

REVOLUTION

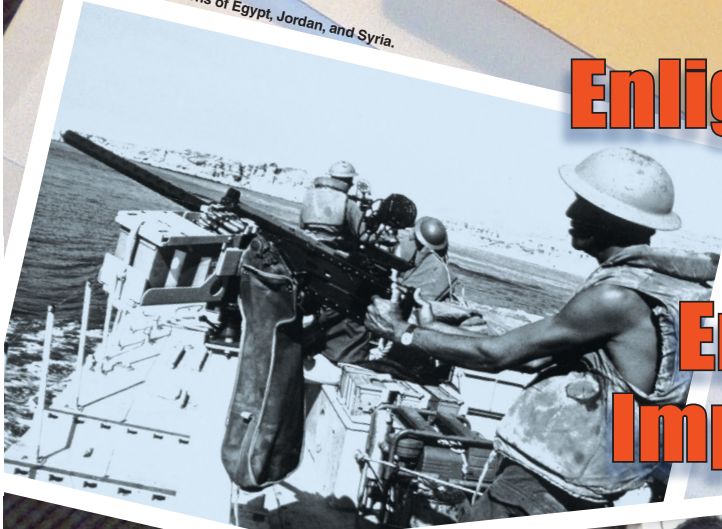
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THE CASE OF ISRAEL!

**Bastion of Enlightenment
or
Enforcer for Imperialism?**

Israeli army in the 1967 war—
Israel seized sections of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.



Palestinian
medics evacuate
child wounded
in Israeli
invasion of
Gaza, January,
2009.

Special Issue on Israel

Basics—5:12

**After the Holocaust, the worst thing that
has happened to the Jewish people is the state of Israel**

**Bob Avakian, Chairman of the
Revolutionary Communist Party, USA**

Table of Contents:

reprinted from Revolution #213 unless otherwise noted

Israel’s Murderous Assault on the People in Gaza... And the Need to Oppose These Crimes NOW <i>Reprinted from Revolution #286</i>	3
Bastion of Enlightenment of Enforcer for Imperialism? The Case of ISRAEL	6
Life Under Israeli Occupation	14
A Voice of Conscience from the Holocaust	14
The Palestinian Resistance	15
Question: Does the Holocaust Justify the Dispossession of the Palestinian People	16
Revolution Responds to Question on Nature of Holocaust <i>Reprinted from Revolution #215</i>	17
Bringing Forward Another Way	24
The U.S. ... Israel ... and Crimes Around the World	28
Drumbeat for Israel Attack on Iran Grows Louder by the Day	30
Get <i>Basics</i> (you can’t change the world if you don’t know the Basics)	34

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Bastion of Enlightenment or Enforcer for Imperialism? The Case of ISRAEL—REVOLUTION #213—revcom.us

Israel's Murderous Assault on the People in Gaza... And the Need to Oppose These Crimes NOW

by Alan Goodman, November 25, 2012, *Revolution Newspaper* #286

At this writing, a brutal wave of targeted and indiscriminate killing, destruction, and terror is being rained down on the Palestinian people in Gaza by Israel—an operation the Israelis are calling “Pillar of Defense.” Health officials in Gaza say 46 people have been killed and 440 people wounded so far in the attacks. By the time you read this, that number will be larger (there have been three reported deaths on the Israeli side). This terror and brutality—overwhelmingly hitting at non-combatants in Gaza—is fully backed by the United States, with Obama insisting over and over that Israel’s murderous bombardment of essentially defenseless people in Gaza is “self defense.”

Israel’s assaults on Gaza are taking place under cover of darkness—literally. Israeli missiles and bombs have, at this writing, knocked out power in Gaza, leaving people, hospitals, homes, and emergency responders without light. What few reports from Gaza make it into mainstream media coverage portray a reporter standing in pitch dark, describing sonic booms, earth-shaking bombs, and flames erupting high into the sky. The Israeli assault has already killed elderly people, children, and many, many other people who could not possibly be considered “combatants” in any military activity originating in Gaza.

One of those killed by the Israelis was the 11-month-old son of Jihad Misharawi, a BBC journalist who lives in Gaza. An Israeli missile hit Misharawi’s home on November 14, early in the assault, killing both his son and sister-in-law. When the Israeli missile hit Misharawi’s home, there was no military activity observed in his residential neighborhood. After the Israeli missile hit Misharawi’s house, his BBC editor tweeted, “if Israel can kill a man riding on a moving motorbike (as they did last month) how did Jihad’s son get killed.” This murder of the 11-month-old child and the sister-in-law of a BBC journalist is part of a long record of Israeli (and U.S.) killings and terror against even mainstream reporters to keep the world from seeing what Israel is doing to the Palestinians.

Only a very partial picture is available of the situation in Gaza. But what emerges from postings on social media is alarming. A doctor in Gaza posted this at Facebook two days into the attack:

Dear Friends, Gaza is under extensive Israeli military attack, in less than 2 hours, 14 military attacks against different targets in different parts of Gaza Strip, 6 were killed including 2 young girls age 4 and 7, 11 were injured, the hospitals are already lacking essential emergency medications, and citizens were called for blood donation, we do not have power, iam using UBS, the first stage of this operation has been accomplished, we expect more escalation. your solidarity means a lot at this difficult times, pass the word, this aggression, should stop now.

Again, a clear picture of the terrible human cost of the attack on Gaza is not available at this writing, and all indications are that what is leaking through Israeli blackouts and U.S. media distortion is only the surface of the death and suffering the people there are being subjected to as you read this.

And as this issue of *Revolution* is posted online and goes to press, Israel is massing troops on its border with Gaza and there is talk of a ground invasion, which would further escalate the death and destruction.

The current assault on the people of Gaza comes four years after Israel’s “Operation Cast Lead” which killed 1,400 people in Gaza and destroyed schools, hospitals and housing; and after four years of a blockade that has kept building supplies and other necessities of life from reaching Gaza. On May 31, 2010, Israeli military forces stormed the *Mavi Marmara*, one of six ships attempting to bring concrete, toys, workbooks, chocolate, pasta, and substantial medical supplies to Gaza, items that Israel banned from Gaza. Israeli commandos killed nine unarmed activists on board.

U.S. Media: Turning Reality Upside Down

It is important to highlight the utterly shameful complicity of the U.S. mainstream media in justifying all this by framing it as “Israel’s response to terror,” even when their own reports reveal a different picture.

A revealing exchange took place on the Piers Morgan show on CNN. Morgan—who himself is a mouth-piece for the interests of U.S. imperialism, but may have “lost his head” for a moment after watching a report from CNN’s reporter in Gaza depicting massive destruction and terror being rained down on people—more or less blurted out: “Gaza is, to many people, one of the key problems in the region because of the terrible oppression, whatever the right phrase is for it, of the Palestinian people there. It’s an awful place for people to try and live, isn’t it?”

He was immediately “corrected” by his guest, CNN analyst Fareed Zakaria, who said: “First, one has to say, Piers, as you did, the Israelis are justified in doing something when all these rockets are being fired at them. So there’s no question that it’s justified.”

And with that “settled,” the terms of acceptable discourse were re-set, and the discussion moved on... to critiquing how successful (or not) Israel had been at advancing the interests of Israel (and by extension, its sponsor, U.S. imperialism). And in the process, utterly upside-down terms were set as the beginning and ending point for any “analysis” that was going to come across the airwaves, and how viewers were being programmed to think.

Three Basic Defining Facts

Israel’s assault on Gaza is taking place in the context of a complex and rapidly and radically shifting political situation in the region, and in the world. There is work to do to analyze how all this is playing out right now, but a basic and sweeping analysis of the current world situation, and how to act in the face of it, can be found in Bob Avakian’s talk “Why We’re in the Situation We’re in Today... And What to Do About It: A Thoroughly Rotten System and the Need for Revolution.” The audio of this talk is available at revcom.us, and again, this provides an essential foundation for contextualizing the conflicts and upheaval in today’s world.

But in order to have any sense of how Israel and the oppression of the Palestinian people fits into the big picture, it is necessary to ground one’s understanding

in three basic, objective facts that define the nature and role of Israel in the world today:

1. Israel was, and is, built literally on the blood, bones, land, and homes of the Palestinian people, stolen through terrorist ethnic cleansing that constitutes a great legal and moral crime. *As such, the state of Israel is illegitimate, and no justice—for anyone—can be found within the paradigm of the Zionist state.*

The terrorist attacks by Zionist settlers were concentrated in the “Nakba” (catastrophe): systematic, planned killing, destruction of Palestinian villages, and rape of Palestinian women in 1948 that marked the birth of the state of Israel. This has been documented, even by defenders of Zionism (even as pro-Zionist historians have sought to justify these acts). Nearly the entire population of Gaza was driven out of, or is descended from, people driven from their homes in what is now Israel.

2. Israel is a product of, and plays a special role in, enforcing the global system of capitalism-imperialism. From its conception and inception, Israel has never been mainly an expression of the aspirations of Jewish people (although there has been and is a Zionist movement among Jewish people). Instead, it is fundamentally a creation of first British imperialism (one of whose representatives said that a Zionist state would be “a little loyal Jewish Ulster*” in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism.) Soon after its birth, Israel became a key enforcer of the interests of U.S. imperialism in containing Arab nationalism and contending with other imperialist powers (especially the Soviet Union after capitalism was restored there). Israel’s service to U.S. imperialism ranged from providing key military assistance to Apartheid South Africa to playing a key role in overseeing the genocidal massacre of 200,000 indigenous Guatemalan peasants in the 1980s. And today, Israel continues to play an indispensable role for the U.S. empire.

3. The moral foundation on which Israel’s crimes are justified—invoking the Holocaust—is utterly immoral. To quote from this special issue of *Revolution*—

“Let us state in no uncertain terms that the Holocaust was clearly one of the great crimes of modern history. But on a very basic moral level: how does a crime against one people (the Jews) committed by the government of another (the Germans)—no matter how horrific that crime—justify the dispossession, exile, constant humiliation and oppression, and

denial of self-determination to a third (the Palestinians)? It does not and it cannot... To approach this question another way, the slogan ‘Never Again’ can be taken in two ways. One way is that ‘never again shall it be allowed that crimes against humanity can go on and people will be able to plead ignorance or impotence as an excuse for doing nothing to stop those crimes’; the other way is to say that ‘never again will my people be fucked over, and anything that is done to justify preventing that is allowable.’ There is a world of difference between those two moral stands.”

And Israel, built on a foundation of ethnic cleansing, enforcing imperialist exploitation and oppression, and justified with profound immorality, is upheld by the “international community,” the great powers of the world, especially the U.S., as a “bastion of enlightenment” in the Middle East.

“Two Outmodeds,” a Basic Question of Right and Wrong, and a Need to Act

The (elected) government of Gaza—a section of Palestine not directly occupied by Israel—is Hamas, which is an Islamic fundamentalist movement aligned in various (and shifting) ways with other Islamic fundamentalist forces. And Israel’s attack on Gaza is taking place in the context of a whole set of global conflicts, including the clash between “the West” and Islamic fundamentalist forces.

Bob Avakian speaks to that conflict this way:

What we see in contention here with Jihad on the one hand and McWorld/McCrusade on the other hand, are historically outmoded strata among colonized and oppressed humanity up against historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system. These two reactionary poles reinforce each other, even while opposing each other. If you side with either of these “outmodeds,” you end up strengthening both.

While this is a very important formulation and is crucial to understanding much of the dynamics driving things in the world in this period, at the same time we do have to be clear about which of these “historically outmodeds” has done the greater damage and poses the greater threat to humanity: It is the historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system, and in particular the U.S. imperialists.

—BASICS 1:28

In the world today there is a great and urgent need for not only mass resistance to both these “outmodeds” and above all the imperialist “outmoded” —but for qualitative advances and breakthroughs for the real and fundamental alternatives to both these outmodeds: revolution led by a genuinely communist vanguard aiming for the final goal of a communist world, free of every kind of outmoded, exploitative and oppressive relation and corresponding ideas. (See “On the Strategy for Revolution” by the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA for a full presentation of what is needed for there to be a revolution, and how the work of revolutionaries, along with developments in the world, can make that possible. The statement on strategy is in *BASICS* and at revcom.us.)

There is a basic question of right and wrong here: Israel’s attack on the people of Gaza is essentially a mass slaughter of civilians in the service of reactionary aims, to enforce and impose an exploitive and oppressive world order. Nobody with a basic sense of justice should be silently complicit in that! And while there have been important protests around the world, and some in the U.S., there is not anywhere near enough visible political outrage in this country.

Going back to the challenge to break out of the parameters of the “two outmodeds,” the lack of visible opposition in the U.S. to these attacks would feed the whole deadly paradigm where the two alternatives people think are possible are these “two outmodeds.”

But on the positive side, the more people around the world *do* see a force in the U.S. that is cohering around a whole other way things could be, and is, opposing the crimes of “our” government, and the more that resistance is framed in the context of a movement for revolution, this can be a really important part of a whole ensemble of work to put revolution on the map here, and around the world.

* Ulster is the name the English ruling class assigned to a section of Northern Ireland, where there has historically been a section of people who identify with and have served as enforcers for English domination of Ireland, and Ulster has been a stronghold for the English domination of Ireland.≈

Bastion of Enlightenment... or Enforcer for Imperialism? The Case of ISRAEL

The state of Israel is projected to the world as an outpost of democracy and tolerance in a sea of hostile, intolerant Islam bent on its destruction. To be considered a credible mainstream voice in U.S. politics, academia, or the media, one must present Israel as a front line of defense against Jihad, and a critical fortress defending “our way of life.”

When Israel carries out acts that are simply indefensible under international law, such actions are defended by the U.S., rarely noted in the media, and allowable criticism in the U.S. is constrained to mildly taking issue with Israel’s “disproportionate response” to what is always branded “terrorism.”

To take just one recent example: In May of this year, the Israeli army violated international law by boarding the *Mavi Marmara* in international waters. This ship was part of a flotilla bringing relief supplies to Palestinians and challenging Israel’s illegal and inhumane blockade of the Palestinian area of Gaza. Israeli military forces killed nine passengers in storming the ship.

An investigation of the deaths on the *Mavi Marmara* by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights determined: “The circumstances of the killing of at least six of the passengers were in a manner consistent with an extra-legal, arbitrary and summary execution.” The report found that two passengers, including a 19-year-old U.S. citizen, “were shot at near range while the victims were lying injured on the top deck.” Four others “were shot on the bridge deck while not participating in activities that represented a threat to any Israeli soldier. In these instances and possibly other killings on the *Mavi Marmara*, Israeli forces carried out extralegal, arbitrary and summary executions prohibited by international human rights law, specifically article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.”

The 47-member UN Human Rights Council voted to endorse this report with a single “no” vote—cast by the United States. The report received extremely limited press coverage in the U.S. (See “UN Report finds Israel ‘summarily executed’ U.S. citizen on flotilla,” by Glenn Greenwald, *Salon*, October 1, 2010.)

* * *

What *is* the essential nature of Israel? How does one understand what seems to some to be a paradox of a country founded to make up for a great crime itself committing great crimes? And what defines the strategic relationship between the United States and Israel?

Answering these questions is not about “competing narratives”—the question here is what is true... and what is just. To get into this, we will examine the history of Israel to understand the actual dynamics that led us to today’s situation, and we will analyze the role Israel plays in today’s world.

