupied the Nile Valley, and around the year 6,000 BCE agriculture was born. The productive surplus gave rise to Egyptian civilization, which lasted more than 3,000 years: an agricultural economy with social differentiation and an authoritarian State, which included slave labor. Egypt was later dominated by the Roman Empire and later by the Byzantine Empire.

In the year 640, the Arab conquest began. As in the Middle East, caliphates were formed in North Africa. Its political-religious leader was the caliph, Muhammad's successor, elected by a council of elders. Thus, during the Middle Ages, several cali-

phates succeeded one another, until the Ottoman one. At the same time, in sub-Saharan or Black Africa, dozens of ancient kingdoms and societies rose and fell. They were agricultural-pastoralist and commercial tribal communities, some were matriarchal, with diffuse borders and social hierarchies. The most powerful of them was the Empire of Ghana that flourished from the 4th to the 12th century. European colonization destroyed that original social Matrix.

## 2. SOME MACRO DATA

- Africa is the third-largest continent, after Asia and America. It has five large regions: north, central, east, west and south. The north covers the Maghreb (from Morocco to Libya) and the Mashrek (Egypt and Sudan). The entire sub-Saharan horizontal strip is called the Sahel.
- It has a population of more than 1.4 billion inhabitants that is rapidly increasing. It is the youngest continent, with an 18-year average age (Europe's is 42, Japan's 47). 80% of the population is made up of Black ethnic groups, and the north is Berber and Arab. 60% is rural, and 40% urban and rising.
- The most spoken native language is Swahili, one of about 1,700 languages. Arabic was introduced

in the north and French, English and Portuguese -among others- in their former colonies.

- In the north and the Sahel, Shiite Islam is the predominant religion, in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is Catholicism and Protestantism. In much of the continent, there are indigenous religions, which are intertwined with the aforementioned.
- With a fairly average altitude, Africa has mountain ranges, volcanoes, plains, plateaus, large rivers and lakes. The Sahara is the largest desert on the planet. The climate is generally warm, with peaks of 50° C due to global warming. The fauna and flora, of great diversity, also suffer capitalist predation.

### 3. TREMENDOUS CONTRASTS

Africa has 24% of the world's arable land, but it is mostly used for agribusiness and food for foreign nations. China, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and other countries have bought large fields. Other fertile lands are used to produce biofuels instead of food for the local population. Wood is obtained from logging in forests, which are not reforested.

It has a third of the planet's mineral reserves, with more than 60 types: platinoids (90%), coltan (80%), cobalt (60%), tantalum (70%), diamonds (46%) and gold (40%), as well as iron, uranium, copper and bauxite. As energy sources, it has gas in the North, oil in the Gulf of Guinea, coal in the South, hydrographic basins in the center, sunlight in the Sahel and geothermal capacity in the East.

But such abundance contrasts with also having the world's worst poverty and inequality rates. According to 2022 data, the 14 poorest countries in the world - four of them in extreme poverty - are in Africa, which concentrates a third of global poverty<sup>[1]</sup>. Nigeria is the leading African oil producer but 60% of its people live on less than a dollar a day, and Niger is the 5th world producer of uranium but the 8th poorest country on the planet.

In Black Africa, one in four people is hungry, one in three is illiterate and infant mortality is the highest in the world: 15 times higher than in Europe. Life expectancy is 68 (versus 80 in Europe). To give an idea of the inequality, *"the richest 10% in East Africa earn on average 47% of the total income, while the poorest 50% only receive 13.3%."*<sup>[2]</sup> And women and LGBT+ people suffer much more

oppression than in the West, which is compounded by cultural, religious and colonial traditions.

Few people have access to clean water, health, land and housing. Basic services and infrastructure are insufficient and precarious. That is why floods in Libya and an earthquake in Morocco recently caused thousands of deaths. And that is why a multitude of African migrants try to reach Europe, often in inadequate rafts, at the cost of 3,000 lives per year.

