

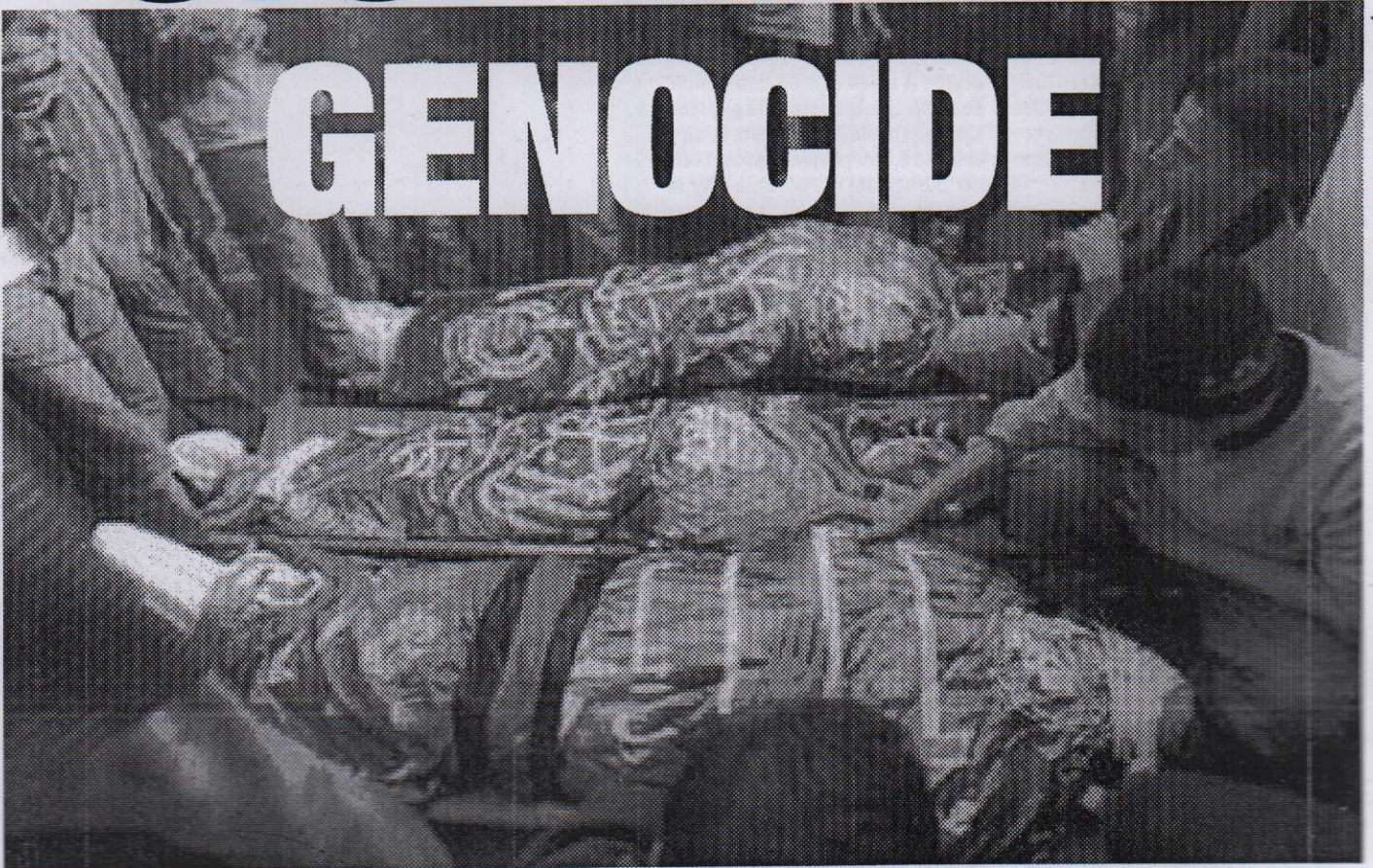
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STOP ISRAELI

GENOCIDE



Victory to the Palestinian Resistance

GAZA CRISIS SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT



League for the
Fifth International

ISRAEL'S TERRORIST WAR - SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Worldwide demos against the massacre of Gaza

By Dave Stockton

As the Israeli was preparing to launch its ground offensive against Gaza, around the world many hundreds of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets to condemn the Zionist state and its latest atrocity aimed at destroying the Palestinians as a people.

It is important that over ten thousand protesters marched in Tel-Aviv in a major demonstration against the war.

Amongst the chants in Hebrew that rang through the streets were: "one does not build an election campaign over the dead bodies of children!" Others included "All cabinet ministers are war criminals!" and "Enough, enough - speak with Hamas!"