Zionism—A Colonial Project Seeking Powerful Sponsors

For many centuries most of the Jewish people in the world lived as an oppressed people in Eastern and Central Europe, spread out across a wide area stretching roughly from the modern-day countries of Russia through Poland and Lithuania to the eastern part of Germany. In 1900, about three fourths of the world’s 11 million Jews lived in this region, with the bulk of the remainder living in the U.S. and Great Britain—countries to which there were large waves of Jewish immigration in the preceding two decades. Jewish people in much smaller numbers lived throughout western and southern Europe, North Africa, and Central Asia.¹

Jews in Europe were constantly hounded and persecuted, severely discriminated against in almost every sphere. They were often deprived of the right to own land, segregated from society, and frequently were the targets of murderous pogroms. These pogroms were outbreaks of mob violence, usually sponsored and organized by the authorities, and in any case the product of prejudice and hostility promoted by the ruling royalty and feudal landowners. Those oppressive exploiting classes were served by the channeling of the anger of the oppressed towards the Jews.

As an oppressed people, the Jews of this part of Europe sought many solutions. For most this meant seeking integration into the larger society (often accompanied by immigration to Western Europe or the U.S.). For many it involved getting into projects for universal human emancipation—that is, seeking an end to the oppression of the Jewish people as part of seeking freedom for everyone. Many were attracted to the cause of socialist revolution. For a minority it meant the Zionist movement, focused on building a separate Jewish nation-state for all Jews.

The founders of Zionism, most notably Theodor Herzl, formulated the Zionist ideology in the late 1800s. This was a time when the European powers, along with the U.S. and Japan, were entering the age of imperialism. Within these countries, capitalism had become increasingly dominated by monopolies, and these monopolies merged with banking capital to form huge financial blocs. These powers increasingly exported capital itself to the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the form of super-profitable

investments in those countries. Going with that, they began a feverish competition to dominate these areas of the world. These capitalist-imperialist powers carried out terrible military aggression against these areas; for example, the U.S. waged war against the Philippines in the early 1900s and murdered hundreds of thousands of people. And these powers increasingly contended with one another.

Herzl overtly “marketed” a Jewish state to these rising colonial powers, especially to England, as a colonial outpost. “England with her possessions in Asia should be most interested in Zionism, for the shortest route to India is by way of Palestine. England’s great politicians were the first to recognize the need for colonial expansion. That is why Great Britain’s ensign flies on all the oceans. And so I must believe that here in England the idea of Zionism, which is a colonial idea, should be easily and quickly understood in its true and most modern form.”²

The early Zionist movement continued to tailor its aims to the ambitions and perceived needs of various imperialist powers. At one point, for example, when the British were considering the advantages of a Zionist settler state in their east African colonies, a major world Zionist conference seriously considered a plan for a Jewish “homeland” in what is presently Uganda (that project was abandoned before it came to fruition). Also at the instigation of the British, Zionist leaders considered establishing a Jewish “homeland” in British-controlled South America. And discussions took place between Zionist leaders and the rulers of Germany over a possible Jewish “homeland” in German-dominated Madagascar.

Britain Backs a “Loyal Jewish Ulster³” in Palestine

The very dynamics that led Britain and other European powers to carve up and plunder Asia and Africa, brought them into sharp conflict with each other. In 1914 this contention erupted into World War 1. On one side were Britain, France, the U.S. and Russia. On the other stood Germany, and the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman (Turkish) empires. Neither side was fighting for any greater cause than a bigger share of the plunder. Sixteen million people died as the armies of contending imperialists slaughtered each other, and civilians, to determine which imperialists would expand and which would be crushed. In the course of that war, empires crashed to the ground—most importantly the vast Russian empire, where a socialist revolution emerged victorious. In other parts of the world, the old order collapsed but the victorious imperialists raced in with new forms of domination.

One of the focal points of the post World War 1 contention between the victorious imperialists, particularly on the part of Britain and France, was the oil-rich and strategically located Middle East. This part of the world was pried loose from the defeated Turkish Ottoman Empire. France seized Syria and Lebanon. England established control over much of the rest of the region, including Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine.

As noted, the leaders of the Zionist movement—starting with Herzl—had pitched a Jewish state in Palestine as a strategic

beachhead for imperialism in the region. In the wake of World War 1, the British ruling class moved more decisively to seize on the prospect of a Zionist entity. The famous Balfour Declaration of 1917 declared, “His Majesty’s Government view [sic] with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

The Balfour Declaration stated that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.” But Sir Ronald Storrs, the first British military governor of Jerusalem, was more candid about England’s aims. He wrote that England’s support for the Zionist “enterprise was one that blessed him that gave as well as him that took, by forming for England ‘a little loyal Jewish Ulster’ in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism.”

The Palestinian People Were There First!

The mythology of the Zionist movement claims that Palestine was “a land without a people for a people without a land.” But the main obstacle to the establishment of this “little loyal Jewish Ulster” in the Middle East was the fact that Palestine was already inhabited by the Palestinian people!

When modern Zionism emerged in 1880, and began to attract the interest of imperialist powers, 24,000 Jews lived in Palestine among 450,000 Palestinians. Palestinians owned and farmed virtually all the land. The small Jewish population was composed of some whose roots in the area went back centuries and more. Others were orthodox Jews from Europe who had migrated to the city of Jerusalem for religious reasons. Altogether, Jewish people made up 5 percent of the population of Palestine. By 1922, several decades of Zionist-sponsored Jewish immigration from Europe had only raised that percentage to about 11 percent, according to official British census figures.

In the period before and during World War 1, the Palestinian nation emerged out of people who had lived in that part of the world for centuries. A nascent national economy began to cohere among the Palestinians, with different social classes. Most Palestinians were Muslim, but a substantial minority—about 11 percent—were Christian. Palestinians shared a common culture and language (Palestinian people speak a dialect of Arabic), and a developing commercial infrastructure and authority, driven by the development of capitalist export agriculture and beginning industry (particularly olive oil production for the global market). This Palestinian nation was further forged in national resistance to the Ottoman Empire, and later in opposition to British colonial rule. As with all the emerging nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America in this period, the national development of Palestine was distorted and suppressed by the domination of the world by imperialism with its powerful monopolies, control of global commerce, and military force.

In the 1920s and 1930s, between the two World Wars, there was intense political polarization in Europe. There were

growing revolutionary movements, along with the rise of vicious reactionary movements. In addition to Hitler and the Nazis in Germany, other fascist movements gained influence in Eastern Europe, with virulent anti-Semitism a leading edge. Under these circumstances, there was both pressure on Jewish people to emigrate out of Europe, as well as the “pull” to move to Palestine afforded by the Balfour Declaration. So there was increased Zionist emigration and both purchases *and* thievery of Palestinian lands. There were armed conflicts between the Zionists and Palestinians, and the emergence of a powerful Zionist paramilitary.

Further, the imperialist world was wracked by a huge economic crisis—the Great Depression—and this heightened both the political polarization within the imperialist powers *and* it exacerbated the conflicts *between* them. All this set the stage for what would be the decisive turning point: World War 2.

The Holocaust: A Great Crime of *Imperialism*

Only a couple of decades after the end of World War 1, the imperialist powers were again driven to a war to redivide the world. The German ruling class had turned to Adolf Hitler and the Nazis to lead them out of severe internal social crises, and to violently restructure the international division of colonial plunder that was skewed in favor of the victors in the First World War.

World War 2 was fought between two main alliances. On one side was Germany, Japan and Italy. The other alliance was the U.S., Britain and the Soviet Union. All the principals in the war were fighting for their own imperialist interests—with the exception of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was *not* imperialist and was fighting for its very life against a military onslaught by Germany that was historically unprecedented in its power and ferocity.

Going into this war, the Soviet Union at that time stood dramatically apart from centuries of tradition in many ways. One was that it granted equality to Jewish people. This had a great impact on the political sentiments of Jewish people in Europe. Broad attraction on the part of Jewish people to progressive causes, and to support for the Soviet Union, explains in large part why the German imperialists felt compelled to carry out the horrendous war crime that became known as the Holocaust—the systematic and wholesale murder of millions of Jews.⁴

Much as this has been greatly distorted in official U.S. history, the great bulk of fighting, death, and terrible destruction in World War 2 in Europe took place between Germany and the Soviet Union, in the Soviet Union. Over 14 percent of the population of the Soviet Union was wiped out during the war—almost 24 million people.⁵ Jewish people were active in resistance to the Nazis, and often aligned with the Soviet Union and the world communist revolution. As Hitler’s armies and German imperialism advanced to the east and as Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, the German rulers came up with a “final solution” to kill off the millions of Jews within the territories

they occupied. In addition, Hitler’s policies of exterminating Jews in the captured territories facilitated Germany’s alliances with traditional reactionary and virulently anti-Semitic ruling class forces in those countries.

Here it must be said that the U.S. rulers saw it in their own interests to stand aside from, and not try to stop the Holocaust. Hitler’s anti-Semitism was not utilized by the “Allies” as a significant propaganda factor in World War 2. In 1939, U.S. authorities turned away the USS *St. Louis*, a ship filled with Jews seeking asylum. They were sent back to Europe, many to their deaths at the hands of the Nazis. This highly publicized incident sent a clear message to the Jews of Europe that they would get no mercy or support from the U.S.

It went so far that Roosevelt not only refused to bomb the railroad tracks hauling Jews to their deaths in the gas chambers, he even refused to let the word get out that this was happening!

After the war, the victorious allies did publicize the crimes of the Holocaust, and some Nazi war criminals were prosecuted. But the driving forces behind the Holocaust—the German ruling class as a whole—and the passive complicity of other imperialists was never widely exposed or understood.

And Jewish survivors of the Holocaust were, overall, not provided with the kind of support and compensation they needed to rebuild their lives in Europe. Many desired to move to the United States. Between 1880 and 1914, some two million Jewish people had emigrated from Eastern Europe to the U.S., and many Holocaust survivors had family ties there, or prospects of finding a community that would welcome them. But the same heartless U.S. immigration policies that kept out Jews escaping the Holocaust before and during World War 2 remained in place until 1948. Denied resettlement in the U.S., many Holocaust survivors emigrated to Palestine.

The Outcome of World War 2 and the Establishment of Israel

In the aftermath of World War 2, the U.S. emerged at the top of the imperialist world order, in a position to dictate terms to both defeated rivals (like Germany and Japan), and allies (like Britain and France). Around the world, the U.S. moved to supplant old colonial powers and swallow up or encompass their spheres of influence.

But other important forces also emerged out of World War 2. For a short time, the Soviet Union and China formed a socialist camp that confronted the imperialist world. And another major factor on the post-war political stage was a powerful wave of national liberation struggles throughout especially Asia and Africa against the weakened colonial powers of Europe and Japan.

These two, related challenges to capitalism-imperialism in the wake of World War 2 had much to do with the way the U.S. rehabilitated Japan and West Germany (Germany was divided after World War 2, and the east became a separate country aligned with the Soviet Union).

These developments—and the conflicts within them—all played out in maneuvering and contending of the imperialist powers in the Middle East against national liberation struggles, and against each other. For different and conflicting reasons, and to different degrees, the U.S. and its rivals all saw their interests served by establishing, and gaining influence within, a Zionist state of Israel.

In 1947, United Nations Resolution 181 allotted the Zionists 56 percent of Palestine, even though population figures—setting aside the legitimacy of British sponsored Zionist settlement—were 650,000 Jews living among 1,350,000 Palestinians.⁶ The UN partition was unjust, and was sponsored by all the powers contending for control of the Middle East.⁷

The Nakba: The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine

During the period from World War 1 up until the establishment of Israel, the British colonial authorities had essentially facilitated initial waves of Zionist ethnic cleansing waged against the inhabitants of Palestine. This erupted in an orgy of terrorist violence in the years after World War 2. By December 1947, the Zionists began mass expulsions of Palestinians. This wave of terror, known as The Nakba (from the Arabic word meaning catastrophe), continued into the early months of 1949.

During the Nakba almost a million Palestinians were brutally forced from their land, villages and homes, fleeing with only the possessions they could carry. Many were raped, tortured and killed.⁸ To ensure that there would be nothing for the Palestinians to return to, their villages and even many olive and orange trees were thoroughly destroyed. When the Nakba ended, there had been 31 documented massacres—and probably others.

Activists have worked to unearth the physical remains of these villages. Historians have studied the diaries and notebooks of Zionist leaders. The stories of the inhabitants of these villages have been collected in oral histories. Through this process, lists of destroyed Palestinian villages have been compiled that range from 400 to 500—constituting over half of all Palestinian villages. These villages served as centers of political and economic life for the largely rural Palestinian population and their destruction was accompanied by the dispossession of Palestinian farmlands.⁹

Former Arabic village and road names were given Hebrew names. Ancient mosques and Christian churches were destroyed. Theme parks, pine forests (trees not native to the region) and Israeli settlements sit atop many of the old Palestinian villages. Visitors from the U.S., including idealistic youth who spent summers working on Israeli so-called “socialist” kibbutzes (cooperative farms) were told that nearby demolished buildings were “ancient ruins.” All this was to wipe out any physical evidence that the land belonged to Palestinians and give finality to the Nakba.

The Nakba—terrorist ethnic cleansing—was *foundational* and *essential* in the establishment of the state of Israel. It created

the conditions, and set the stage, for other initiatives like the purchase of Palestinian land, and diplomatic initiatives.

The systematic destruction of Palestinian villages was, all along, the agenda of key Zionist leaders. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* makes a carefully argued case that the dispossession of the Palestinian people meets the legal definition of ethnic cleansing, and that it was the conscious plan of key Zionist leaders. The book draws on primary sources from the Israeli military archives, including the diary of David Ben-Gurion who played a key political and military role in the founding of Israel.¹⁰

One important strategic project guided by Ben-Gurion was the “village project” of mapping all of Palestine. Through the use of aerial photography and other means, details of every Palestinian village were recorded: its access routes, quality of land, water springs, main sources of income, sociopolitical composition, religious affiliations, names of its mukhtars (traditional village heads), relationship with other villages, the age of individual men and an index of “hostility” toward the Zionist project measured by involvement in a major 1938 revolt against the British policy of allowing increased immigration of Jews into Palestine (including those who may have killed Jews).

Blatant *Israeli* Terrorism

Along with the systematic destruction of Palestinian rural society, the Zionists used terrorist ethnic cleansing to clear the major cities of Palestinians. After the 1948 UN resolution dividing Israel and Palestine, the Zionists publicly proclaimed to uphold the resolution. But inside the country they began to implement their own plans. The morning after the UN resolution, the Hagana (the main military group that would become the Israeli army) and the Irgun (an early split from the Hagana, led by future prime minister Menachem Begin, which also later became part of the army) unleashed a campaign of terror on the 75,000 Palestinian residents of Haifa.¹¹

Jewish settlers who had come in the 1920s and lived in the hills around the city took part in these attacks alongside Zionist military units. Frequent shelling and sniping was rained down on the Palestinian population of Haifa. Oil mixed with fuel was poured down the roads and ignited. Barrels full of explosives were rolled down into the Palestinian areas. When panic-stricken Palestinians came to put out the fires they were sprayed with machine-gun fire. Jews who passed as Palestinians brought cars stuffed with explosives to be repaired at Palestinian garages and the cars were then detonated. In a refinery plant in Haifa, Jews and Arabs worked shoulder to shoulder and had a long history of solidarity in their fight for better labor conditions against their British employers. The Irgun, which specialized in bomb throwing into Arab crowds, did so at this refinery. Palestinian workers reacted by killing 39 Jewish workers, one of the worst and also one of the last retaliatory skirmishes in that period.¹²

By March 1948, Ben-Gurion commented to the Jewish Agency Executive, “I believe the majority of the Palestinian masses

accept the partition as a *fait accompli* and do not believe it is possible to overcome or reject it... The decisive majority of them do not want to fight us.”

