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Dagestan: Western powers feign concern after attempted anti-Jewish pogrom

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Hundreds of activists led by Jewish Voice for Peace occupied the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor to demand an end to U.S.-Israeli genocide in Gaza, Nov. 7.

Late on the night of Oct. 29, a group of over 300 people stormed the airport terminal and ransacked a nearby hotel in Makhachkala, the regional capital of the Dagestan region of Russia. The mob's stated goal was to capture and exact revenge upon Jewish people for Israel's recent genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people.

The Russian government and local Dagestani authorities [moved quickly to squash the riot](#) and attempted pogrom. The word attempted is crucial, as the mob was unable to cause any harm to Jewish people or damage to Jewish institutions.

This was partially due to the few number of Jews in the area that night. However, the quick response of Russian police and political leaders certainly played a role in stamping out the excesses of Oct. 29.

Russian officials at all levels harshly condemned the antisemitic riot and ordered security forces to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators to the fullest extent of the law. Sergey Melikov, the elected head of Dagestan, attacked the rioters as cowards bent on dividing Russian society.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov reiterated these sentiments in no uncertain terms. All of these leaders harshly condemned antisemitism or any form of ethnic bigotry and urged the people to avoid provocations led by opportunists.

Ramzan Kadyrov, head of the Chechen Republic, gave a particularly passionate statement on the issue. Kadyrov pushed his citizens to resist the urge to take out anger about Israeli apartheid on Jews living in Russia. He also ordered his security forces to help investigate and arrest the leaders of the Oct. 29 riot and all those who participated.

Nonetheless, media outlets in the United States and Europe were quick to jump on the opportunity to frame Dagestan as an antisemitic place bent on the destruction of civilization, along with the rest of the Muslim world.

Spreading anti-Muslim hate

This sort of blood feud narrative is used to justify Israel's genocidal actions and obfuscate U.S. culpability in destabilizing the entire Middle East. One only has to look as far as the imperialist publication The Hill. In the wake of the events at Makhachkala, The Hill released a piece by Yulia Latynina, an open right-wing ideologue.

In the piece, Latynina argues that the attempted antisemitic pogrom is a result of “Islamization” in the Caucasus region over the past 30 years. She further argues that this “Islamization” has given rise to a feudal clan culture equivalent to gangland rule. In her own racist words, “There is no civil society in Dagestan.”

CNBC also seized on the opportunity to push this propaganda point, framing the entire incident as “rising ethnic tensions in Russia.” The implication of all this Western media coverage is that the more Muslim people in any given society, the more antisemitism and general barbarism in that society. This is a theme we have seen repeated in the statements of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, calling Palestinians “children of darkness.”

Not only is this narrative patently false, but it only serves to justify current U.S. and Israeli aggression towards Palestine, as well as Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, etc.

Jan. 6 attempted coup

The pearl-clutching on the subject is rich coming from U.S. politicians and the corporate media. Because it was exactly those two groups that whitewashed the horror of the Jan. 6, 2021, [bierhalle putsch](#) in Washington, D.C., where not hundreds but tens of thousands of fascist lunatics carrying Nazi and Confederate flags succeeded in storming the U.S. Capitol building.

At that racist riot, one protester was seen wearing a shirt that read “Staff: Camp Auschwitz – established 1940.” This sort of frothing-at-the-mouth antisemitism was on display for the entire country that day as fascist shock troops chased Black Capitol police officers and sought to assassinate members of “the Squad.” The racist mob made it all the way to the floor of the House of Representatives, the supposed seat of “American democracy.”

In the wake of the attempted fascist coup, the U.S. Capitol police launched an

internal investigation into the security failures that led to the storming. The investigation concluded that [not only were the capitol police aware](#) of the potential fascist riot, but were [ordered to stand down](#) in the face of explicit threats of violence against Congress.

In Russia, state authorities could not rush fast enough to suppress the antisemitic mob at the Makhachkala airport. Local police and military assets responded in force. Further, leaders at every level of the Russian government vowed fierce prosecutions of all responsible.

While in the wake of the Jan. 6 racist riot, there was widespread condemnation in most of the mainstream press and from many mainstream politicians, Congress still voted not to impeach Donald Trump despite overwhelming evidence that he incited the putsch.

Much can be said about a government based on its response to racism and fascism. The U.S. always responds to fascism with a whimper, if not a cry of support.

This is just one of the many realities that distinguish the current Russian government not only from the United States but also Russian tsardom that waged a campaign of countless large-scale pogroms against the Jewish people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Russian Federation of today is not socialist, as the USSR was before it. However, that does not mean the current Russian government is in the image of imperial tsarist Russia, despite [incessant](#) Western media [comparisons](#) of the two.

The events in Dagestan on Oct. 29 were vile and unacceptable. However, those events were almost certainly a result of efforts by right-wing opportunists and [foreign enemies](#) of Russia. This sort of division between different Russian ethnic groups serves only U.S. imperialism.

Any instability in Russia is beneficial for NATO as it desperately tries to fuel a Ukrainian fascist breakthrough on the war front.

This was an unfortunate chapter of history, where genuine anger against Israeli genocide was seized upon by political opportunists in an attempt to undermine Russia's moral authority among its people.

What Oct. 29 was not is proof that the global Muslim community or the Russian state are inherent dangers to Jews. The inherent dangers to Jews internationally are fascism and U.S. imperialism.