The demonstration was organised by Gush Shalom and twenty other peace organisations. The slogans of the demonstration called for the end of the blockade, an immediate cease-fire and opening of negotiations with Hamas as a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Israeli extreme Right mobilized to break up the demonstration by force and did in fact attack some demonstrators as they began to disperse.

A thousand Arab citizens from the north arrived in Tel Aviv in 20 buses straight from the 150,000 strong demonstration of Arab Israeli citizens which had taken just place in Sakhnin in lower Galilee. There, huge crowds waving Palestinian flags and brandishing pro-Palestinian placards chanted "Gaza will not surrender to the tanks and bulldozers", and "Don't fear, Gaza, we are with you!" Thousands of Israeli police were deployed on the outskirts of the town and across northern Israel.

Large scale protests have continued on the occupied West Bank and Israeli soldiers shot and killed a demonstrator 22-year old Mufid Saleh Walweel, in the city of Qalqilya, the second such death since the Gaza assault began.

More than 1,000 demonstrators marched through Kuwait

City and protests of a similar size took place in Madrid, Amsterdam, Milan and Turin.

In Egypt, thousands of paramilitary riot police have been deployed in a bid to calm growing anger. A week ago 20,000 people took to the streets of Egyptian cities, the largest protest saw around 8,000 people demonstrate on the streets of Assiut, a city in southern Egypt with another 3,000 gathering in Minya, south of Cairo. On Friday 2 some 5,000 managed to protest in the city of Ismailia. "We demand the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador" read one banner. The Egyptian police have detained 40 members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo as those who attempted to demonstrate were beaten with truncheons and prevented from going outside the mosques and university campuses. Clearly Mubarak knows these demonstrators are as much against him and his collusion with Israel and the United States as they are against Ehud Barak or George Bush. He knows too that once the Egyptians masses conquered the streets his days are numbered.

Several thousand people demonstrated in the Turkish capital Ankara and in the country's largest city. They burnt Israeli flags, waving Palestinian ones and chanting "Israeli murderers, get out of Palestine." Around 3,000 Afghans held a similar demonstration in Kabul, burning Israeli flags and chanting anti-American slogans.

Beyond the Arab and Muslim countries two thousand protested in South Africa outside the United States Consulate in Johannesburg organised by the Palestine Solidarity Committee (South Africa).

In Paris more than 25,000 demonstrators marched through the city centre chanting "Israel murderer!" and waving banners demanding an end to the attacks. As the demonstration ended there were clashes between groups of protesters and the police and cars were overturned and set alight. In addition 8,000 people demonstrated in Lyon, 3,000 people Nice and



Demonstrators in London on 3 January. Photo: James Wray

3,800 in Mulhouse in the east.

Berlin saw protests of 10,000 people as Arab and Muslim organisations mobilised the Palestinian community and beyond. The city had had thousands strong demonstrations in the preceding week numbering 4000 and 7000. Altogether Germany saw thousands taking to the streets many cities all across the country. The day before saw a militant protest by 8,000 people in Vienna, Austria.

Demonstrations in the USA were smaller than in Europe. In New York hundreds gathered in Times Square on Saturday, and swelled into a demonstration which stretched four blocks and clogged much of central tourist

district for several hours. The demonstrators then marched in a slow procession along 42nd Street to the Israeli Consulate on Second Avenue.

However on Friday January 2, some 4,000 rallied at Tribune Plaza on Chicago's Michigan Avenue and then marched across the Michigan Ave. Bridge to hold a protest in front of the Israeli Consulate on E. Wacker Drive. In Seattle, on Saturday 500 or more assembled at Westlake Center to protest the air strikes on Gaza and in Boston hundreds congregated on Copley Square on Saturday waving signs and banners and wearing the names of those who have died in the Gaza Strip.

ISRAEL'S TERRORIST WAR - SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

ISRAEL'S TERRORIST WAR

The appalling massacres in Gaza have aroused global protest and indignation. While, Israel may have, once more, demonstrated its awesome military power and capacity for sheer barbarism, it has lost all pretense of moral credibility. This is Palestine's historic opportunity.

Some of the images being made available by freelance journalists and Palestinian activists on the internet, are truly shocking. Too often when the terrible death count is recounted we can forget that each life lost is someone's brother or sister, mother or father, friend or loved one. We in Britain can only begin to imagine the sense of collective loss, fear and terror that now exists in Gaza.

The Israeli claim that they are fighting terrorism sounds more and more like a sick joke. It is plainly they who are carrying out terrorist acts on an appalling scale.

Neither is it the first time in Israel's bloody sixty years that it has committed such atrocities. Regular war - with arms and funds provided by the United States - is Israel's pattern normal. Only two and half years ago they sub-

jected the people of Lebanon to a similar, if not quite so barbaric, assault leaving hundreds dead. What drives them to do it?