The armies of several Arab countries intervened in 1948 on behalf of the Palestinians. They were no match for well-equipped Zionist military units, with wide-ranging connections to modern weapons and munitions, modern military training, and a tightly organized army. Arab irregulars (small, non-centralized military units) ambushed Israeli convoys but refrained from attacking the settlements. Much of the organized Palestinian military capacity, as well as civilian governmental leadership, had been decimated by the British in the course of ruthlessly suppressing Palestinian independence struggles after World War 1.

Ben-Gurion Orders “Occupation, Destruction and Expulsion”

Ben-Gurion used the Arab world’s intervention to frame the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians as one of a tiny Jewish homeland besieged by hostile Arabs. Until March 1948, the Zionist leadership still portrayed their activities as retaliation to hostile Arab actions. Then, two months before the British were to leave, they openly declared that they would take over the land and expel the indigenous population by force. Ruthless expulsion went into high gear and the word retaliation was no longer used to describe what the Israeli military forces were doing. According to Ben-Gurion, there was no longer any need to distinguish between the “innocent” and the “guilty.” Pre-emptive strikes and collateral damage became acceptable and necessary. According to an associate, Ben-Gurion ordered that “Every attack has to end with occupation, destruction and expulsion.”¹³

On a hill to the west of Jerusalem lay the town of Deir Yassin. The massacre there reflected the systematic nature of Plan D¹⁴ as applied to hundreds of villages throughout Palestine. On April 9, 1948, Jewish soldiers burst into the village and sprayed the houses with machine-gun fire, killing many. Pappé writes, “The remaining villagers were then gathered in one place and murdered in cold blood, their bodies abused while a number of women were raped and then killed. Fahim Zaydan, who was twelve years old at the time, recalled how he saw his family murdered in front of his eyes: ‘They took us out one after the other; shot an old man and when one of his daughters cried, she was shot too. Then they called my brother Muhammad, and shot him in front of us, and when my mother yelled, bending over him—carrying my little sister Hudra in her hands, still breast-feeding her—they shot her too.’”

On the blood and bones of such massacres, the state of Israel was built. And such terror is not “ancient” or even just “modern history.” It frames the daily life of every Palestinian, today.

Here a terrible irony must be noted: Many in the military core of Zionists who carried out the Nakba —the terrorist ethnic cleansing of Palestine—were battle-hardened veterans of guerrilla warfare *against the Nazis* in Europe in World War 2. This enlistment of people who had in great numbers fought

against some of the most barbaric crimes of capitalism-imperialism, into an army of *perpetrators* of terrible crimes against *other* oppressed people—in service of the *same criminal system responsible for the Holocaust*—is emblematic of the birth of Israel as an outrageous crime of world imperialism.

The U.S. Confronts Postwar Challenges...

As noted earlier, World War 2 weakened the old-line colonial empires like Britain, France, Japan, Holland, etc. *and* it drew the colonized peoples into political life. Revolutionary struggles in Asia—particularly in China, but also in Vietnam—intensified, and within several years the revolution would be victorious in China. The most thoroughgoing of these national liberation struggles were led by communists, as in China. But beyond that, there was a tremendous rise of secular nationalism, in places like Indonesia, Iran, a number of nations in Latin America, and the “Arab world” as well.

In the Middle East, the most prominent representative of secular nationalism was Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt. Nasser came to power promising to stand up against the imperialist powers and put an end to the decades of Egyptian colonial and neocolonial humiliation and subjugation.

At times, the U.S. aligned with national liberation struggles as a wedge to edge out its rivals. This is what happened in the 1956 war between Israel, France, and Britain on the one side, and Egypt on the other. In 1956, Nasser moved to nationalize the Suez Canal—a legitimate assertion given that the canal was, after all, *in* Egypt. The Suez Canal took on new importance after the war, with half of its traffic being increasingly precious and strategically critical oil exports from the Middle East. In response, France, England, and Israel invaded Egypt, with Israel making rapid military advances into Egypt. The U.S. (and the USSR) pressured the invaders, including Israel, to back off. This was part of establishing that *the U.S.* was now the shot-caller in the region (and the world). In a limited and short-term way, Nasser’s nationalist aspirations coincided with U.S. strategic objectives.

But *in the main*, secular nationalist movements like Nasser’s were strategically seen as obstacles by the U.S. The U.S. worked to undermine and/or eliminate them, often through CIA-backed military coups, as in Iran, Guatemala and Indonesia—coups which took hundreds of thousands of lives. By the mid-1960s, Nasser’s influence and power had been checked and knocked down, including by increasing U.S. sponsorship of Israel.¹⁵

One important national liberation movement that emerged in this period was that of the Palestinian people themselves. The Palestinian people had resisted the rule of the Ottoman Empire, and they rose up in arms against British rule after World War 1. In militias and in other forms of courageous resistance, Palestinians fought back against the Nakba. But their struggle went to another level in the context of the worldwide revolutionary upsurge in the ‘60s. Palestinian guerrilla organizations launched armed struggle against Israel

with the aim of creating a democratic, secular (non-religious) state throughout Palestine. The struggle of the Palestinian people attracted broad support throughout the world (see “The Palestinian Resistance” page 15).

...And Forges a “Special Relationship” With Israel in the Cold War

Through the Nakba, and the 1956 war, Israel was strengthened as a military power in the Middle East. As such, it was eyed by all the world powers as a valuable agent. As the U.S. moved to establish domination in the region, and the world, the “special relationship” between the U.S. and Israel began to grow.

In the immediate wake of World War 2, a socialist camp had emerged in opposition to world capitalism. But that bloc was short-lived. In the 1950s, capitalist-roaders—that is, political representatives of the remaining and powerful capitalist relations in socialist society—came to power and restored capitalism in the Soviet Union. This restoration of capitalism in the USSR—the rise of Soviet social-imperialism—was a major event. The contention between the U.S. and this rival imperialist and its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and elsewhere was to shape much of the geopolitical landscape for decades.

This conflict—the “cold war”—had a profound role in defining the role of Israel and its relationship to the ambitions and requirements of the U.S.

A pivotal factor in the “special relationship” between the U.S. and Israel was Israel’s overwhelming victory in the “Six-Day War” in 1967, when Israel invaded and occupied large sections of Jordan, Syria, and Egypt. Strategic thinkers in the U.S. government took note. Even as the U.S. was working to sponsor other allies in the region (most notably the brutal Shah of Iran, who they installed in a CIA coup in 1953), Israel stood out as a uniquely valuable asset for the U.S. as the “leader of the free world”—that is, the head of the bloc of western imperialists.

In 1967, the U.S. sold cutting-edge jet fighters to Israel for the first time, establishing the principle of U.S. support for Israel’s qualitative military dominance over the Arab countries.

In the ensuing decades, much of the “special relationship” between the U.S. and Israel was framed by global contention with the Soviets. The new Soviet imperialists used the anti-imperialist reputation gained when the country was socialist—along with military and economic aid—to seek influence in the governments of Asia, Africa and Latin America. They aimed to gain a foothold through which to contend with the U.S. The 1973 war between Israel, on one side, and Egypt and Syria, on the other, (referred to in Israel and the West as the “Yom Kippur War”) had significant elements of a proxy war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. At that time, Egypt was moving towards alignment with the Soviets and got substantial military hardware and advice from the Soviets, and Syria was closely aligned with the Soviet bloc.

Similar dynamics set the backdrop for Israel’s bloody, U.S.-backed 1982 war against Lebanon. During the 1980s, Lebanon served as a base area for Palestinian forces, but also as focal point of contention between U.S.-aligned forces and the Soviet-backed Syrian regime and other Soviet-leaning forces in the region. That war had a devastating effect on the civilian population. Israeli jets waged a massive bombing attack on the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

It was in the course of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon that Israeli military forces surrounded and sealed off the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut while their Lebanese allies massacred between 750 and 3,500 people. Israeli military and allied forces were to occupy southern Lebanon for 18 years.

From the mid-1960s up until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S.-Israel strategic relationship was in large part framed by the clash of these rival superpowers. Israel engineered both the coming to power of Idi Amin in Uganda and, when he outlived his usefulness, sped his demise, and facilitated genocidal slaughter by the Guatemalan death squads to strike at Soviet-aligned countries or forces in those parts of the world. And frequently, Israel supplied military aid to pariah regimes the U.S. did not want to be too openly associated with but which played critical roles in countering Soviet influence—like the apartheid regime in South Africa. Page 29, 30 of this issue of *Revolution* documents such crimes around the world. (*Also available as full color poster on revcom.us*)

The End of the Cold War: The U.S. / Israel “Special Relationship” Evolves

The collapse of the Soviet Union was an unprecedented event that upended many global economic, military, and power relationships.¹⁶ One unexpected product of that collapse was the rise of the very Jihadist forces the U.S. built up to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, these forces turned against the remaining superpower, the U.S. While Islamic fundamentalism does *not* challenge imperialist domination of oppressed nations, it does pose a real challenge to the whole matrix of global relations that the U.S. sits on top of.

With the emergence of the Islamic fundamentalist challenge to U.S. imperialist domination in the Middle East, Israel’s role has morphed to serve U.S. needs in that conflict. In 2006, Israel launched a massive invasion of Lebanon to strike mainly at Hezbollah—Islamic forces aligned with Iran. (See “Drumbeat for Israeli Attack on Iran Grows Louder by the Day.” page 30.) The Israeli invasion killed over 1,000 people, displaced over a million, and blanketed South Lebanon with over a million anti-personnel cluster bombs that today still maim and kill Lebanese farmers and children.

U.S. Imperialism: Sticking *by*, and Stuck *with* Israel

In much of the world, and in a very intense way in the Middle East, Israel’s displacement and ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people and other crimes makes that country the

object of tremendous outrage and anger. That is a big problem for the U.S. as it seeks to counter oppositional Islamic forces and impose pro-U.S. regimes in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Widespread outrage against Israel puts reactionary pro-U.S. regimes in the region, like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, in an awkward and even precarious position. And the close bonds between the U.S. and Israel provide openings for rival powers to exploit in their contention with the U.S.

When U.S. General David Petraeus (now commander in Afghanistan) told the Senate Armed Services Committee, “Enduring hostilities between Israel and some of its neighbors present distinct challenges to our ability to advance our interests in the area of responsibility,” he was identifying a real contradiction for the U.S. ruling class.

It has not proven easy for the U.S. to broker a settlement that would integrate the Palestinians into some semblance of a stable situation, and, at the same time, satisfy what the Israelis see as their need for unchallenged domination and a thoroughly Zionist state. This has remained a sore point in the region and around the world, and as Israel resorts to more and more extreme measures to lock down the Palestinians, this contradiction becomes sharper.

And yet, in profound ways, the U.S. has not only stuck *by* Israel—it is stuck *with* Israel. Despite real problems and even significant differences at times, the unique “strategic relationship” between the U.S. and Israel continues because, from the perspective of U.S. imperialism, there is no real alternative on the chessboard in terms of the role Israel plays in the Middle East and throughout the world.

With the U.S. deeply mired in wars throughout the Middle East, the role of Israel is more critical than ever. In an op-ed piece, U.S. Representative Steve Rothman (a “liberal” Democrat and strong supporter of Obama), enumerated how “One strategic ally in particular has always stood out from all others: the state of Israel.” He noted that Israel provides “America with vital security assistance in the Middle East and around the world.” Rothman argued that “without our partnership with the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces—the Israeli army), the United States might need to have 100,000 or more additional troops stationed permanently in that part of the world to make up for the protection of U.S. interests and vital intelligence provided by Israel to the United States.”¹⁷

One reason why Israel is so important to the U.S. is that it is the one country in the region where the pro-U.S. government has a big social base. That loyal social base, in turn, rests in large part on the history and present-day place of Israel in the world’s “food chain”—that is to say, the ways in which it shares in imperialism’s parasitical relation to the oppressed nations of the world. European-immigrant citizens of the country have a high standard of living measured in nice houses, wages, and access to gadgets and luxuries. Israel provides its citizens with the trappings of bourgeois democracy—various rabid Zionists along with some moderate critics of the

government who accept the terms of Zionism can run against each other in elections, while any politics that opposes Zionism is violently suppressed.

In short, with its massive nuclear arsenal, its European/U.S. level of technology, and a substantial section of its population enlisted in the “logic” and immorality of Zionism, Israel plays an irreplaceable role enforcing U.S. interests.

It is *these* factors that make it very difficult for U.S. imperialism to alter the “special relationship” between the U.S. and Israel—particularly right now. And this is true even though U.S. support for Israel provokes further opposition to the U.S. in the region, and creates fertile ground for Islamic fundamentalist Jihad.

Needed: Resistance...
and a Radical Rupture in Framework

Israel was, and is built literally on the blood, bones, land, and homes of the Palestinian people, stolen through terrorist ethnic cleansing that constitutes a great legal and moral crime. As such, **the state of Israel is illegitimate, and no justice—for anyone—can be found within the paradigm of the Zionist state.** And this state was a product of, and plays a special role in enforcing the global system of capitalism-imperialism.

Identifying the illegitimacy of Israel is not a “Palestinian perspective.” Nor is it in any way anti-Jewish. As we have seen in earlier sections of this article, the existence of Israel is *not* any kind of “justice” for the crimes of the Holocaust, but is in fact a product of the *same system* that engineered the Holocaust. Israel is not a solution to the age-old oppression of the Jewish people as Jews. It is, instead, a settler state and a tool of imperialism. As such it should and must be opposed.

Over the past several years, growing numbers of people around the world, and within the U.S., have become outraged by Israel’s crimes, and have been driven to political protest. Campus actions have had important impact. Solidarity actions, including the Gaza Freedom March, the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, and actions of the International Solidarity Movement and others, have sounded a call to the world and given heart to Palestinian resistance. BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions) activity has raised awareness, generated necessary debate and controversy, and turned up the political heat on Israel—especially on campuses.

This movement of opposition to Israel and its crimes is growing, and must be built further. This is all the more urgent as Israel threatens war against Iran, and carries out vicious day-in/day-out repression against the Palestinians, with no end in sight. Much more protest and debate is needed over the nature and role of Israel. This special issue of *Revolution* is intended as a contribution to that. And it is a challenge to everyone, students in particular, to dig into the root causes behind Israel’s crimes in a global system of exploitation and oppression, and to check out, and get with, the movement to end that system.

¹ *American Jewish Year Book Vol. 1 (1899-1900)*, p.

285, available at www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1899_1900_7_Statistics.pdf; Swatos, Jr., William H., Editor, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, available at harr.hartsem.edu/ency/jews.htm.

² Theodor Herzl: *The Complete Diaries*, cited from Abdullah Schleifer, *The Fall of Jerusalem* (New York: 1972), p. 23 in *Our Roots Are Still Alive*, chapter 2.

³ For centuries, England—now the United Kingdom (UK)—maintained bloody and overt colonial domination over Ireland. England built up sections of Northern Ireland, sometimes referred to as Ulster, as a more industrially developed region with a substantial section of people who identified with and fought for the interests of British colonialism. Following Irish independence in 1922, Northern Ireland (Ulster) continued to be occupied by the UK.

⁴ For a comprehensive exploration of the relationship of Jewish people to the economic, political and military factors behind the rise of Hitler and World War 2, see *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken* by Arno J. Mayer (Pantheon Books, 1988).

⁵ See sources referenced at Wikipedia article on World War II Casualties. Some Western sources estimate the number of deaths at 20 million.

⁶ “Special Report: What Will Israel Do as the Arab Demographic Tide Rises in Palestine?” by Andrew I. Killgore (Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, July/August 1998).