### 4. SLAVERY, THE ENGINE OF CAPITALISM

Just as in the rest of the ancient world, there were forms of slavery in Africa and prisoners of war were used for domestic or agricultural tasks. Later, from the 8th to the 18th century, it is estimated that the Arabs commercialized six million slaves to Europe and the Middle East.

The third phase of slavery was carried out by European colonizers across the Atlantic from the 15th to the 19th century. From a marginal business, slavery soon became the main economic sector. The demand for slaves of the colonial plantations in the Americas encouraged the militarism of West African kingdoms to capture and sell more slaves. It is estimated that 12 to 15 million enslaved people became the new "commodity" whose labor forged the profits of capital.

As Marx rightly pointed out: *"Direct slavery is as much the pivot upon which our present-day industrialism turns, as are machinery, credit, etc. Without slavery there would be no cotton, without cotton there would be no modern industry. It is slavery that has given value to the colonies, it is the colonies that have created world trade, and world trade is the necessary condition for large-scale machine industry."*<sup>[3]</sup> And he added: *"the transformation of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of Black-skins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production."*<sup>[4]</sup>

Furthermore, Marx distinguished between slavery and racism. *"A Black man is a Black man. He becomes a slave only in certain relationships,"* he stated.<sup>[5]</sup> That is why he supported the developmental North against the slave-owning South in the US Civil War and called on white workers to support the struggle against slavery.

### 5. THE IMPERIALIST DISTRIBUTION

The division and distribution of Africa was designed in 1885 at the Berlin Conference. The



German and Ottoman empires, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, Spain and Portugal participated; so did the US and other countries that had no African colonies. According to them, the superior white Europe had to civilize a savage Africa. They divided the whole continent among them, except for two independent countries: Abyssinia, today Ethiopia, which defeated Italy, and Liberia, a territory that the US bought from Sierra Leone.

But Europe's incursion faced resistance. The Ashanti fought several wars against Britain in the Gold Coast, now Ghana. So did the Anyong in Nigeria, the Nandi in Kenya and the Zulu in South Africa. The Herero and Namaqua resisted Germany in the southwest, today Namibia, and the Maji Maji did so in the East, today Tanzania. The Berbers of the Rif resisted the Franco-Spanish protectorate in Morocco. The Libyan people opposed the Italian yoke.

The distribution negotiated in Berlin did not resolve the disputes between metropolises<sup>[6]</sup>. In 1889, a conference was held in Brussels against slavery: the same European powers that had previously exercised it, now used it as an excuse to colonize Africa. By 1914, the entire continent was occupied by European powers and in 1936, Italy invaded Abyssinia. Since they imposed artificial borders, there are conflicts that continue still today.

## 6. DECOLONIZATION AND INDEPENDENCE

This period began after World War II. In 1951, Libya, previously under Anglo-French occupation, was the first colony to gain its independence. Egypt, previously a British protectorate, had it since 1922. Sudan and Tunisia followed in 1956, Ghana in 1957, Guinea in 1958 and Algeria in 1962. The surge in struggle took place in 1960, the so-called *Year of Africa*, when 17 countries declared their independence.<sup>[7]</sup> Several of these processes included just wars of national liberation against the metropolises that dragged on for a decade or longer. These are some of the most significant struggles and leaders:

- Ghana won its independence from Great Britain in 1957, led by Kwame Nkrumah, until he was overthrown by a CIA backed coup in 1966.
- Guinea won its independence from France

in 1958 after a struggle led by Ahmed Sékou Touré, who ruled until his death in 1984.

- The Democratic Republic of the Congo gained independence from Belgium in 1960, led by Patrice Lumumba. Prime Minister for just 80 days, he was deposed by a coup and assassinated in 1961 by the CIA with Belgian complicity.
- Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands won independence from Portugal in 1974 after a decade of war led by Amílcar Cabral, who was assassinated the year before his force's victory.
- Burkina Faso, formerly Upper Volta, became independent of France in 1960. After two coups, a revolution led by Thomas Sankara triumphed in 1983. His government fought against dependency, corruption and the privileges of tribal elites. He achieved food self-sufficiency, redistributed land, and improved education, health, and women's rights. He was assassinated in 1987 during a French-backed coup.