This is not about one or two wrong policies or bad leaders but it goes to the very heart of what Israel is. The Zionists said, Israel was a "land without a people, for a people without a land". This was a lie. It had a people, the Palestinians, who were expelled by Israel in 1948 and to this day are denied the right to return. They are forced to live in exile, in camps in the West Bank, Gaza and the surrounding Arab states. All so that a racist Jewish majority state, Israel, can be preserved.

The Israeli government used rocket attacks as a pre-text for this war. They forget to mention the background: the heinous blockade of Gaza that was starving the people.

Israel's basic demand, as it has been in most of its wars, is that the Palestinians cease to resist their national oppression. But it won't work.

It won't work, not least because of the global movement that has taken to streets to oppose Israel's appalling war crimes. Our global movement of solidarity - with the hugely important demonstrations in the Arab states, particularly Egypt - coupled with the unstinting defiance and courage of the Palestinian people is an almighty challenge to Israel.

Already today more people leave Israel each year, than arrive: a devastating fact for any racist settler state. Neither will the American Empire, so important to Israel's survival, last forever. Last but not least their actions of the last week's will damage Israel's moral standing for years to come. Palestine has an historic opportunity.

'Israel is a terror state' say tens of thousands marching in London

By Luke Cooper

At least 50,000 people packed London's streets yesterday in a massive show of opposition to Israel's massacre of Gaza. The turn out was staggering for an demonstration called at just five days notice and all the more impressive when you consider that at the same time some 30 local demonstrations were taking place across Britain, including demonstrations in Manchester (4,000) Edinburgh (3000), Glasgow (3,000), and Leeds (1000).

Workers Power and the socialist youth organisation and Revolution had a lively contingent, handing out a leaflet which declared our support for the Palestinian resistance and our call for the defeat of Israel. The march was short, going from Thames Embankment to Trafalgar Square via the Houses of Parliament and Whitehall. So great was the turn out, when the first demonstrators reached Trafalgar Square more were still pouring out of Embankment tube to join the back of the protest. At Downing Street

demonstrators hurled shoes at the ornate gates protecting Prime Minister Gordon Brown official home. Trafalgar Square was packed to hear speakers such as George Galloway, Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone condemn not only Israel and George Bush but also Gordon Brown and foreign secretary David Miliband for their refusal to condemn Israel. Galloway roundly condemned Hosni Mubarak and other Arab leaders who were refusing to come to the aid of the Palestinians.

A great number of the demonstrators - probably a quite substantial majority - had been organised by Britain's Palestinian, Arab, Muslim and other Middle Eastern communities. Consequently it had a quite electric, internationalist and anti-imperialist atmosphere. While, all the main organisations of the left were present, numbers of trade unionists, notably Unite Banners, as were activists from the peace movements, it was nonetheless clear that the most successful mobilising force over the last days had been these migrant communities.

This is, of course, hugely important in and of itself. British Muslims marched in huge numbers against the Iraq war but, in consequence, suffered a vile racist counterattack from the media and from the state, particularly following the 7/7 bombings. This certainly made many of the religious and community leaders keep their heads down over the last two years. Not since the emergency demonstration against the Lebanon war - with which yesterday's protest shared many features - have these communities protested in such huge numbers.

Like the Lebanon war demonstration - where the most popular chant was, "we are all Hezbollah" - an anti-imperialist ethos ran right the way through the march. The message was basic but powerful. Israel is a racist state, currently committing the most heinous war crimes in Gaza and we must support the people of Palestine's struggle against it. And some of the most popular chants were, "1,2,3,4 occupation no more, 5,6,7,8 Israel is a terror state", "Israel: terrorists"

and "in our thousands, in our millions, we are all Palestinians".

But not only were the slogans bold, there was also a feeling of anger, militancy and determination. This was clearly illustrated by the big turn out at the Israeli Embassy on High Street Kensington for another protest after the demonstration in central London. Over 5,000 people put the embassy under siege. As we approached the demonstration it was pretty clear the police would attack it, if it reached a certain size and they felt under pressure from the crowd on the narrow high street. Sure enough, they brought out scores of riot police and several times baton charged the demonstration, leaving several protesters with nasty head and arm injuries. The Israeli flag was burned and it took the police some time and a number of snatch squad arrests to clear the area. Another picket is planned today (Jan 4) and daily ones until a national demonstration next Saturday, this time to the Israeli embassy.

This is likely to be huge after the land invasion.

ISRAEL'S TERRORIST WAR - SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Why Israel is

Whether it starts a war or not, Israeli politicians are always careful to present the Zionist state as the victim. *Dave Stockton* exposes the hypocrisy of this oppressor state.

Israel has launched shell after shell and dropped bomb in the attack which started on December 27 with no regard for Palestinian life.