⁷ While the Soviet Union mainly supported national liberation struggles during the time it was socialist, it also made a series of very serious errors in subordinating the revolutionary struggles and just causes of people in other countries to what they perceived to be the state interests of the Soviet Union, often to disastrous effect—as in this case.

⁸ The role of rape of women by Zionist forces in the ferocious ethnic cleansing of Palestine is documented in *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* by Ilan Pappé. Pappé (Oneworld Publications, 2006) draws on and cites reports from the UN and the Red Cross, along with first hand Israeli military sources, and Palestinian accounts; see especially pages 208-211.

⁹ Khalidi, Walid (ed.): *All that Remains. The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*. Washington, D.C: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992, App. IV, pp. xix, 585–586; and Sitta, Salman Abu: *The Palestinian Nakba 1948*. London: The Palestinian Return Centre, 2000.

¹⁰ Much of the characterization of, and citations from, Pappé’s book in this section of this article is taken from “The Nakba: Ethnic cleansing and the birth of Israel,” distributed by A World to Win News Service, December 10, 2006. That article summarizes and analyzes Pappé’s important work, and includes insights on limitations of Pappé’s perspective and political analysis. Pappé himself has been forced to leave Israel.

¹¹ The Hagana (also spelled Haganah) was the main, and “mainstream” Zionist military force. The Irgun, ostensibly a “split off” of the Hagana, sometimes carried out particularly gruesome and odious operations that the Irgun required some distance from. The Stern Gang in turn was a split-off from the Irgun, and operated with even more freedom from international scrutiny. These Zionist armed forces and others worked in concert, if not in perfect synchronization, and all were later integrated into the Israeli army with the establishment of the state of Israel. Many of the key founding fathers of the state of Israel came from the Irgun and Stern Gang and openly invoked / invoke their association with particularly egregious atrocities against the Palestinians as defining their credibility to be major players in Israeli politics.

¹² Pappé, page 58.

¹³ Pappé, page 64.

¹⁴ Plan D was the terminology the Zionist leaders of the Nakba used to reference their master plan.

¹⁵ Today, the rulers of Egypt function as U.S. puppets who collaborate with the U.S. and Israel to oppress the Palestinians. Egypt is the third largest recipient of U.S. “aid” (after Iraq and Israel), and much of that goes to fund a massive repressive apparatus.

¹⁶ For more understanding of that event and its implications, see “The New Situation and the Great Challenges,” (revcom.us/a/1256/ba-newsituation.htm) and *Bringing Forward Another Way* (online at revcom.us/avakian/anotherway or as a pamphlet from RCP Publications, 2007). Both are by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

¹⁷ “U.S.’s valuable, strategic relationship with Israel” by Rep. Steve Rothman, *The Hill*, June 3, 2008.≈

Life Under Israeli Occupation

As a result of the Nakba—the Zionist ethnic cleansing of Palestine—there are today almost 4.5 million Palestinians dispersed throughout the world. In addition, 1.4 million Palestinians live under Israeli domination in the West Bank, and 1.3 million in Gaza, a formerly sparsely populated desert strip now full of crowded refugee camps and towns. About 1.5 million Palestinians continue to live in Israel itself. The forced relocation of Palestinians into the West Bank and Gaza (almost all the residents of Gaza are refugees or descendants of refugees) is a violation of the Geneva Convention and international law, and a war crime.¹

In the West Bank, hundreds of miles of 26-foot-high concrete wall divide Palestinians into small, encircled zones. In 2007, Amnesty International reported that “The hundreds of checkpoints and blockades which every day force long detours and delays on Palestinians trying to get to work, school or hospital, have for years limited their access to essential health services and caused medical complications, births at checkpoints and even death.”

Israel’s West Bank wall is called the Apartheid Wall, and similarities between Israel’s treatment of Palestinians and the racist apartheid rule that existed in South Africa are glaring, and have been acknowledged by even strong supporters of Israel. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter told an Israeli newspaper, “When Israel does occupy this territory deep within the West Bank, and connects the 200-or-so settlements with each other, with a road, and then prohibits the Palestinians from using that road, or in many cases even crossing the road, this perpetrates even worse instances of apartness, or apartheid, than we witnessed even in South Africa.”²

Since the election of the Hamas government in Gaza in 2006, Israel has imposed a brutal siege to force regime change. At the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, Israel launched a massacre of Gaza, killing 1,400 people—mostly civilians.³ Hospitals, apartments, and schools were systematically shelled. The UN-commissioned Goldstone Report concluded that Israel carried out “indiscriminate attacks resulting in the loss of life and injury to civilians,” “deliberate attacks against the civilian

population,” and “attacks on the foundations of civilian life in Gaza.” After the massacre, Israel imposed a siege on the 1.5 million people in Gaza intended to degrade their health and crush their spirits, allowing only enough food to meet minimum caloric requirements for life, and specifically banning materials needed to rebuild.

In Israel proper, the Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, who make up 20 percent of the population of Israel, are subjected to second class citizenship. People who are deemed Jewish by Israeli-sponsored religious authorities can immigrate to Israel from anywhere in the world, but spouses of Palestinian Israeli citizens who live in Gaza or the West Bank cannot. Many benefits in Israeli society are available only to veterans of the Israeli army—a criterion that excludes the vast majority of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship. And while much is made of the right of Palestinians who are Israeli citizens to vote, Israeli laws ban candidates who deny “the existence of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people,” or who deny “the democratic nature of the state” of Israel.⁴

Palestinians who live in exile throughout the Arab world and beyond are often stateless (without diplomatic protection or recognized passports), marginalized, isolated, and persecuted.

¹ See Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Article 8, which prohibits “transfer of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory” by an occupying power. (untreaty.un.org/cod/icc/index.html)

² “Jimmy Carter: Israel’s ‘apartheid’ policies worse than South Africa’s” by Haaretz Service, November 12, 2006.

³ “Confirmed figures reveal the true extent of the destruction inflicted upon the Gaza Strip; Israel’s offensive resulted in 1,417 dead, including 926 civilians, 255 police officers, and 236 fighters,” Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, March 12, 2009 press release.

⁴ See “Special Report: 10 Discriminatory Laws,” Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, June 2010.≈

A Voice of Conscience from the Holocaust

In its wars, Israel invokes the supposed moral “carte blanche” (blank check) of the Holocaust to declare itself absolved of terrible war crimes. During Israel’s bombing of Beirut, Lebanon in 1982, a Jewish survivor of the Nazi Holocaust living in Israel, Dr. Shlomo Shmelzman, went on a hunger strike in protest. He wrote, “In my childhood I have suffered fear, hunger and humiliation when I passed from the Warsaw Ghetto, through labor camps, to Buchenwald (a Nazi concentration camp). Today, as a citizen of

Israel, I cannot accept the systematic destruction of cities, towns and refugee camps. I cannot accept the technocratic cruelty of the bombing, destroying and killing of human beings Too many things in Israel remind me of too many things from my childhood.”¹

¹ Cited in *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians* by Noam Chomsky, 1999, South End Press.≈

The Palestinian Resistance

From the inception of the Zionist project, there has been courageous Palestinian resistance. In 1936, Palestinians launched an armed uprising against the British authorities and the Zionist settlers. The British brutally crushed the uprising in 1939 and passed emergency laws condemning to death any Palestinian found with a gun.¹ Throughout the Nakba, outgunned Palestinians in cities and towns waged courageous resistance to ethnic cleansing.

Each time the resistance of the Palestinian people has been violently suppressed, new waves and forms of struggle have come forward. In the context of the global upsurge of the 1960s, Palestinian guerrilla organizations launched armed struggle against Israel with the aim of creating a democratic, secular (non-religious) state throughout Palestine. In March 1968 Palestinian fighters held off a major Israeli attack at Karameh, Jordan.² Yasser Arafat and the Fatah organization and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) emerged as a respected leadership within this armed struggle.

The high tide of mass resistance in the late '60s, however, ran into obstacles that Fatah and the PLO were unable to surmount. The leadership increasingly turned to reliance on Arab regimes and the Soviet Union, and, in actual fact, to fighting in order to get Israel to negotiate a so-called mini-state—rather than fighting for a liberated Palestine. All this occurred in a context in which the wave of post-World War 2 national liberation struggles around the world was ebbing and the contention between the U.S. and the now-imperialist Soviet Union was intensifying.

Here, it must be noted that one way Israel (and the U.S.) worked to undermine the resistance of the Palestinian people was to promote Islamic fundamentalist forces like Hamas, in opposition to more progressive, secular nationalist opposition to Zionism. The *Washington Post* acknowledged, for example, “In the 1980s, for instance, the Israeli government decided to weaken the secular Fatah movement headed by Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat by promoting the rise of Islamic parties as a counterweight, on the theory that Islamic groups would not have the same nationalistic impulses. So Fatah’s social networks were dismantled by the Israeli government, but it went easy on Islamic charitable networks. This decision fueled the rise of Hamas as a political force....”³

Despite unending repression, the Palestinian people continued to find ways to protest and rebel. The first Intifada (an Arabic word meaning “to shake”) began in December of 1987 with uprisings in Gaza. It pitted stone-throwing youth, with wide support throughout Palestine and around the world, against occupying Israeli soldiers. In 2000, a second Intifada was sparked by Israeli leader Ariel Sharon’s consciously provocative visit to the Al-Haram Ash-Sharif Muslim holy site in Jerusalem guarded by 1,000 armed Israeli soldiers. It unleashed mounting Palestinian frustration, rage and despair over the failure of the “peace process” to address their basic rights.

Most recently, new waves and forms of protest have emerged in Palestine not tied to either the Palestinian Authority or Hamas. In some ways, openings for that resistance have been facilitated by international activists who have stood with Palestinians in courageous protest against mass Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes in Gaza and opposing the Apartheid Wall in the West Bank. This has not substituted for, but instead brought attention to, the continuing refusal of the Palestinian masses to kneel down. Ongoing attempts by international and Palestinian activists to break the siege of Gaza are shining a spotlight on conditions there.

¹ *Our Roots Are Still Alive* by Joy Bonds, Jimmy Emerman, Linda John, Penny Johnson, and Paul Rupert, 1977, Peoples Press, page 68. [back]

² See “Fact Sheet—Palestine: A History of Occupation and Resistance,” *Revolution #52*, June 25, 2006. [back]

³ “Unintended Consequences Pose Risks for Mideast Policy” by Glenn Kessler, January 7, 2009, *Washington Post*. Also see documentation of Israeli support, including funding for the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas in the article “Hamas history tied to Israel” by Richard Sale, June 18, 2002, United Press International.≈

Question: Does the Holocaust Justify the Dispossession of the Palestinian People

For many the “bottom-line” argument for the state of Israel is this: the Jewish people, worldwide, need a state to which they can go for protection should another nation take up Hitler’s project of extermination of the Jews.

Let us state in no uncertain terms that the Holocaust was clearly one of the great crimes of modern history. But on a very basic moral level: how does a crime against one people (the Jews) committed by the government of another (the Germans)—no matter how horrific that crime—justify the dispossession, exile, constant humiliation and oppression, and denial of self-determination to a third (the Palestinians)? It does not and it cannot. An argument could perhaps be made that, as part of the post-war reconstruction of Europe and as part of reparations for these horrendous crimes, provisions should have been made to enable the Jewish people to choose some form of autonomy or self-determination within Eastern Europe, using German lands and resources to carry this out; but this argument was not only never seriously entertained by the victorious powers at the time, but when someone like the journalist Helen Thomas commits the unpardonable sin of mentioning this notion, as she did a few months ago, she is immediately subjected to public humiliation and career death.¹

To approach this question another way, the slogan “Never Again” can be taken in two ways. One way is that “never again shall it be allowed that crimes against humanity can go on and people will be able to plead ignorance or impotence as an excuse for doing nothing to stop those crimes”; the other way is to say that “never again will *my* people be fucked over, and anything that is done to justify preventing that is allowable.” There is a world of difference between those two moral stands.

Further, let’s look at the historical context of the Holocaust. The Holocaust was part of a “larger project.” The Nazi regime conflated Judaism and communism; that is, the Nazis rolled them into one big enemy, the so-called Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy. The Nazis regarded the communist project of emancipation—which included the abolition of anti-Semitism—as utterly intolerable and evil; the participation of some Jews in this project only added to their hatred. As the Nazi forces invaded the Soviet Union, the counter-revolutionary forces from among the Soviet citizenry which supported them were the same ones who eagerly assisted in the extermination of the Jews and the murder of communists.

This part of World War 2 was, in a real sense, a fight between two different visions of what it meant to be human. Whatever the shortcomings of the socialist Soviet Union at that time, two different worlds based on two different visions confronted each other, captured in the respective watchwords of their movements: “Deutschland Uber Alles” (“Germany Over All”) versus the emancipation of all humanity. For this among other reasons, the “Eastern Front” (where the Soviet Red Army defeated the great majority of the German Wehrmacht [war machine]) was a war zone of particular ruthlessness. Very few Americans know that, in addition to the six million Jews pitilessly exterminated by the Nazis, the German army was responsible for the deaths of some 28 million Soviet citizens! (And here, too, when someone mentions *that* inconvenient truth—as Oliver Stone did a few months back²—they too are be publicly pilloried.)

So long as imperialism exists, the majority of nations and peoples will be oppressed by a relative minority of dominant nations. It is important and valuable and just—in fact, it is *absolutely necessary*—that people stand up to that oppression, refuse to tolerate it, resist it, and work to abolish it. But if that turns into a fight for national rights *at the expense of another people’s rights*, then it is not so fine—then it is on the road to very quickly becoming reactionary. The only way to be finally sure that there will be no more genocides, of any kind and against any people, is to abolish imperialism itself—to, yes, emancipate *all* humanity, and nothing less.

¹ In the course of a May 27, 2010 “interview” outside the White House by a pro-Israel rabbi, Helen Thomas said Israel should “get the hell out of Palestine...” Within hours, the 89-year-old Thomas, long known as Dean of the White House press corps, had been forced by media pillorying, pro-Israel organizations, and the Obama administration into retirement. For more, see *Revolution* #203, June 12, 2010, or revcom.us.

² In a July 25, 2010 interview with London’s *Times*, filmmaker Oliver Stone said that Hitler might have done “far more damage” by killing 25-30 million Soviet citizens during World War 2 than by killing six million Jews. When asked why he thought there was so much more emphasis on the Holocaust than on the deaths of tens of millions of Soviet citizens, Stone said it was mainly because of a powerful Jewish lobby within the U.S. Coming under fierce attack by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the American Jewish Committee and other pro-Zionist organizations, Stone clarified his remarks, saying he did not intend in any way to belittle the atrocity that was the Holocaust.~

Revolution Responds to Question on Nature of Holocaust

from *Revolution* #215, October 31, 2010

Revolution received the following letter from a reader:

I thought your special issue on Israel was very good. I got a lot out of how you situated the stages of the development of Zionism and Israel in relation to what was going on with the imperialist powers at any given time. But it strikes me that the Holocaust is a very complex phenomenon, demanding more explanation than you gave it in the article. Could you respond?

Editors Respond:

This is an important question that deserves and requires some additional exploration. The discussion of the causes of the Holocaust, and the relationship between that terrible crime and Zionism, was an important element of our special issue on Israel. As the reader points out, this was part of overall situating the factors that made Zionism a viable force in the world, within a whole complex set of developments in Europe, with the Holocaust being a very important part of that.