All of these independence processes occurred in the global context of the *Cold War* between the US and the USSR, which is why the USSR, Cuba and the communist parties gained significant influence in Africa. Several of the anti-colonial movements were defeated by coups with imperialist intervention. Others, despite some partial progressive measures taken by the new governments early on, were then inconsistent in advancing toward a complete break with imperialism and local capitalism. Thus, the progress that was achieved stagnated after gaining formal independence and ended up retreating within the new countries as well as in their relationship with the imperialist powers.

## 7. THE POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD

Between the 1960s and the late 1980s, Africa suffered more than 70 coups and 13 presidential assassinations. The entire continent is essentially neocolonial, agricultural, a supplier of raw materials and has a low level of industrialization, slightly moderate in the North. South Africa is the only developed country, with a strong labor union tradition and playing a regional sub-imperialist role. The racist apartheid regime ended in 1992 and Mandela won the presidency in 1994.

In his book *France in Black Africa* (1987), journalist Pierre Biarnès summarizes French politics

well after 1960: “Consolidate the power of the leaders who loyally played the game of Franco-African friendship... and put pressure on those who look too much in other directions, while countering the objectives of competing powers as soon as they are considered threatening.”<sup>[8]</sup>

But it is not just France or Europe: “Popularized by the expression ‘ChinaAfrica’, the meteoric development of the Chinese presence in Africa over the last 20 years is part of the new geopolitical realities. China is the continent’s leading trading and construction partner and the leading bilateral lender to many African countries. China’s companies are present in everything from logging to banking and energy... between 2000 and 2018, 50 out of 54 African countries borrowed from China in various forms... largely related to infrastructure whose relevance and cost are sometimes questionable (railways, ports, roads, energy plants, etc.).”<sup>[9]</sup>

“In two decades, China’s trade with Africa multiplied by almost 30. Today it is four times greater than that of the US with African countries... Thus, China managed to secure access to the strategic resources with which Africa is richly endowed: oil in Gabon or Angola, bauxite (for aluminum) in Guinea, copper in Zambia, uranium in Namibia, etc. And, increasingly, cobalt and lithium, those crucial raw materials for the energy transition and the development of electric cars. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which accounts for more than two-thirds of global cobalt production, almost all mines are already under Chinese control... Joe Biden’s administration is concerned about this and is trying to regain control. This is proven by the memorandum of understanding signed in December 2022 with Congo and Zambia, which aims to develop a complete value chain around batteries for electric vehicles in both countries, from mineral extraction to industrial manufacturing.”<sup>[10]</sup>

Thus, for example, the Mali’s gold mines are operated by a Canadian corporation. Though the Chad regime is one of those most closely linked to France and when oil was found in its territory promised the business to Total, the World Bank opted for Exxon and granted a loan to Chad to exploit its deposits.

The US played a direct or indirect military role in Africa during the decolonization period, seeking to ensure that the new regimes did not fall into Russia’s orbit. It intervened in the war in Angola, and the CIA participated in the assassination of Lumumba. The US returned to the continent in 2007, when it created its Africa Command (Africom).

## 8. GEOPOLITICS, IN DISPUTE

- There are 54 countries in Africa today, with 51 republics and three monarchies: Morocco, Lesotho and Swaziland (now Eswatini). Western Sahara, under Moroccan occupation, is not yet independent. The 54 countries and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic constitute the African Union.<sup>[11]</sup> The Arab League includes African Muslim countries.<sup>[12]</sup>
- The African Economic Community exists, but the bulk of the economy is controlled by mul-



tinational. All 54 countries are members of the IMF, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the WTO except South Sudan and Eritrea. As oil producers, Algeria, Angola, Gabon, Libya and Nigeria are members of OPEC.