The targets chosen - every institution and building associated with Hamas - means that all government buildings, most Mosques, plus the dense network of social services and the Islamic University - made the high numbers of civilian dead and wounded inevitable. The Gaza strip is one of the most densely populated places on Earth, with some 1.5 million people packed into a tiny strip of land (360 sq kilometres or 139 square miles in size). Israel knows this and yet continues its attack.

Hamas was democratically elected as the Palestinian government in 2006, but at US and Israeli instigation the "international community" refused to recognise these elections. They issued an ultimatum for Fatah to be given the dominant role in the government and control over the security forces, even though the electorate had clearly rejected them at the polls. Within a year - egged on by Israel threats and CIA manipulation - fighting broke out as Fatah forces tried to oust Hamas from its dominant position in Gaza. Hamas naturally resisted, effectively splitting Palestine into two entities, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Israel pulled its illegal settlers out of the Gaza Strip, precisely in order to clear its line of fire. The way was open for a state of siege against the entire 1.5 million people, who were to be collectively punished for daring to elect the "wrong party," i.e. one that had not yet capitulated to Israel. The blockade has intensified over the last two months, forcing Palestinians to live in terrible conditions, denying them access to essentials like electricity, petrol, heating and cooking oil.

Whilst socialists have nothing in common with the political goals of Hamas for an Islamic state in Pales-



tine or the imposition of sharia law on those who do not wish to live their lives according to its prescriptions, they cannot fail to recognize that Hamas stands now at the forefront of resistance to Israel in Gaza - as Hezbollah did last year in Lebanon. In this military role it fully deserves the support of workers, youth, indeed all democratic and progressive forces worldwide who must wish its victory and help it to defeat the Israeli attacks and break siege of Gaza.

The current offensive is a cynical ploy by the incumbent Israeli government a coalition government of "centre right" Kadima and "centre left" Labour, to win back votes at the February election. Michael Warschawski, a founder of the Alternative Information Centre in Jerusalem, pointed out that "all Israeli leaders are competing over who is the toughest and who is ready to kill more." As long as the illusion that this bloody onslaught can deliver victory over Hamas, public opinion in the Israeli population remains pro-government and its latest war.

Premier Ehud Olmert, mired in corruption scandals and the ignominy of the defeat by Hezbol-

lah in the 2006 invasion of southern Lebanon, desperately needed to persuade the electorate that the IDF had restored its military prowess. He did so by raining death and destruction from the air on Gaza. But this cowardly attack, whilst it can cause a enormous amount of human suffering, will not and cannot break the will to resist of the Palestinians.

They have no alternative. The plain fact is that no Israeli government has offered or will offer meaningful concessions, even to wretched quislings like Mahmoud Abbas and his corrupt regime on the West Bank. The Palestinians have no option but to resist because Israel offers them nothing short of their annihilation as a people - i.e. ethnic cleansing from all the best land and loss of control over its infrastructure and communications links, and the penning up of the remaining population into a series of barren enclaves. In short the Palestinian people face deliberate genocide.

The international media tries to apportion the greater share of the blame to Hamas, claiming that Israel's attacks are only a response to the 'indiscriminate rocket fire

from the Gaza strip'. The BBC carries daily reports of the 'Sderot front line', it shows footage of damaged buildings, it points to the four dead Israelis as some kind of justification for the Israeli government killing 400 Palestinians.

The attempt to equate the two actions are totally wrong. The firing of unguided rockets which certainly kill civilians is nothing compared to the massive full scale bombardment of the Gaza strip by the Israeli air force. The Palestinians do not have an army or modern military equipment, whereas Israel has one of the most powerful military forces in the whole region. The Israelis deliberately ignored Hamas' overtures for a renewal of the ceasefire if they would lift the siege and stop their aerial attacks on Hamas leaders.

The government did so because (a) they absolutely refused to lift the blockade, which had become near total in early November, and (b) because they were looking for a pretext for the onslaught they were preparing. Moreover as a result of ministerial visits to Cairo just before Christmas they had got the Egyptian president and the Saudi King's tacit approval for the destruction

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the aggressor

of Hamas rule in Gaza. Today in despite the murder of its militants, Hamas has once again said that it was prepared to consider proposals for a ceasefire. Hamas official Ayman Taha has commented "Once we receive a proposal, we will study it. We are for any initiative that will bring an immediate cessation to the aggression and lift the siege entirely." The response of Israel is a flat refusal.

Socialists clearly stand with the oppressed Palestinians in their struggle for liberation from their racist oppressors, including their right to re-establish their own national state on the entire territory of pre-1948 "Mandate Palestine." The Zionists and their imperialist backers try to cover the racist logic by talking about their "demographic problems- i.e. about how to expel, and keep expelled, enough "Arabs." how to deny citizenship to millions, how to settle enough Jewish immigrants so as to claim a majority and accord them "democracy" in the context of a fundamentally settler state. Yet the Palestinians always were, and still remain, the majority of the population- if the ethnically cleansed population is freely allowed to return.