The special issue of *Revolution*, and in particular the article, “Bastion of Enlightenment... or Enforcer for Imperialism: The Case of ISRAEL,” Page ____ and the shorter article, “Question: Does the Holocaust Justify the Dispossession of the Palestinian People?” Page) ____ expose that the Holocaust was a crime of *imperialism*. The Holocaust was a terrible crime. And as the special issue on Israel pointed out, and we will expand on here, this was not some inexplicable crime that can only be “understood” as an expression of humanity’s capacity to do evil, or some eternal and inherent anti-Semitism. Instead, the Holocaust was the product, in complex ways, of the workings of the system of capitalism-imperialism. And, the issue makes the case that it is utterly unjust, immoral, and without basis to defend the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, and the establishment of the Zionist state of Israel, on the basis of the Holocaust.

As we wrote: “Let us state in no uncertain terms that the Holocaust was clearly one of the great crimes of modern history. But on a very basic moral level: how does a crime against one people (the Jews) committed by the government of another (the Germans)—no matter how horrific that crime—justify the dispossession, exile, constant humiliation and oppression, and denial of self-determination to a third (the Palestinians)? It does not and it cannot.”

But all this does require examination in more detail, and in many dimensions.

In responding to this question from a reader, we will not attempt an overall analysis of all the causes of the Holocaust. But we will explore some key political, economic, social, and yes—religious—factors underlying this great crime. And in the process, further deconstruct and expose claims that Israel’s existence is justified by the Holocaust.

In discussing the underlying causes of the Holocaust, the special issue of *Revolution* on Israel focused on the factor of the massive and bloody clash between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and the alignment of Jewish people in relation to that¹. “The Nazi regime conflated Judaism and communism; that is, the Nazis rolled them into one big enemy, the so-called Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy. The Nazis regarded the communist project of emancipation—including the abolition of anti-Semitism—as utterly intolerable and evil; the participation of Jews in this project only added to their hatred. As the Nazi forces invaded the Soviet Union, the counter-revolutionary forces from among the Soviet citizenry which supported them were the same ones who eagerly assisted in the extermination of the Jews and the murder of communists.”²

This was, indeed, one—and a very significant—factor behind the Nazis’ “final solution,” that is, their attempt to literally kill off nearly all the Jewish people in Europe, along with the Roma people (referred to as Gypsies), gays, and others. But there were other factors—both long-term and immediate—behind the Holocaust, particularly rooted in centuries of promotion of fear and hatred of Jews by the ruling establishment in Europe, and the powerful role of Christianity in the ruling order. And Hitler’s fanatical nationalism that carried with it an absurd, yet foundational notion of “racial purity.” Even the connections between Hitler’s war on the Soviet Union and his anti-Semitism were multi-layered and complex.

The Immediate Situation Behind the “Final Solution”

The Nazi plan for the mass murder of the Jews of Europe was laid out and implementation orchestrated in gruesome detail at the Wannsee Conference, held in the Berlin suburb of the same name in January, 1942. The agenda of this conference was, explicitly, what the Nazis called the “Final solution to the Jewish question.”

The Conference confronted, from the perspective of the Nazi leadership, how to carry out the “cleansing” of German-occupied territories of Jews. This ethnic cleansing

of the Jews had been part of the Nazi program for some time, but a set of developments and circumstances—including setbacks Germany was encountering in World War 2, created a situation where, at Wannsee, even more extreme measures towards the Jews were adopted.

Leading into, and early in the war, the Nazis had explored possibilities for massive deportation of Jews from Europe—including forced emigration from Europe to African countries dominated by European imperialism, including Madagascar.³

But the Nazis were unable to implement mass deportation of Jews from Germany and German-occupied areas for a number of reasons. One was the refusal of the “Allies” to accept Jewish deportees.⁴ Another was the continuing domination of naval passageways that the Germans had hoped to use to deport Jews from Europe by British naval power.

Further, the Nazis had hoped to send large numbers of able-bodied Jews to die in forced labor on their Eastern Front. But on the eve of the Wannsee Conference, the Germans began to suffer serious military setbacks in the war with the Soviet Union, and made an assessment that they did not have the resources or freedom to implement the scale of forced labor involved in that plan.

There were other immediate factors behind the adoption, at Wannsee, of the “final solution” in the form of death camps. Among them, serious food and housing shortages in German-occupied territories in Eastern Europe. Local Nazi officials, along with allied local fascists, demanded these shortages be mitigated by seizing the homes and property of Jews.

All of these factors combined to set the stage for the horrific crime of the killing of some six million Jews in Europe. The Nazis, led by Hitler, unleashed and carried out vicious attacks on the Jews as soon as they took power in 1933 (including building the Dachau concentration camp). Prior to 1942 many Jews were slaughtered, and Nazi officials made statements about the need to exterminate the Jews. Wannsee marked an extreme escalation of even this situation. The Nazis adopted and put into motion detailed, and definitive plans for the most thorough and efficient murder of all Jews in areas under their control—setting in motion the deportation of remaining Jews under Nazi control to *death camps*.⁵

Drawing on a Deep Well of Anti-Semitism

Beyond, and underlying the immediate agenda that produced the “final solution,” an interweaving set of

political, economic, and ideological factors formed the historical backdrop for the Nazis’ vicious anti-Semitism.

One profoundly influential factor was the generalized virulent, violent anti-Semitism that was pervasive in Europe for over a thousand years. From the time that the Roman emperor Constantine adopted Christianity as state religion, Christianity was tightly integrated with the political, economic, and ideological domination of oppressing classes in Europe. The Catholic Church was an extremely powerful element of the ruling state structures in feudal Europe.

The Jews, as non-Christians, were outsiders—ostracized, and periodically persecuted. This was justified in part by the explosive claim that Jews had committed “deicide”—the killing of a god!—by refusing in great numbers to follow Jesus and, according to Christian myth, legend, and theology, agreeing to his crucifixion at the hands of the Roman authorities.

The Spanish Inquisition in the decades around 1500 saw the use of waterboarding torture, and the burning of Jews at the stake. Jews who refused to “convert” to Christianity were killed or driven from the country.

The Rise of Capitalism and the Enlightenment: The Impact on Jews...

The rise of the bourgeoisie and capitalism in Europe was accompanied by the Enlightenment—an ideological and political trend. In the economic base of society, as well as in the superstructure (the laws, customs, and thinking of people) these developments gave rise to seismic changes. These changes had great, and contradictory, impact on the status of Jews.

Speaking of the ideologists of the French Revolution, but applicable more broadly to the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the Enlightenment era, Frederick Engels wrote:

“The great men who in France were clearing men’s minds for the coming revolution acted in an extremely revolutionary way themselves. They recognized no external authority of any kind. Religion, conceptions of nature, society, political systems—everything was subjected to the most unsparing criticism: everything had to justify its existence before the judgment-seat of reason or give up existence. The reasoning intellect became the sole measure of everything. It was the time when, as Hegel says, the world was stood on its head, first in the sense that the human head and the principles arrived at by its thinking claimed to be the basis of all human action and association; but then later also in the wider sense that the reality which was

in contradiction with these principles was, in fact, turned upside down. Every previous form of society and state, every old traditional notion was flung into the lumber-room as irrational; the world had hitherto allowed itself to be led solely by prejudice; everything in the past deserved only pity and contempt. The light of day, the realm of reason, now appeared for the first time; henceforth superstition, injustice, privilege and oppression were to be superseded by eternal truth, eternal justice, equality based on nature, and the inalienable rights of man.

“We know today that this realm of reason was nothing more than the idealized realm of the bourgeoisie; that eternal justice found its realization in bourgeois justice; that equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law; that bourgeois property was proclaimed as one of the most essential rights of man; and that the government of reason, Rousseau’s social contract, came into being, and could only come into being, as a bourgeois-democratic republic. The great thinkers of the eighteenth century were no more able than their predecessors to go beyond the limits imposed on them by their own epoch.” (*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*)

As part of subjecting religion, conceptions of nature, society, and political systems “to the most unsparing criticism,” irrational hatred and fear of Jews, the exclusion of Jews from economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life, and different forms of prejudice, persecution, and oppression came under attack. The bourgeois-democratic revolution that overthrew the French monarchy and nobility granted Jews full political rights. And the 1776 revolution in the U.S. against England institutionalized the separation of church and state.

Opposition to anti-Semitism arose along with other enlightened movements like those to abolish slavery and grant equality to women. All this was fiercely contested, both by pre-capitalist forces and institutions, and among different sections and trends in the bourgeoisie.

Within this explosion of social turmoil and intellectual ferment, there was a lessening of elements of centuries of oppression and marginalization of the Jewish people. And, Jews were active in all the economic, social, philosophical, and political movements of the time. The Jewish philosopher Spinoza identified places where the Bible and the Torah (essentially the first five books of the Bible adhered to by Judaism) are self-contradictory, and he did other rational studies that revealed that the Bible could not be the inerrant word of an all-knowing, all-powerful god who actively intervened in the lives of humans. For this, Spinoza was excommunicated by the Jewish religious authorities, and Protestant and Catholic authorities censored, burned, and banned his writings.

The capitalist system brought into being new forms of grinding exploitation and brutal oppression. Vast numbers of people who had suffered under feudal rule in the countryside were now violently and forcefully “freed” of their connection to the land, and driven and pulled into the slums and sweatshops of European cities. Through this, a new class of exploited people—the proletariat—emerged, an international class which owns nothing, yet has created and makes the modern, highly socialized means of production work. In some ways, the exclusion of Jewish people from wide areas of economic and political life in pre-capitalist societies in Eastern Europe facilitated their entry into new realms of economic and social life created by the rise of capitalism. In much of Eastern Europe (where the overwhelming majority of the world’s Jews had lived for a thousand years), economic and social status was historically related to ownership of, or permission granted by the nobility to work the land. For hundreds of years, in these agrarian societies, legal and social prohibitions, persecution, and pogroms (mob violence against Jews) prevented or greatly restricted Jewish people from engaging in farming. They ended up concentrated in the cities where they acquired craft and other skills.

Locked out of many professions (like the military and civil services), many Jews ended up in professions like medicine, finance, and law. These professions rose in societal influence and prestige with the advance of capitalism and the decline of feudalism. Jewish traditions of literacy based in theological study and debate (among men at least) were advantageous in entering new arenas of intellectual and scientific inquiry.

And Jewish people were disproportionately represented in the radical and revolutionary movements of the time, including the communist movement for the abolition of all exploitation and oppression.

...and Ongoing Prejudice and Persecution

All this was intensely and wildly contradictory. As Engels summed up, the *formal* equality enshrined by the bourgeois-democratic revolutions and their ideologues actually covered up profound inequalities built into a system where the fundamental relations in society are grounded in the exploitation and oppression of the many by a relative handful. And where the drive of the capitalists to expand their profits/their capital dominates all of society and all the relations among people in society.

But even the fulfillment of the promise of formal equality was highly contested and uneven. The rise of capitalism emphasized the ideology of equality. In previous oppressive societies, people had their place in life defined by the social class, or religion, or the gender they were born into,

and this was enforced in the realm of law, and in people's thinking. These ideas (and laws) were obstacles to the capitalist reorganization of society. And in the context of the promotion of formal equality, old customs, laws, and prejudices were subjected to criticism and in different ways knocked aside.

All this gave rise to all kinds of movements for equality. But as the bourgeoisie came to power, it often found it in its interests to limit or oppose demands for even formal equality—for women, for example.

And Christianity remained, for powerful sections of the ruling classes, an essential factor in legitimizing and maintaining (and enforcing) their rule. Leaders of the Protestant rebellion against the Catholic Church—expressing the outlook of the rising bourgeoisie in opposition to the absolute rule of kings, nobles, and the church hierarchy—challenged the authority of the Pope. At the same time, Martin Luther, the leader of this Protestant rebellion, wrote that Jews were a “base, whoring people.” Luther advocated that Jewish synagogues and schools should be set on fire, Jewish prayer books destroyed, rabbis forbidden to preach, homes razed, and property and money confiscated. Luther wrote, of the Jews, “[W]e are at fault in not slaying them.” (Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, 1543)

In short, the profound changes in the economic foundation of society associated with the rise of capitalism gave rise to closely related changes in law, culture, and thinking. Jews found greater acceptance in commerce and cultural life. But at the same time, powerful countervailing trends erupted. In many realms the bourgeois revolutions were not able to, and did not, even complete the ruptures with feudal traditions and prejudices—traditions, institutions, and prejudices that they found useful and essential to maintaining social order and their class rule.⁶ Further complicating the terrain was the fact that in much of Eastern and Southern Europe, feudal economic and social relations remained powerfully embedded in society. With the rise of capitalism in Europe, Jews both entered into broader society in unprecedented ways, and were the victims of periodic pogroms instigated directly or indirectly by the ruling classes.

Imperialism, World War 1, and the Rise of Hitler

The clash between openings for Jews and various forms of backlash and attacks on the status of Jewish people formed a tense contradiction. *Both* sides of this complex equation developed in intensity with the rise of imperialism in the late 1800s, and the spreading of capitalism into still semi-feudal Eastern Europe.

The earth-shaking changes ushered in by the emergence of

capitalism in Europe loosened and challenged, but did not come close to uprooting traditional theocratic-based fear and hatred of Jews. And even as great changes took place in the political and social landscape of Europe in the 1800s, and early 1900s, powerful forces in European society—including elements of the Christian establishment, along with feudal and other reactionary forces—lashed back at these changes, and, as part of that, targeted the Jews.

Sections of people were periodically enlisted in spasms of anti-Semitic violence. Peasants locked out of any scientific understanding of the forces that were upending their lives had their desperation channeled away from the ruling classes and towards the Jews. Even in the most cosmopolitan countries—like Germany—anti-Semitic demagoguery had an appeal among sections of small business owners and shopkeepers who tended to be blinded by their social and economic positions to the actual mainsprings of capitalist society.

At times, the status of Jews, served as political flashpoints in contention within the ruling classes. The Dreyfus Affair that divided France in the late 1890s and early 1900s involved the framing of a Jewish officer in the French military on bogus treason charges. It was a move by reactionary sections of the French army and church to reassert influence that had been curtailed by the French revolution. Radical bourgeois-democratic forces in France, including the influential intellectual Emile Zola, rallied behind Dreyfus and he was exonerated. For sections of the French bourgeoisie, the Dreyfus Affair was a challenge, and an opportunity to strike at remnants of feudal influences and impediments to the rise of—as they saw it—“true equality.”

The inexorable demand of capitalism to “expand or die,” including the contention of different imperialist powers over colonial domination, exploded into World War 1, from 1914 to 1918. As the special issue of *Revolution* on Israel identified: “On one side were Britain, France, the U.S. and Russia. On the other stood Germany, and the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman (Turkish) empires. Neither side was fighting for any greater cause than a bigger share of the plunder. Sixteen million people died as the armies of contending imperialists slaughtered each other, and civilians, to determine which imperialists would expand and which would be crushed. In the course of that war, empires crashed to the ground—most importantly the vast Russian empire, where a socialist revolution emerged victorious. In other parts of the world, the old order collapsed but the victorious imperialists raced in with new forms of domination.”

The horror and suffering of World War 1, along with the world's first successful socialist revolution in 1917, profoundly challenged—both in reality and in people's

thinking—the permanence of the existing order. And this was as true in Germany as anywhere. In the short two decades between the end of the first World War, and the beginning of the second World War, Germany saw both an attempt at socialist revolution (that was crushed by the German ruling class with invaluable aid from reformist “socialists” in the government), and then the rise of Hitler with his fascist (extreme, overtly and violently repressive) program for German imperialism.