- The US has the largest foreign military presence in Africa (with bases or stationed troops in 29 locations in 15 countries and the Africom), seconded by France (which reduced its bases in ten countries to six). Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia are non-member NATO allies. Russia is advancing. It is Africa’s leading arms supplier, it has “peacekeeping forces” in four countries, its Wagner mercenary group operates in eight countries, and Putin announced military-technical pacts with 40 countries in July. In Djibouti, a small country on the coast of the strategic Red Sea-Gulf of Aden crossing, five imperialist powers have bases: United States, France, Italy, Japan and China, its first overseas base, though has plans to establish others in Tanzania, Guinea and Gabon.



- At a regional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) brings together 15 countries, under Franco-British tutelage. Imperialism exploits internal disputes in armed forces and the actions of jihadist terrorist groups (Boko Haram, Al Shabab) and mercenaries (M23 in Congo) to justify its interference. In response to imperialist threats to intervene in a rebellion shaken West Africa via ECOWAS, the governments of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso created the Alliance of Sahel States, for mutual defense in September.

## 9. FROM THE ARAB SPRING TO TODAY

From 2010 to 2012, just about the entire Arab world experienced a wave of social unrest against capitalist its governments and regimes. With a domino effect, several countries were shaken by massive spontaneous mobilizations - and strikes in

authoritarian governments even returned to power. The demobilization that capitalist political leaderships achieved was also aided by Stalinist popular-front policies and NGOs linked to imperialism.

A law of history can be seen in the repetition of the dynamics of the independence period: what does not advance, retreats. However, as the crisis and poverty continue and the masses rise to fight again, these struggles become recurring ones.

Thus, a second Arab Spring emerged in 2019 with the Hirak (*movement*, in Arabic) in Algeria, revolts in Sudan, Iraq and Lebanon in 2020, Tunisia and Senegal in 2021 and Egypt in 2022, the latter with several strikes. This rise reverberated in Central Africa, as before in Sudan, encouraging another wave of social rebellions and military coups against puppet governments of French imperialism in Mali and Guinea in 2021, Burkina Faso in 2022, Niger and Gabon in 2023.



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some cases - demanding social improvements and democratic rights against poverty and dictatorships. Thousands and thousands of young people in these countries study and obtain degrees, but are unable to find employment. Many seek to migrate to Europe or turn to street vending, like the young man who set himself on fire in a public square in Tunisia, unleashing the rebellions.

The Arab Spring defeated the governments of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, where civil war still rages. However, given the absence of a significant revolutionary leadership, the movements were channeled with promises and in some cases new

<sup>[1]</sup> World Bank and United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

<sup>[2]</sup> <https://www.oxfam.org/es/africa-oriental-la-desigualdad-extrema-en-cifras>

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<sup>[5]</sup> Marx, Karl; *What is a black slave?*, in *The Karl Marx Library*, Vol. II, edited by Saul K. Padover (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 21 and 24.

<sup>[6]</sup> London fought Paris for the connection of the Nile and Lisbon for Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. France fought Germany over Morocco, Great Britain over Egypt and Italy over Tunisia. Italy fought Türkiye over Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, now part of Libya.

<sup>[7]</sup> The last countries to become independent were Angola from Portugal ('75), Seychelles from the United Kingdom ('76) and Djibouti from France ('77). Later, three States separated from others: Namibia from South Africa ('90), Eritrea from Ethiopia ('93) and South Sudan from Sudan (2011) after two civil wars.

<sup>[8]</sup> Borrell, Boukari Yabara, Collombat and Deltombe; *The Empire that does not want to die, a history of Françafrique* (Paris: Seuil, 2021), p. 211.

<sup>[9]</sup> Vircoulon, Thierry; *After 20 years, the successful case of Chinafrica has consequences that pose problems*, *Le Monde*, 3/16/21.

<sup>[10]</sup> de Vergès, Marie; *The US does its best to make up for lost time in Africa*, *Le Monde*, 4/6/23.

<sup>[11]</sup> Several territories depend on European States: Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla (Spain), Mayotte and Réunion (France), Madeira (Portugal) and Saint Helena (United Kingdom).