The international working class and progressive movements need to rally to the defence of Gaza and call for not only an end to the attacks but to the complete lifting of the siege as well. In the event of an Israeli ground invasion socialists call for the victory of the Palestinians resisting the attack and for the defeat of the Israeli forces. Those courageous Israeli socialists, democrats and peace activists who oppose the invasion can play their part to stop the bloodshed too. If they are in the army they should, clandestinely try to organise meetings amongst their fellow soldiers to discuss why they are being used as political pawns by the government to win the election, persuading them to refuse to go into the Gaza strip.

The anti-Zionist forces in Israeli working class must come to the defence of the Palestinians and protest against the war, including organising strikes to disrupt the



Israeli tanks roll into Gaza

economy. Such actions are will be very difficult if not impossible whilst the government is holding the illusionary objective of "peace through victory" before they eyes of the population. But if Israel suffers yet another setback, and when the reality of the mass murder in Gaza becomes known, the antiwar movement can grow in strength. Today's isolated heroic individuals can quite suddenly become influential amongst hundreds or thousands of people. But to fundamentally change the relationship of forces a weight greater than that available in Israel-Palestine needs to be thrown into the scales - the people of the Arab countries and all progressive forces around the world, not least in the "belly of the beast" US imperialism and it European allies.

The most significant force in the region has yet to come into play though - the Arab working class in countries like Egypt is large and becoming better organised and more militant. During the Gazan onslaught right across Egypt demonstrations have been held and mass meetings on campuses taken place, all under the threat of heavy repression from the Mubarak regime. All our solidarity goes out to these courageous militants- both socialist and Islamist alike- in their

struggle to expose the rotten capitulationist policies of Mubarak and bring down this number one asset of Us imperialism. Across the Middle East demonstrations have been organised, often against the Arab leaders, who despite statements of protest against the attacks in Gaza, have done nothing practical to help. The Egyptian government must be forced open the border with the Gaza strip, not just to let out casualties but to allow a free flow of people and goods- including fighters- in and out of the Palestinian areas.

The impact of the present capitalist crisis in the Arab world is severe. The masses face food and fuel price inflation, mounting unemployment, and their own government's repression of the slightest protest. The explosive material, political and economic, which has accumulated under the foundations of these regimes is enormous. Mass demonstrations for Palestine that conquer the streets, turning into strikes, can be the spark that sets off an huge social explosion, a revolution in Egypt and in other states would change the whole international situation.

The Israeli government and military has already shown that it desires to drown the Palestinian resistance in blood in order to defeat their struggle for an independent

homeland. It bears on its forehead the indelible mark of a racist state, one moreover with clear genocidal intentions. Can Arabs and Jews - especially Arab and Jewish workers and small farmers, live in the same land? Emphatically yes.

In Palestine 60 years ago a section of the Jewish people became convinced of the Zionist delusion that the creation Israel would bring peace, security, prosperity, a flowering of national culture. It did not. The "empty land" had a people who paid the price of the UN backed creation of Israel, as thousands of Arabs were expelled from their homes. Now the cycle of violence goes on, bringing to mind Marx's words 'any nation which oppresses another can never itself be free'. Genuine peace can only come in the region through a one state solution, in which the racist colonial Israeli state is destroyed and replaced by a bi-national state for Arabs and Jews in Palestine. It is one that, in our view, must be socialist and an integral part of a Socialist United States of the entire Middle East.

ISRAEL'S TERRORIST WAR - SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT**'We thought we lived in a world where the Geneva convention applied' - UN**

By John Bowman

On 6 January 2009 Israeli strikes killed at least 40 civilians by bombing the UN run al-Fakhura school in Gaza. 350 people were using the school to shelter from fighting around the refugee camp of Jabaliya where the school is situated.

In previous attacks, where civilians have been killed, Israel has blamed collateral damage and claimed they missed militant targets elsewhere. This time Israel targeted the school directly. Astonishingly, an Israeli government spokesman blamed the deaths of children on Hamas firing rockets from school and using civilians as 'human shields' which he described as 'a war crime'. In reality, the Israeli bombing of this school sheltering refugee chil-

dren could go down as one of the most horrific war crimes in decades.

Journalists are banned from witnessing the actions of the Israeli Defence Forces in Gaza and there is no evidence to suggest that this is true. In fact a UN official gave exact coordinates of the school so it could be avoided in bombing raids.

UN staff reacted with indignation. In an interview on Channel 4, a UN representative was damning of the Israeli military. Asked whether he agreed with his colleague who had they were "99% sure" no Hamas rockets were fired from the school, he said, "no, I'm 100% certain". He added for good measure, "we thought we lived in a world with a Geneva convention, clearly we no longer live in that world".