Post World War 1 Germany had offered tradition-breaking openings to Jews in economic, political, and cultural life. By the 1920s, Jews were as accepted and assimilated in Germany as they were anywhere in capitalist Europe. At the same time, and partly in reaction to these changes in the status of Jews, Germany was a hotbed of anti-Semitic resentment. This resentment was felt, and fostered by powerful sections of the ruling class who saw changes in post-war Germany as treasonous, and inimical (intolerable obstacles) to Germany rising to the top of the imperialist world order.

These reactionary forces could continue to pluck the strings of irrational fear and hatred of Jews that were deeply embedded in the culture. German Jews ended up—as they had in the Dreyfus Affair in France—as flashpoints in conflicts within German society. But this time with terrible results.

Hitler’s Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust

As the special issue on Israel briefly alludes to, the German ruling class turned to Hitler, and his fascist program in all its dimensions, at a time of great crisis for German imperialism. The point of situating the roots of the Holocaust in the traditions of European culture and politics is not to argue that Hitler’s ferocious anti-Semitism and the Holocaust were *simply* extensions of traditional fears and hatred of Jews.

In re-cohering German society, Hitler *did* draw on a deep well of prejudice against Jews, and a long tradition of scapegoating Jews. But there were other factors that came together—in the situation faced by German imperialism, and in Hitler’s ideology—that led to the Holocaust.

Germany had been on the losing side of World War 1, and was cut out of the international division of Africa, Asia and Latin America by European, U.S., and Japanese imperialism. In the immediate aftermath of World War 1, Germany was devastated militarily and economically.

Many Germans drew the conclusion was that the horrific imperialist war—responsible for the deaths of some ten million people—and the system that gave rise to it, had to go. There was great attraction to the model of the Bolshevik

revolution in what became the Soviet Union. Others, including dominant sections of the ruling class, drew opposite conclusions: that the loss in the war was the result of weakness that had to be, and could only be overcome with more extreme nationalism and a return to a mythic and reactionary Germanic identity.

All these contradictions sharpened tremendously with the global Great Depression, which began in 1929. Germany’s economy had developed very dynamically after World War 1, and politically, the post-war Weimar Republic was a period of relative tolerance (again, based on the bloody suppression of an attempt at socialist revolution). During the Weimar period, reactionary fascist forces who seethed at what they perceived as the “betrayal” of German national interests by “weak” forces in the ruling class provided the ground from which Hitler emerged. Even as Hitler and his program emerged, he and his movement were kept somewhat in abeyance by the German ruling class.

But with the severe depression that wracked the capitalist world in the 1930s, the balance of forces within the German ruling class moved towards Hitler and his fascist program. They shared Hitler’s determination to end Germany’s exclusion from colonial super-exploitation that was choking the ability of German capital to expand in the face of rivals like Britain and France. And they saw in him a populist demagogue capable of channeling desperation and outrage of sections of the masses into appeals to vitriolic nationalism.

An immediate result of Hitler’s coming to power was the ruthless, violent crushing of Germany’s large communist movement. After the defeat of the revolution in Germany in the aftermath of World War 1, communists had again developed great influence among the poorer sections of the German working class in particular. And Hitler went after them with a vengeance. In the famous words of German theologian Martin Niemoller, “First they came for the communists...”⁷

Hitler’s Insane “Master Race” Theories

One significant dimension of Hitler’s ideology and agenda was his adoption of, and taking to extremes, the pseudo-science (fake science) of Eugenics along with bizarre “master race” theories. Absurd as these theories were, they found a home among Germans who gravitated towards a mythology that whipped up and supposedly “rationalized” national chauvinism and the superiority of their nation when the status, and very coherence of that nation seemed to be in question. And these theories were adopted as the ideology of the Nazi state—to devastating effect.

Eugenics claimed that humanity could be improved by forced sterilization of people with real or perceived physical or mental conditions (which included, along with genuine medical and mental handicaps, categories like homosexuality and poverty). These theories had significant influence in the rest of the world, including the U.S. in the period leading up to the rise of Hitler. In the U.S., laws and policies were implemented in less extreme ways in the form of forced sterilization, for example, of prisoners in some parts of the U.S. And Eugenics theory merged with traditional racism in significant parts of the U.S.—especially the South—as a force behind the adoption of laws and policies enforcing sterilization of Black people and others.

To Hitler, much of what he saw as weakness in German society was a result of the “dilution” of not only German culture, but the Aryan gene pool by “degenerates” (like the handicapped, gays, and people suffering from alcoholism), as well as the “dilution” of the gene pool by non-Aryans—particularly the Jews. Eugenics theories, along with other unscientific schools of anthropology and other realms, formed part of the framework from which Hitler developed his “master race” theory.⁸

And again, regardless of the extent to which other leading members of the Nazi power structure and German ruling class actually believed these insane theories (and some did), they took on a “life of their own.” A significant section of German people was mobilized behind this poisonous mythology that in turn invoked—and drew on—centuries of Christian anti-Semitism.

Hitler was not a “perfect fit” for German imperialism. German scientists working on nuclear weapons were handicapped by the exclusion of Jewish physicists and other scientists, as well as by ideological dictates that they not acknowledge the work of Jewish scientists like Einstein.⁹ And Hitler’s determination to exterminate the Jews factored into real divisions in the German ruling class over his whole program.¹⁰ But Hitler’s master race ideology, hyper-aggressive military policies, and brutally repressive domestic agenda—with its component of genocidal anti-Semitism, was overall adopted by the German ruling class as—if not a “perfect fit”—the perceived best solution to the situation they found themselves in.

Hitler’s Obsession with “Judeo-Bolshevism”

The Jews in Germany posed—by their very existence—a challenge to Hitler’s program of a tightly united German nation cohered by a mythology of an “Aryan master race.” These theories provided a—profoundly false—“justification” for German expansionism, domination of other countries, and the driving out or crushing of supposedly “inferior races.” Hitler’s “master race” lunacy

provided a core ideology for a movement that would crush internal dissent and embark on hyper-aggressive imperialist adventures.

Integrally mixed into all this was the relationship of Jews in World War 2 Europe to the communist revolution and the socialist Soviet Union. That relationship had different, complex, and contradictory components—including but not only in the political dimension. To Hitler, the threats to German imperialist interests from the Jews and the communist revolution were integrally intertwined.

Overall, Hitler’s conflation of Jews and communism reflected some, secondary elements of reality—there was an attraction among Jewish people to progressive and radical causes including communism. But this was coupled with mountains of exaggeration, distortion and outright invention, all underpinned by insanity, as reflected in the “master race” theories.

But a) Hitler’s program was seen as expeditious to dominant sections of the German ruling class (whether they themselves all believed all of Hitler’s master-race and anti-Semitic theories or not); and b) the adoption of these theories and programs had terrible implications and led to horrific crimes—including the Holocaust.¹¹

Needed: The Emancipation of Humanity, Not Zionism

A whole complex mix of political, ideological, and military factors converged to lead up to the great crime of the Holocaust. We have explored some of them here in expanding on the discussion in the special issue, and other factors are still beyond the scope of this article.

But the overall framing dynamic that set the stage for the Holocaust was the operation of global capitalism-imperialism. The Holocaust was not a pre-determined result of the workings of global imperialism, or even necessarily the only possible outcome of the situation confronting German imperialism. But it was a product of a whole series of policies adopted by the German imperialist ruling class in furtherance of their interests—both contention with their imperialist rivals, and their drive to crush the Soviet Union. Hitler’s virulent anti-Semitism served the mission of cohering and enforcing unity on the German “home front” for a horrific war, and in particular the war against the Soviet Union that resulted in over 20 million deaths.

And as noted in our special issue on Israel, the U.S. and the “democratic West” remained mostly silent and restrained in response to the Holocaust while it was taking place, refusing entry to Jews fleeing Hitler, and shared the Nazis’ determination to wipe the socialist Soviet Union off the map.

In this light, the Holocaust—a great crime of imperialism—in no way justifies Zionism, which, as our special issue makes clear, is *another crime of imperialism*.

The *Palestinian people* were not in any way responsible for the Holocaust. Their exile from their homeland through terrorist ethnic cleansing is utterly immoral and unjust, and cannot be defended by invoking the crimes of the Holocaust. Nor does the Holocaust in any way justify Israel's ongoing role as a global hitman for the same imperialist system that gave rise to the Holocaust.¹²

The solution to *all* oppression—in any form—cannot be achieved by a persecuted people turning on *another* oppressed people, as Zionism insists. Instead, as we pointed out in the special issue on Israel, “So long as imperialism exists, the majority of nations and peoples will be oppressed by a relative minority of dominant nations. It is important and valuable and just—in fact, it is *absolutely necessary*—that people stand up to that oppression, refuse to tolerate it, resist it, and work to abolish it. But if that turns into a fight for national rights *at the expense of another people's rights*, then it is not so fine—then it is on the road to very quickly becoming reactionary. The only way to be finally sure that there will be no more genocides, of any kind and against any people, is to abolish imperialism itself—to, yes, emancipate all humanity, and nothing less.”

¹ In two different articles in the special issue, the number of those killed in the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union was given in one article as 24 million, and in another article as 28 million. Both these figures, and numbers in between, and others in the same ballpark are given by historians and different sources as the death toll in that conflict. Conditions of a long, vicious war, with massive civilian casualties, and widespread deaths due to hunger, cold, and disease, among the population, along with a lack of today's level of sophisticated record keeping make it difficult to determine the exact numbers killed in that theater of World War 2, but all agree that the great majority of deaths in World War 2 in Europe were in the Soviet Union (see resources at wikipedia under “World_War_II_casualties.”)

² See “Question: Does the Holocaust Justify the Dispossession of the Palestinian People?”

³ The French surrender to the Nazis in World War 2, and Nazi expectations that Britain would capitulate as well, led the Nazis to anticipate “inheriting” and having access to France's extensive colonial empire. This formed a backdrop to the Nazi “Madagascar Plan,” to deport the Jews of Europe to Madagascar—a French colony in Africa.

⁴ See special issue of *Revolution* for documentation of the complicity of the U.S. in the Holocaust.

⁵ Minor adjustments in these policies were made for some countries in Western Europe under Nazi domination, where there were small numbers of Jews, and where it was the assessment of Nazi diplomats and others that rounding up and killing all the Jews would have very negative consequences – this policy was applied in Norway, for example, but affected very small numbers of Jews.

⁶ Even today, feudal and theocratic remnants like formal recognition of kings, queens, official state religions, and powerful “Christian Democratic” parties are integral to political life in modern Europe.

⁷ See “Martin Niemoller and the Lessons for this Moment,” by Toby O’Ryan, *Revolution*, Oct. 30, 2005, available at revcom.us.

⁸ Today, evolution-deniers claim that Hitler's “theories” of racial superiority were derived from or rooted in Darwin's theory of evolution. The opposite is true—the theory, and reality, of evolution debunks theories of racial superiority. As Ardea Skybreak writes in her book *The Science of Evolution and the Myth of Creationism: Knowing What's Real and Why It Matters*, “The main thing that evolution teaches us about race is that there is no such thing as truly distinct biological races of human beings!” (Insight Press, 2006, p. 166). What are called “races” are socially and culturally defined categories, with meaning in that sense, but not natural divisions of the human species. Throughout recent history, and down to the present day, oppressive forces have seized on what are actually fairly minor secondary characteristics of appearance like skin color, or the shape of the eyes, to create social categories of races—and on that basis to justify, and carry out, terrible oppression of whole peoples. For more on the actual nature of races, see “Evolution, Racist? No Way! The Creationist Big Lie,” *Revolution* Feb. 15, 2009, available at revcom.us.

⁹ Many German Jewish scientists were forced to flee Nazi Germany, and were welcomed by the U.S. – even as other German Jews fleeing Hitler were refused entry to the U.S. They were a factor in the U.S. developing the atomic bomb ahead of the Nazis.

¹⁰ For example, Hitler's Secretary of State, Ernst von Weizsäcker, who claimed after the war that he had opposed Hitler, and who maintained some contacts at least with more actively pro-Western factions of the German military during the war, was not invited to the Wannsee Conference because Hitler's closest associates suspected he was not fully on board with the “final solution.”

¹¹ For an in-depth and insightful exploration of the factors behind Hitler's anti-Semitism, and factors that led to the Holocaust, see *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?* by Arno J. Mayer.

¹² See for example, “The U.S. ... Israel ... and Crimes Around the World,” special issue of *Revolution* Oct. 4, 2010.≈



BRINGING FORWARD ANOTHER WAY

by **Bob Avakian,**
Chairman of the
Revolutionary
Communist
Party, USA

*The following are excerpts from *Bringing Forward Another Way*: an edited version of a talk by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, to a group of Party supporters, in the fall of 2006. Subheads and footnotes have been added for publication here. This talk is available in its entirety on-line at revcom.us, and has been published as a pamphlet. The essential analysis laid out in this talk has ongoing importance, and we are reprinting these sections in this issue for their particular relevance.*

More on the “Two Historically Outmodeds”

This leads me to the question of World War 3. A number of pundits and “analysts”—including once again right-wing squawking heads like Glenn Beck—have continued to insist: “This is World War 3, we are already in World War 3.” This specter of World War 3 involves, in a real sense, both considerable distortion of reality and actual reality. And this does get to the “two historically outmodeds” and how in fact they do reinforce each other even while opposing each other. As I have formulated this:

“What we see in contention here with Jihad on the one hand and McWorld/McCrusade on the other hand, are historically outmoded strata among colonized and oppressed humanity up against historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system. These two reactionary poles reinforce each other, even while opposing each other. If you side with either of these ‘outmodeds,’ you end up strengthening both.”

While this is a very important formulation and is crucial to understanding much of the dynamics driving things in the world in this period, at the same time we do have to be clear about which of these “historically outmodeds” has done the greater damage and poses the greater threat to humanity: It is the “historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system,” and in particular the U.S. imperialists.

Now, it’s not that these other forces—the “historically outmoded strata among colonized and oppressed humanity,” and more specifically the Jihadist forces of Islamic fundamentalism—it is not as if they don’t pose threats to the ordinary people in many countries, and it’s not as if they don’t do real harm to the interests of the masses of people throughout the world. Even such things as that *New York Times* Sunday Magazine article¹ I referred to, and more generally the arguments of these ruling class representatives about Iran and nuclear weapons—it’s not as if there is no aspect of reality that they are speaking to, even while they are grossly distorting much of reality. It is a fact that at least many of these Islamic fundamentalists have hit upon a certain strategy which is really reactionary and extremely wrong, and does involve completely unjustified actions against civilians—this is their answer to what are greatly unequal (or, as the imperialists say, “asymmetrical”) power relations, particularly as this is concentrated in the military sphere: the overwhelming superiority of the imperialists, in conventional military terms, in relation to the nations and people they dominate, oppress, and exploit. And the idea that Iran or even North Korea could get a nuclear weapon and slip it to some other people—and that it wouldn’t be traceable to the state that produced the weapon—this is not simply and entirely imperialist propaganda. It’s not completely far-fetched.

Recently Ted Koppel wrote a whole article about this, explicitly invoking the “Godfather”—the movie *Godfa-*

ther I. You see, some of these artistic works have a certain universality, although different classes view them differently. And, speaking from the standpoint of the U.S. imperialist ruling class, Koppel invoked the scene in *Godfather I* after Mafia Godfather Don Vito Corleone's oldest son, Sonny, has been killed, in the context of war between different Mafia families. Finally, after this has gone on for awhile, these Mafia families have a "sit-down," to try to negotiate an end to this warfare. And Don Vito Corleone (played by Marlon Brando) has real largeness of mind, in terms of the relations and interests among these Mafia families. He says:

"For the sake of our larger interests and peace among us, I will forgive the death of my older son. But what I will not forgive is if anything happens to my son Michael. If a car accident should happen to him..." —he goes on to list a bunch of different things that are apparent accidents, and he says: "If any of those things happen to my son Michael, I'm going to blame some people in this room, and that I will not forgive."