<sup>[12]</sup> Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Mauritania, Somalia and Djibouti.

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# PERMANENT REVOLUTION

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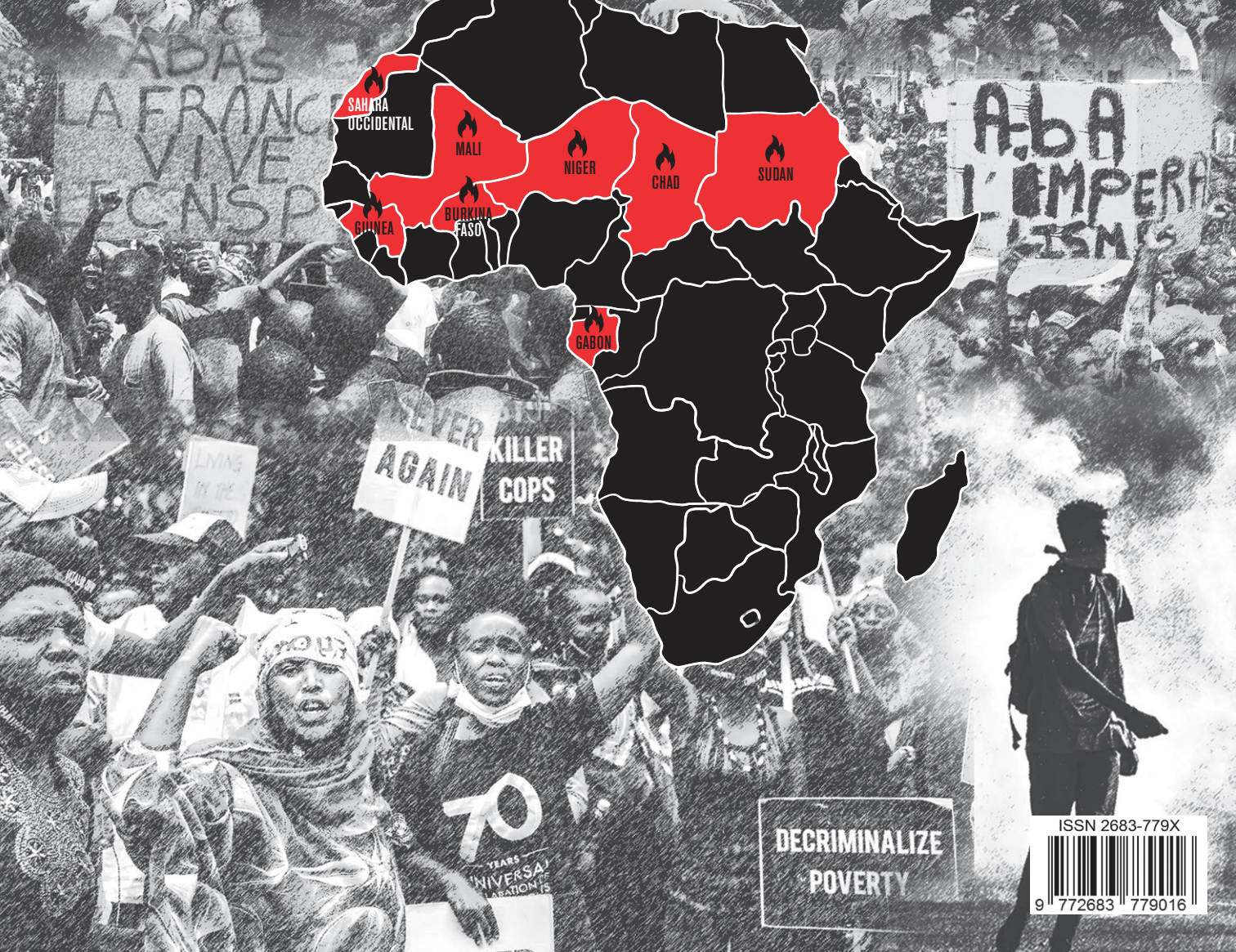


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