In private, the UN has told media sources that Israeli officials have admitted to them no Hamas fight-

ers were in the school compound.

The Fakhura massacre adds to the heavy loss of young life suffered by Palestinians in Gaza. One third of the 600 killed since the attacks began have been children. Already living life under constant raids, family deaths, poverty, disease and malnutrition one third of children in Gaza suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Psychological warfare is one of the most deadly weapons in the Zionist arsenal as the changing of checkpoint locations, searches, gun fire and the sporadic turning on and off of electricity and water tries to demonstrate whose boss.

The Israeli Defence Forces have also hit three other schools since the attacks began. Four people also died when a children's playground was hit by a shell. The strategy of the Israeli forces is to minimise their

own losses by reducing entire areas to rubble before sending in soldiers minimising the risk of losses. This is due to the heavy IDF losses suffered by Israel in 2006 when they invaded Lebanon. The result was government unpopularity and criticism at home.

We must challenge our government to condemn war crimes such as that which took place at al-Fukhua school and we must demand the immediate removal of "Middle East Peace Envoy" Tony Blair from his entirely inappropriate position. Journalists from all over the world should be able to report from Gaza without censorship to prevent a cover up of these atrocities and we must challenge the media when they show biased reporting towards the Zionists to make sure that the truth of this war is there for all to see.

Palestine's modern history of oppression by Israel

1897: First Zionist congress chooses Palestine as future home for the Jewish people and decides on strategies to bring this about including Jewish immigration to Palestine.

1917: Palestine placed under British mandate during WW1. British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour writes to Zionist movement promising them the land of Palestine as a future homeland for the Jewish people.

1917-1947: Jewish immigration to Palestine increases. Indigenous Palestinians and Jewish immigrants generally coexist peacefully. There are tensions caused by the existence of Zionist militias and as a result of well founded fears of the expansionist aims of Zionism.

1947: UN General Assembly passes resolution 181 to partition Palestine into a state for the Jewish minority and a state for indigenous Arab Palestinians. Resolution 181 is accepted by the Zionist movement and deemed unjust and rejected by the Palestinians.

1948: April 9 - Zionist militias from the Irgun and Stern gang kill 100 villagers in the Palestinian village of Deir Yassin. This massacre was part of a systematic campaign started months earlier by the Zionist militias to ethnically cleanse Palestine by terrorising civilians and causing them to flee.

1948: May 15 - Zionist movement in Palestine declares the founding of the state of Israel. The campaign of ethnic cleansing continues. 530 Palestinian villages are depopulated and destroyed, 700 thousand Palestinians become refugees. Arab states respond in defence of the Palestinians, an armistice is agreed with Israel controlling 78% of what was Palestine and Jordan and Egypt having custodianship over the West Bank and Gaza respectively.

1964: Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) founded to bring together Palestinian resistance groups to liberate Palestine.

1967: June 5 - Israel occupies the West Bank, Gaza, the Sinai desert in Egypt and the Golan heights in Syria. Israel starts building settlements throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories and housing people there.

1987: The first Palestinian uprising (Intifadah) starts in Gaza and the West Bank against 20 years of Israeli military rule. Palestinians face the Israeli army with rocks. Hamas is officially founded.

1993: Secret bilateral negotiations between the PLO and Israel result in the signing of the Oslo Accords which create a semi autonomous Palestinian government on parts of the West bank and Gaza. Israel continues expanding its settlements and delays on certain aspects of the Oslo Accords. Dissatisfied with the results of the peace accords, Hamas and other Palestinian factions begin to use suicide bombings against Israel.

2000: The second Intifadah begins, triggered by a visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque by Ariel Sharon. Hundreds of Palestinians are killed in the first few months.

Palestinian militant factions start using suicide bombings again. The Israeli army conducts incursions into Palestinian towns and villages, restricts the movement of Palestinians throughout the OPT and carries out extrajudicial assassinations against members of Palestinian militant groups.

2002: Israel launches operation "Defensive Shield", a wide scale invasion of the West Bank. Israel also starts building a wall inside the West Bank fragmenting Palestinian communities and depriving them from their land and natural resources. The International Court of Justice rules in 2003 that the wall is illegal.

2005: Israel withdraws its troops and settlements from the Gaza Strip but continues to maintain control over access to the territory.

2006: Hamas wins a majority in Palestinian parliamentary elections. Israel and western governments refuse to accept the legitimacy of a Hamas led government. Multiple attempts at forming a unity government between Hamas and Fatah are marred by civil strife.