Invoking this scene, Ted Koppel says we should learn from this and apply it in our dealings with Iran—we should say to Iran:

"Okay, go ahead and have your bomb, but if any such bomb ever goes off anywhere around our interests, you're on the hit list right away. We won't even argue about it, we won't even investigate, we won't even think about who did it—we'll just blame you and act accordingly. Now, if you want to get a bomb, go ahead."

Koppel's argument here is not just large-scale gangster logic on behalf of U.S. imperialism—it is that, but it is not just that. It is not just a matter of imperialist manipulation and demagoguery. There is a reality that Koppel is speaking to—from the point of view of U.S. imperialism. We should understand the complexities in all this. I have pointed out before that, sooner or later if things keep going the way they are—and in particular if these "two historically outmodeds" continue to drive much of the dynamics of things and reinforce each other even while opposing each other—then things could get to the point where some of these Islamic fundamentalist forces will get some real weapons of mass destruction, maybe even nuclear ones, and then the shit's going to really fly on a whole other level. And, to refer back to the point I made earlier in discussing

Vietnam and the "domino theory," these Islamic fundamentalists are not guided by the same kind of thinking and approach that the Vietnamese were, even with their shortcomings from a communist standpoint. These Islamic fundamentalists are not communists! They are not revolutionary or progressive forces. They do not look at the world the same way. They are reactionary, they are historically outmoded. They look at the world from that standpoint—from the standpoint of their reactionary philosophical, or theological, worldview—and what they do flows from this.

In this, they are not unique. This is, in an essential sense, common to all religious fundamentalists, including those who have positions of significant power and influence within the ruling class of the U.S. at this time (and this is why I have referred to Jihad on the one hand and "McWorld/McCrusade" on the other hand). This same basic worldview can be seen in the comments of one of these colonels or generals in the U.S. military about Pat Tillman's family.² This U.S. officer said: The reason the Tillman family is making such a big fuss about how Pat Tillman got killed is that they're atheists and they think he's just going to become worm food. He was saying that if the family were Christians and believed that Pat Tillman were going to "a better place," they wouldn't be so upset. Well, that's the mentality of religious fundamentalists.

And that is the mentality, in the general ideological sense, that characterizes Islamic fundamentalists too. They look at the world very differently than people who approach it in a rational and scientific way. They "live in a different world"—a different world than the real one—in terms of how they perceive reality and the driving and defining forces of reality. All this is part of the complexity of things, and we are not going to get anywhere if we don't engage and grapple with this complexity in a very deep and all-sided way, utilizing the best of our materialism and dialectics, and keep on working at it.

Now, having said that, it is important to return to the question of which of these "two historically outmodeds" has done the greater damage and poses the greater threat to humanity. Some people, including some who claim not only to be anti-imperialist but even to be "Marxist," have criticized or denounced this "two historically outmodeds" formulation as being pro-imperialist because, they claim, this statement fails

to distinguish between imperialism and the countries and peoples oppressed by imperialism. Well, if you are supposedly a “Marxist,” you might be able to look at the wording of this formulation and notice that it says: “historically outmoded strata *among oppressed and colonized humanity* up against historically outmoded *ruling strata of the imperialist system.*” If you were even close to being a Marxist in reality, you would know that some distinction was in fact being made there, an important distinction, even while what is said about their both being historically outmoded and how they reinforce each other, even while opposing each other, is also real, and “operative.” But it is important to be clear about which has done and continues to do the greater damage, which has posed and does pose the greater threat to humanity. Clearly, and by far, it is the “ruling strata of the imperialist system.”

It is interesting, I recently heard about a comment that someone made relating to this, which I do think is correct and getting at something important. In relation to these “two historically outmodeds,” they made the point: “You could say that the Islamic fundamentalist forces in the world would be largely dormant if it weren’t for what the U.S. and its allies have done and are doing in the world—but you cannot say the opposite.” There is profound truth captured in that statement.

As a matter of general principle, and specifically sitting in this imperialist country, we have a particular responsibility to oppose U.S. imperialism, our “own” ruling class, and what it is doing in the world. But, at the same time, that doesn’t make these Islamic fundamentalist forces not historically outmoded and not reactionary. It doesn’t change the character of their opposition to imperialism and what it leads to and the dynamic that it’s part of—the fact that these two “historically outmodeds” *do* reinforce each other, even while opposing each other. And it is very important to understand, and to struggle for others to understand, that if you end up supporting either one of these two “historically outmodeds,” you contribute to strengthening both. It is crucial to break out of that dynamic—to bring forward another way.

Rejecting—and Breaking Out of—the Framework of the “War on Terror”³

For people living in the U.S., there is a particularity that needs to be continually gone back to, in relation to the “war on terror.” I have made the point that this is not entirely fabrication on the part of the Bush regime (and the imperialist ruling class generally). There are real aspects to this—or, better said, there is a reality to which these imperialists are speaking, even while they fundamentally distort reality. But, in essential terms, this “war on terror” is an imperialist program which, among other things, is aimed at blotting out and turning the attention of people, even people who should know better, away from reckoning with *the profound inequalities and oppressive relations that exist within different societies but especially on a world scale*, under the domination of the imperialist system and in particular U.S. imperialism, which boasts of being “the world’s only superpower” and is determined to maintain all this. If you accept the terms of “war on terror”—and especially if, as part of this, you do not look more deeply at the more fundamental relations in the world, the effects and consequences of *that* and the ways in which it is at the root of developments in the world now—you will get increasingly caught within the logic that what is most important is that “we” (meaning the people in the U.S.—and “I” above all!) “have to be protected.” You get caught up thinking and arguing about what should be “the real war on terror.” This has happened even to a lot of progressive people—including those who frame their opposition to the Iraq war in terms of considering it a “diversion from the war on terror”—they become trapped within the wrong logic. If you are carried along by this logic, you can end up in a very bad place.

You cannot get to a correct understanding of things, and you cannot move toward the only possible resolution of all this that is in the interests of humanity, by proceeding from within the terms of the “war on terror.” Even while “the war on terror” is not entirely a fabrication, even while there are important aspects of reality that it is reflecting—from the point of view of the imperialists—it *is* a fabrication in the form in which it is presented to people. That contradiction is important to understand: There are important aspects of reality that this formulation of “war on terror” (or “war against terrorism”) is reflecting; but, as it is presented, it is a fabrication. Its *essence* is not “a war on terror.” It

is essentially a war *for empire*. And the confrontation with Islamic fundamentalist, and other, forces (even those which actually do employ tactics and methods which can legitimately be called “terrorist”) *takes place within, and is essentially framed by, that context and that content of war for empire*.

¹ See “Islam, Terror and the Second Nuclear Age,” by Noah Feldman, *New York Times Magazine*, October 29, 2006.

² Pat Tillman was a professional football player who, after September 11, [2001] left the Arizona Cardinals to join the U.S. military. His brother was also in the U.S. military. Pat Tillman was killed in Afghanistan—by “friendly fire” from U.S. forces, as it turned out—yet U.S. military and government officials kept trying to cover this up and deceive people, including Tillman’s family, about what actually happened. Tillman was played up as a big national war hero, but as his family continued to dig for the real story of what happened to him, they became more and more alienated and angry because of the lies and deception they kept running into. And they have become increasingly critical not only of how the military dealt with Pat Tillman and his death but of the military and the government more generally, and of the Iraq war specifically.

³ This talk was given during the presidency of George W. Bush. Since Obama has assumed office, the specific slogan “war on terror” has been de-emphasized; but the essential “national security” policy formulated and prosecuted by the Bush regime under the rubric of “war on terror”—both in its international aggression and its trampling on democratic rights and safeguards, including use of torture and now, under Obama, the assertion of a presidential right to kill U.S. citizens not in war zones without even a semblance of due process—has continued virtually unabated and has in some respects intensified.≈

Crimes Around the World

The U.S. ... Israel ... and

The state of Israel has functioned as a military bastion to defend and extend U.S. domination over the strategic area of the Middle East and worldwide—in the context of establishing U.S. supremacy over other imperialist powers. Israel is by far the largest recipient of U.S. support: in outright grants, military sales, and economic support.

From 1981 to 2004, the U.S. sent \$1.8 billion a year in military support to Israel; since 2004 that number has been raised to \$2.4 billion. Part of the bargain is that the U.S. often utilizes Israeli military and intelligence as a proxy to distance itself from some of its most odious and barbaric crimes around the world.

1 Guatemala, 1978-1984: One of the most barbaric atrocities in history occurred in Guatemala under the direction of the U.S. and its Guatemalan puppet, the Christian fundamentalist butcher Rios Montt. This slaughter included beheadings, massive rape, slaughter of pregnant women, and the abduction of Mayan children who were sold or given as slaves to functionaries of the fascist Guatemalan regime. At least 180,000 Mayan peasants were murdered. "Operation Sofia," as it was called, was determined by the United Nations "Historical Clarification Commission" to have committed "acts of genocide against groups of Mayan people." In 1982, as exposures of these massacres were coming to light, the *New York Times* reported that U.S. "Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. prompted Israel to do more in Guatemala." Israel played an essential and central role in the epic slaughter—supplying transport to remote villages, war planes, military training, "advisors," and 10,000 Uzis. In 1982, under the direction of the U.S. military, Israeli commanders devised and helped implement a scorched earth policy (burn all, kill all) for the Guatemalan highlands.

2 Argentina 1976-1983: In the 1970s, the U.S. was under worldwide pressure from its imperialist rivals in the formerly socialist, but now imperialist, Soviet Union. U.S. rulers were especially concerned about growing Soviet influence in South and Central America—regions they had long considered their "backyard." To counter the Soviet presence, "Operation Condor" was hatched by U.S. intelligence agencies as a campaign of political terror and repression in the "southern cone" of South America, including Argentina. In 1976, the military junta in Argentina began a reign of terror known as la guerra sucia—"the dirty war." U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger told a meeting of Argentine generals "if there are things that have to be done, you should do them quickly." In the nightmare that followed, up to 30,000 people were abducted, tortured, and "disappeared." Students, intellectuals, trade unionists, leftists and suspected armed guerrillas were targeted. The military's widespread pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic outlook produced "particular brutality in the treatment of prisoners of Jewish origin." Yet, during this period, and under the direction of the U.S. baton, Israel became one of the Argentine junta's largest arm suppliers, providing jet planes, missiles, patrol boats, spare parts, small arms and ammunition.



August 2007, Guatemala. Villagers at a mass grave of 12 people massacred by the Guatemalan army in 1982.

April 2007, Argentina. At a memorial, pictures of people disappeared during the 1976-1983 "Dirty War."

The U.S. ... Israel ... and

Crimes Around the World

The U.S. does this because it is an imperialist mega-power spanning the globe, and it enforces its domination with savage repression, including mass murder, genocide, torture, rape, and dispossession of entire peoples. Israel's function as a militarized state bristling with the most advanced weaponry deludes many people into thinking Israel is somehow acting against U.S. interests as it perpetrates monstrous crimes against humanity.

But the cold fact is this is one important means by which U.S. domination has been enforced. U.S. backing for all Israel's crimes is not because the American political process has been corrupted by the Israel lobby or "the Jews." The U.S. arms and supports this brutal regime because doing so serves its global objectives.



September 8, 1978, Tehran, Iran "Black Friday" The Shah's troops open fire on demonstrators, killing hundreds.

6 Middle East

3 Iran

5 India

4 South Africa



January 28, 2009, Palestinians in the rubble of their home in the Gaza Strip town of Jebaliya, look up at incoming Israeli drones.

3 Iran 1967-1986: The Shah of Iran was installed in power by a U.S.-engineered coup in 1953. The Shah was a brutal tyrant who turned Iran—oil rich and strategically situated—into a client of U.S. imperialism. Beginning in the late 1950s, Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, played a major role in training the Shah's notoriously brutal Savak. Thousands of Iranians were tortured and killed by Savak. After Israel's wars on its neighbors in 1967 and 1973, and as opposition to the Shah's regime pulsed through Iran, Israel's "Project Flower" sent Iran up to \$500 million of military and police equipment.

4 South Africa 1948-1994: The apartheid regime of South Africa, which ended in 1994, enforced white supremacy as its official, legal system. It brutally dispossessed the black majority of their land, liberty and human rights. Millions of black people were forced into squalid "townships." "Pass laws" required black people to show ID at all times. South Africa acted as a bulwark of U.S. domination in southern Africa and Africa as a whole. For decades the U.S. "stood by" this ugly regime; for decades Israel armed South Africa, sending the racist regime Uzi submachine guns, fighter jets, patrol boats, missiles, communications and intelligence equipment, armored personnel carriers and artillery. Israel and South Africa worked together in their development of nuclear weapons.

5 India 2010: On July 1, 2010, a unit of the Andhra Pradesh Special Intelligence Bureau [Andhra Pradesh is a state in India] abducted and assassinated Azad, Communist Party of India (Maoist) Political Bureau member and spokesperson, and Hem Pandey, a zonal committee-level member of the CPI (Maoist). According to A World To Win News Service, "The Andhra Pradesh Special Intelligence Bureau has been partly trained by the Mossad [Israeli intelligence]..." These assassinations were carried out in the context of "Operation Green Hunt," the Indian government's military campaign to defeat the CPI (Maoist).

6 Middle East, 1948-present: Since 1948, the state of Israel has meant the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people and war on the adjacent countries. Since its founding, Israel has launched wars or military aggression against Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan. When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 to destroy and expel the Palestine Liberation Organization, Israeli troops stood guard outside the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut, Lebanon as their Lebanese Phalangist [pro-Israeli fascist militia] allies went door to door gunning down whole families, raping women and girls before murdering them, and castrating men and boys. Estimates of the number of dead range from 700 to several thousand. In 2007, Israel imposed a blockade against the 1.5 million inhabitants of Gaza. Living conditions became unbearable and the United Nations warned of a humanitarian crisis. From December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009, Israel struck Gaza with massive air attacks and a ground invasion. At least 1,300 Palestinians were killed and countless homes wiped out.

Drumbeat for Israel Attack on Iran Grows Louder by the Day

There has been in recent months a drumbeat for a military strike by Israel on Iran, supposedly to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons. It is said that Iran is in a feverish race to obtain such weapons; that if they get these weapons it will threaten the very existence of Israel; and that if necessary a military attack must be launched to prevent this.

A fourth round of UN Security Council sanctions was passed in June to punish Iran for its failure to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to pressure it to negotiate over the future of its nuclear program. But many U.S. ruling class thinkers claim that their impact will be negligible. In their eyes, this increases the likelihood—and desirability—of a devastating strike, and possible war, against Iran.

An article by Jeffrey Goldberg in the September 2010 issue of *The Atlantic* magazine, titled “The Point of No Return,” has become a central focus of the public debate. Goldberg frames the question this way: “who, if anyone, will stop Iran before it goes nuclear, and how?” And he goes on to explain “how, if things remain on the current course, an Israeli air strike will unfold.” This article has triggered an outpouring of very polarized responses for and against such an attack by Israel from a wide grouping of influential policy makers, analysts, and scholars. (Goldberg is also well known for an article he wrote for *The New Yorker* magazine in 2002 titled “The Great Terror,” which many feel gave legitimacy to Bush’s argument for attacking Iraq by using unreliable information in claiming to have found evidence linking Saddam Hussein to al Qaeda.)