2007: Hamas takes over the Gaza Strip. Israel and the world declares The Gaza Strip a hostile entity and besieges it. Rocket fire continues

2008: Egypt brokers a ceasefire

ISRAEL'S TERRORIST WAR - SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

The resistance movements in Gaza need our solidarity urgently

STATEMENT OF THE LEAGUE FOR THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL

On the 12th day of Israel's attack on Gaza, after the destruction of a United Nations school, sheltering hundreds of refugees from the horrific and indiscriminate bombing, the full genocidal intentions of the Zionists are clear. At least 43 people were killed and 55 injured. Early the same day two other schools were hit with fatalities and injuries in both cases.

The full racist and genocidal policy of the Zionist settler state is now clear to millions worldwide. The policy is intended to destroy any independent, sovereign and political identity, in other words any state identity, of the Palestinian people; to further fragment what is left of the territories of historic Palestine; to continue expanding Israeli settlements, seizing natural resources and ethnically cleansing, driving its people into ever more overcrowded ghettos and terrorising them whatever the level of their resistance.

Against this attempt to destroy the Palestinians as a people, we recognise any methods they use to resist this as legitimate. Nor have those who aid and abet the Israeli policy (the USA, The EU, the Arab states) any right to criticise Palestinian resistance fighters, to set themselves up as judges or mediators.

As we write this, France and Egypt and the European Union are trying to impose a ceasefire on Hamas which involves, as a precondition, that Hamas ceases rocket fire first. It does not demand the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, or the full opening of the borders nor an end to the long siege of Gaza. Israel's offer of a daily pause in the killing is a cynical attempt to ease the pressure and fool an outraged world.

We do not recognise the right of a Zionist, racist state to exist on the territory of Palestine. Such a state can only exist by maintaining the 1948, 1956, 1967 and all the subsequent ethnic cleansings. We reject the Zionist movement's century long insistence that Palestine was a land without a people, while all people around the world of Jew-

ish family or religious background were a nation without a land, who had a right to settle in Palestine and, therefore, to drive out the Palestinians. This argument, and the denial of any "right of return" to the four million Palestinians driven from their homes, brands Zionism as a colonial settler project, one which, even in its liberal and labour versions, has to resort to racism to justify itself.

We reject with contempt the argument that opposition to, or refusal to recognise, a brutally established and brutally maintained Zionist domination of Palestine is anti-Semitic. As principled opponents of racism and anti-Semitism in all countries, we will never for one minute confuse Jewishness with Zionism, an idea which itself reproduces many of the features of anti-Semitism. We recognise and salute Jewish people, including many Israelis, who condemn and expose the brutalities against the Palestinian people. They are the real fighters against anti-Semitism and the best pledge for a land where Jews, Muslims and Christians, Arabic and Hebrew speakers, can live together in peace and harmony.

The major forces within the Palestinian people, despite their sufferings, recognise the right of the Jewish population to remain in a free Palestine. It is the Zionist parties that insist on denying the right of return to the Palestinian refugees. They recognise that this would undermine a "Jewish state" because a "democratic majority" for such a state can only be maintained by excluding most Palestinians from citizenship.

The Zionist political entity could never have been established without the imperialist and colonialist carve up of the Arabic speaking possessions of the Ottoman Empire - nor could it have been maintained except by huge subsidies and military and diplomatic support. Israel's invaluable service for imperialism is to divide and weaken the Arab states and open the region to the continuous plunder of its natural resources. Therefore, the struggle for Palestine and against Zionism is an integral part of the same strug-



gle. Those within the imperialist countries fighting their own governments' policies of division and plunder are, thereby, helping the Palestinians and all forces aiding their struggle are natural allies.

We will do all in our power to help the Palestinians by building the broadest coalition to take mass action NOW for:

- o Immediate and unconditional cessation of the Israeli bombing and shelling of Gaza.

- o Immediate and total withdrawal of the Israeli forces and the cessation of all flights over the area by Israeli aircraft

- o Immediate lifting of the siege and the opening by Israel and Egypt of the border crossings.

- o Restoration of full supplies of food, fuel, medical supplies. For the delivery of massive amounts of aid!

In addition we fight for:

- o Immediate access for journalists and TV crews in order to allow the full effects of the bombing and shelling to be seen and to allow the people to speak to the world,

- o Condemnation of the Israeli government and IDF commanders for war crimes against humanity and attempted genocide

- o Support for the resistance in Gaza - whatever means they choose to strike back at the genocidists. Victory to Hamas, the PFLP, Islamic Jihad and all the other forces fighting to defend the people of

Gaza; For the defeat of Israel in its racist war!

- o Blockade the Blockaders! For a total economic and cultural boycott of the state of Israel imposed by the direct action of trade unionists, students etc

- o Demand access to the media to combat the pro-Israeli genocide propaganda of the Western media! Resist the spreading of pro-Israeli propaganda in the West

- o Demand the recognition of Hamas as the democratically elected -government of the Palestinians and take it off the EU list of "terrorist organisations"

- o For the right to return to their homeland of all Palestinians

To these goals we want to win the international solidarity movement and the organisations of the workers' movement, the migrants and the youth.