As pointed to in the main article in this special issue, the U.S. media projects the state of Israel as an outpost of democracy and tolerance in a sea of hostile, intolerant Islam bent on its destruction. President Obama has not hesitated to say that the U.S. and Israel not only have shared interests, but “shared values.” There is no other country in that part of the world that is, or would be, described that way. Israel, in other words, truly “represents” the U.S. in the Middle East.

This sets the terms and framework for how most people in this country view the conflict between Israel and Iran. Now it is said that Israel is confronting a threat to its existence from a dangerous, Islamic, maverick government in Iran, which could be within close reach of acquiring a nuclear capability—perhaps as soon as one to three years—if it isn’t stopped. Add to that the constant media hammering on open-ended statements coming from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that Israel should, and will, be wiped from the map, combined with his questioning of whether the mass extermination of Jewish people by Hitler’s Nazi regime took place. In this way, support for an Israeli pre-emptive strike is portrayed as not only justified, but a matter of common sense.

In approaching this issue, we should be very, very careful in taking anything at face value from the U.S. government. This is the same government which at one point said that it was certain—in fact, that it was a “slam dunk”—that Iraq under the government of Saddam Hussein possessed “weapons of mass destruction.” These claims turned out to be totally false, a bogus reason to hide the real interests driving the U.S. to make war on Iraq. Nonetheless, war was made on this basis—and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis died, with many more driven into exile, as a result.

By contrast, we will show here what the real interests on all sides are—and how the people of the world have no interest in any such war against Iran, and every interest in opposing it.

Which Middle Eastern Country Actually Has Nuclear Weapons?

Is there an “existential threat” to the state of Israel posed by Iran if it were to acquire nuclear weapons capability? And what is *the nature* of that threat? It is commonly assumed in the mass media—an assumption people have not been discouraged from making—that Iran’s alleged desire for nuclear weapons is intended in some way for use against Israel. Yet in their private analyses, Israeli and U.S. analysts and policy makers all but rule out the actual likelihood of Iran firing a nuclear weapon at Tel Aviv.

Moreover, it is not at all clear that Iran is attempting to produce such weapons. In fact, Iran has developed the capacity to produce nuclear “medical grade” fuel—even as this marks an important capability, it is short of what would be needed to produce a weapon. And there is absolutely no reason why Iran should not have the right to develop nuclear energy.

At the same time, it is an “open secret” that Israel has been producing its own nuclear weapons for over 40 years, and now has well over a hundred! In 1986, a 31-year-old Israeli nuclear technician, Mordechai Vanunu, publicly revealed this “secret” to the British press, along with photos, because of his opposition to weapons of mass destruction. He was kidnapped by Israel’s intelligence agency and brought back to Israel to face a secret trial. Vanunu served 18 years behind bars, 11 in solitary confinement, and continues to be forbidden from speaking about his knowledge of Israel’s nuclear weapons program. Today it is well understood that Israel possesses a huge nuclear arsenal with land, sea, and air delivery systems. As one Israeli defense official told Goldberg, Iran knows “that Israel has unlimited reprisal capability”—a veiled reference to its second-strike nuclear arsenal—and “we think they know that they are putting Persian civilization at risk.” Still, public perception in the U.S. is that nuclear weapons in the hands of Israel are okay, but in the hands of Iran they’re somehow potentially a tremendous danger.

It is said that if Iran gets a nuclear weapon, or achieves “break-



out” capability (the ability to enrich enough uranium for a nuclear weapon), it could be destabilizing to the current power relations throughout the Middle East, Central Asia and beyond. It would further signal that the existence of Israel as the dominant country in the region, representing U.S. interests even as it pursues what it sees as its own, was now facing a coherent challenge from within the region. The shifts and fallout from such a challenge to Israeli and U.S. regional domination, and how that might further develop, could at some point call into question Israel’s future as an untouchable U.S. outpost, and threaten its own stability.

There is some truth to this. But it serves to hide a larger truth: that such shifts are already going on and that, nukes or no, the U.S. and Israel aim to stop this trend. The recent clamor over the Goldberg article, as well as other similar and related developments, signals that they are more urgently threatening the Iranian regime and making serious preparations for military aggression to do this.

Why the U.S. and/or Israel May Attack Iran

The U.S. invasion and occupation, first of Afghanistan and then Iraq, have brought tremendous suffering to the people of those countries, while radically upending the previously existing balance of power in the Middle East and Central Asia. But the U.S. saw all this as the necessary risk required to bring about the transformation of this region to one strategically more favorable to U.S. imperialist interests. These interests, we should understand, are all about dominating this region as an important source of oil and a geostrategic crossroads. And the pursuit of these interests requires, and has required, sentencing the hundreds of millions of people in this region to untold privation, suffering, humiliation, repression, exile and massacre. The so-called war on terror launched by Bush set the U.S. on a

trajectory that Obama is now aggressively pursuing.

The Iranian regime, at the geopolitical center of many key world contradictions, has its own ambitions in the region. It is interacting and building ties with other, emerging rival power centers in the world, including with Russia and China. For instance, China currently is a major importer of Iranian oil and gas, and sells Iran 30% of its refined oil products. Russia had been providing Iran with defensive weapon systems until the recent UN sanctions brought that to a stop. This is giving Iran more maneuvering room to stand up to the U.S. As a relatively coherent reactionary, fundamentalist Islamic state, it also poses an alternative political and ideological model away from the direction that U.S. imperialism wants to take things in the Middle East and globally.

Iran is NOT challenging the system of imperialism, with its division of the world into oppressor and oppressed nations. But it IS playing a role opposed to the U.S. desire to maintain overwhelming dominance in the region. We noted above Iran’s growing ties with China, and Russia. But there are other forces, and developments, as well. Turkey, for instance, has tightened ties with Iran. Together with Brazil, the Turkish government recently attempted to pose an alternate diplomatic initiative around Iran’s nuclear program—to the great displeasure of the U.S. The point is that while the U.S. and Israel do intend to stop Iran from attempts to increase its nuclear capacity, this is not the driving reason behind what is happening.

Iran has, for a whole period of time, been gaining influence as well as indirectly clashing militarily with U.S. and Israeli interests: in Iraq through its extensive ties in the current government as well as influence among the Shi’a opposition to the U.S. occupation; in Lebanon and Palestine through its support for Hezbollah and Hamas; and extensive ties and influence among

some ruling strata in Afghanistan and to some extent Pakistan, which it also borders. The Bush regime's "surge" in Iraq in 2007 represented a shift in strategy and political objectives that aimed to make peace with sections of the Sunnis and isolate and defeat al Qaeda and the anti-U.S. Shi'a forces, in order to forge a government not dominated by Iran. But the current inability of the U.S. to form a government to its liking in Iraq in part reflects that the U.S.-Iran contention there remains unresolved and could easily become acute.

Israel for its part has repeatedly shown its willingness to use overwhelming force and violence again and again to punish Iran's allies on its borders. Israel invaded and bombed Lebanon, wreaking terrible devastation and murdering over 1,000 people, to strike at Hezbollah in 2006. It bombed Syria in 2007—allegedly to take out a nuclear facility, but with evidence that it was a "dry run" for an attack on Iran. It invaded Gaza in December 2008, wantonly targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure as part of going after Iran's ally Hamas. And it waged the recent bloody assault in international waters of the unarmed flotilla bringing aid from Turkey to the Palestinians in Gaza.

In addition to acting through the Israelis, the U.S. has its own blood-soaked history in the region, and is currently waging war or committing military aggression against or in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Pakistan. But this history significantly includes history of aggression against Iran itself. The U.S. engineered a military coup against Iran's elected, secular-nationalist Mossadegh government in 1953. The CIA worked to overthrow Mossadegh and then installed the extremely repressive regime of the Shah (ruler), Reza Pahlavi. When the masses rose up to overthrow the Shah in 1977-78, the U.S. allowed the Islamic fundamentalists, headed by Ayatollah Khomeini, to take the reins of power, in preference to seeing a real revolution develop there. At the same time, the Americans worked both to weaken and control this regime in many different ways, including through encouraging Iraq and Saddam Hussein in a bloody invasion of Iran that set off a terrible, eight-year war in which the U.S. alternately backed both sides. Any war against Iran would be—and would be widely and more or less correctly perceived elsewhere in the world as—a continuation of this history of aggression and oppression.

There is a certain sick irony in all this. In the 1980s, the U.S. was battling the Soviet Union (which was then an imperialist power) for world domination. As part of that, the U.S. found it useful to bring forward and support, with a great deal of money as well as sophisticated weapons, the Islamic fundamentalist forces opposed to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. At the same time, Israel did something similar in its battle against the resistance movement in Palestine—which was largely a secular nationalist movement. During the '80s, the Israelis also backed Islamic fundamentalist forces within Palestine. These forces were then—and are today—extremely reactionary, representing and fighting for extremely backward and traditional relations. But with the fall of the Soviet Union, they began to coalesce into a global force that increasingly came into conflict with ever more flagrant and unchallenged U.S. domination.

The Nuclear Calculus

If the Islamic Republic of Iran were able to acquire nuclear capability—and, again, it is far from proven that they are moving to do so—it would challenge Israel's unrivaled military superiority in this region of the world. Some believe it would provide Iran with a "nuclear umbrella" for further strikes against Israel by Hamas and Hezbollah, because Israel would not be able to threaten Iran in the same way it does now. On the other hand, Israel has not been able to force the Palestinians to accept the kinds of agreements the U.S. has been attempting to impose on them, in large part because of Iran's support for Hamas.

Iran with a nuclear capability could also alter the political calculus in the region significantly. It would put pressure on the pro-U.S. Persian Gulf states (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and the sultanate of Oman), which have been a counterbalance to opposition to U.S. and Israeli domination, to shift their alliances toward the new regional power, Iran. It would also put considerable pressure on them to acquire nuclear capability of their own.

The reality is the world is becoming much more dangerous, including with the spread of nuclear technology and weaponry. But in fact, the world already IS very dangerous, and it is *mainly and overwhelming* the actions of the U.S.—which has far and away the most nuclear weapons in the world and is the ONLY power which has ever used them—which has made it that way, and is making it more so. More than anything this points to the urgency of breaking out of this very negative and dangerous dynamic. And this means breaking out of short-sightedly thinking that striking Iran will make matters better, rather than worse. Such a strike—which itself might very well involve nuclear weapons—would be nothing but a case of big-time gangsters cracking down on up-and-coming gangsters. Again, it must be emphasized: the vast majority of the people of the world have no interest in siding with one gangster against another.

How Iran Might Respond to Military Attack by Israel

There are a number of ways that the military attack against Iran now so loudly being promoted could play out. But the scenarios considered most likely involve Iran retaliating directly or indirectly against both Israeli and U.S. targets, with unpredictable, highly destabilizing consequences that could be difficult to contain.

In a September 1 *New York Times* OpEd piece by Reza Aslan and Bernard Avishai directly responding to Goldberg's article, titled "Stop the War Talk," the authors discuss a likely Iranian response, which they believe "would almost certainly precipitate a devastating regional war with unforeseeable global consequences." They make the point that "Iran is not Syria," which lacked the capacity to respond to Israel's attack on its nuclear sites. Iran fought a brutal eight-year war with Iraq, and could engage in a protracted war against Israeli and American interests. Iran "maintains a large military equipped with Russian-made weapons systems, surface-to-surface missiles, combat aircraft, unmanned drones and high-speed torpedo boats capable of destroying large warships." They say further that Israel would be compelled to move into Lebanon, which they believe would "plunge the entire region into war,..."

and place enormous pressure on leaders in Cairo [Egypt] and Amman [Jordan] to renounce their peace treaties with Israel.” And Iran has said they will attack Saudi Arabia too if it allows Israeli planes to use Saudi airspace.

In fact, the *New York Times* reported on September 17, 2010, that Obama will seek approval for a huge arms sale to Saudi Arabia, which according to administration and Pentagon officials would be chiefly a building block for Middle East regional defenses to box in Iran. This apparently includes scores of new F-15 combat aircraft, 175 attack and troop-transport helicopters, and possibly ships and antimissile defenses in the future.

Iran could retaliate against U.S. forces in Iraq, where it is reported to have 30,000 operatives located. It could shut down the Strait of Hormuz, where 17 million barrels of oil pass through each day, driving oil prices up and devastating the U.S. financial recovery. And it could provoke an all-out response by Hezbollah from neighboring Lebanon. Israeli military officials have indicated they are making plans to prevent such a response; but it is reported that Hezbollah now has 45,000 rockets, three times the number they had before Israel’s invasion and devastation of Lebanon in 2006.

Think for a minute about the levels of horror and suffering involved in those prospects. Think how “cleanly” “taking out Iraq” was presented to the American public... and think of what it has meant in terms of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi deaths, millions sent into exile, the lives that have been ruined if not ended... and the toll as well on the environment and the archaeological legacy of humanity. Now think again about what these imperialists are so calculatedly threatening and preparing for—and so insanely risking.

The fact that there is significant support in U.S. and Israeli centers of power for taking such a risk, and that it is being anticipated, prepared for, and justified at a time when the U.S. is confronting major difficulties in its occupations and wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, is a powerful statement that the rise of the Iranian regime is considered such a major threat to the strategic interests of the U.S. and Israel in the region and beyond that, as risky as the potential consequences of another war targeting a Middle Eastern country may be, the *alternative* is considered *worse*.

Sitting in this imperialist country, we have a particular responsibility to oppose U.S. imperialism, our “own” ruling class, and what it is doing in the world. And that includes opposing what Israel, the U.S.’s enforcer in the region, is doing as well. The “existential threat” that Israel faces is a product of its role as U.S. outpost, carrying out U.S. interests, in the Middle East. The interests, objectives, and grand designs of the U.S. and Israel are not our interests—they are not the interests of the great majority of people in the U.S. nor of the overwhelming majority of people in the world as a whole. And the difficulties these powers have gotten themselves into in pursuit of these interests must be seen, and responded to, not from the point of view of the imperialists and their interests, but from the point of view of the great majority of humanity and the basic and urgent need of humanity for a different and better world, for another way.

That doesn’t change the fact that the Islamic fundamentalist forces are also “historically outmoded” and reactionary. It doesn’t change the reactionary character of their opposition to imperialism and what it leads to and the dynamic that it’s part of, which is also not in the interests of the people of the world. It is very important to understand, and to struggle for others to understand, that if you end up supporting either one of these two “historically outmodeds,” you contribute to strengthening both. It is crucial to break out of that.

In the excerpts from Bob Avakian’s talk, *Bringing Forward Another Way*, that also appear in this issue of *Revolution*, he says that while there is some reality to the “war on terror,” in essence it is aimed at turning people’s sights away from “*the profound inequalities and oppressive relations that exist within different societies but especially on a world scale*,” under the domination of U.S. imperialism in particular. He emphasizes the need to look more deeply at the more fundamental relations in the world, and the effects and consequences of *that* and the ways in which it is at the root of developments in the world now, including what the rulers of this country call their “war on terror.”

Choosing between these two “out-modeds”—even on the basis of “but we have to be protected” from the dangers that this profoundly lopsided world has given birth to—leads to a very bad place. To get to a correct understanding of things, and to move toward the only possible resolution of all this that is in the interests of humanity, means coming to terms with the fact that in its essence this is not “a war on terror.” As Bob Avakian says in *Bringing Forward Another Way*, “It is essentially a war for empire. And the confrontation with Islamic fundamentalist, and other, forces (even those which actually do employ tactics and methods which can legitimately be called ‘terrorist’) *takes place within, and is essentially framed by, that context and that content of war for empire.*”

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