In addition, as revolutionaries, we fight for a unified socialist Palestine as part of a socialist federation of the Middle East. Two peoples cannot both own the same territory and resources as private property. Only social ownership of the large-scale industries, the factories and land, can assure a decent life for all national, ethnic or religious communities. In fact, only a planned economy can provide the basis for a just allocation of housing, jobs and services for all people living in the region.

One state in Palestine for Arabs and Jews

By Richard Brenner

The crisis in Gaza again puts the million dollar question to the forefront of everyone's minds. 'Can there ever be lasting peace between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East?' Communists think there can, and must – but do not believe that this can come about whilst the cruel racial separation of two peoples still exists.

Some on the left support "an independent Palestinian state side-by-side with Israel", and defend the right of Israel to exist in areas where the Israeli Jews are a majority.

There is an immediate problem with this argument. The Israelis created a majority Jewish population in Palestine by forcibly expelling Palestinian Arabs in 1947-9 and denying them and their families the right to return to the territory of their origin.

At the same time, under the Law of Return, Jewish people of any nationality are entitled to Israeli citizenship upon arrival in Israel, even if they have never been there before.

This racist citizenship law is fundamental to the maintenance of a Jewish majority population in Palestine. If the Palestinians were allowed to return, then under any democratic system they would understandably and justifiably vote against being consigned to the status of second-class citizens and therefore against the state defining itself as specifically Jewish.

This historical reality has to be the starting point for any socialist response to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Israel's mistreatment of the Palestinians is not simply the product of a bad policy pursued by reactionary right-wing governments. It arose directly as a result of the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

The only way Israel could create a Jewish majority population on its territory was to drive out millions of Palestinian people, prevent them from returning, strip them of land ownership, and wage a series of bloody wars against any Palestinians that resisted.

It is the continuation of this policy that leads to the forcible settlement of Palestinian land on the West Bank today, complete with bulldozings of Palestinian homes, discrimination in access to water supplies and

a regime of permanent military repression. It is the continuation of this that leads to horrific bombing raids and the ground invasion in Gaza today.

The only just solution must encompass equal citizenship rights for Jews and Arabs and the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their land of origin. This means a state in which Jews and Arabs are equal, not a state that defines itself specifically as "Jewish" or "Arab".

The continued existence of an Israeli-Jewish state, even alongside a Palestinian state, would depend on the maintenance of racist citizenship laws and the exclusion of millions

The only way Israel could create a Jewish majority population on it's territory was to drive out millions of Palestinian people, prevent them from returning, strip them of land ownership, and wage a series of bloody wars against any who resisted

of Palestinians from the territory. Far from providing the basis for a lasting peace, this could only condemn the region to further cycles of repression and war.

Communists are in favour of the right of self-determination, but not when this "right" infringes on the national rights of others - in this case the right of Palestinians living in refugee camps across the Middle East to return home.

Genuine internationalism means support-

ing an end to all oppression on the grounds of nationality, not declaring that recent national and colonial conquests should be treated as final accomplished historical facts just so the victors can maintain their supremacist nation states.

So if this is the case, why does the largest Palestinian organisation support it? This is a result of the PLO leadership's fatal policy of compromise with Israel and their abandonment of the historic rights of their own people.

The PLO since Yasser Arafat persistently accommodated to Israel, handing over the names and addresses of Palestinian radicals to the Israelis even during their campaign of assassinations, allowing the Israelis to wriggle out of every one of their obligations under successive peace treaties, demanding an end to Palestinian resistance in favour of continued talks that yield nothing and utilising their position within the Palestine National Authority to demobilise mass resistance while the leaders enrich themselves and persecute their opponents.

A Palestinian state existing alongside Israel would be like the PNA today – a powerless Bantustan, leaving all the real control and might in the hands of Israel. That is why the task of revolutionary socialists is not to devise ever more "Marxist" excuses for Israeli domination of the region, but to fight for a genuine, lasting solution.

This is not "anti-Semitic" as some Zionists would like to claim, but a socialist republic with no single religious or national allegiance, one in which Arabs and Jews live together as equal citizens. The only force that can bring it into being is the working class, peasantry and urban poor of the Middle East.

The longer the Palestinian left equivocates on this issue, the more likely it will be that the PLO's failings will drive the heroic youth of the Intifada into the arms of the Islamists like Hamas, who do not oppose the reactionary solution of driving out the Jews.

As Karl Marx said, a nation which oppresses another can never itself be free. For as long as there is a racist and discriminatory Jewish state in the Middle East, the consequences will be disastrous for the Palestinians and the Jews alike.