

— Only Death and Defeat with Hamas — A Revolutionary Road for Palestinian Liberation

Let's get two things straight. First, Palestinians face brutal national oppression and indiscriminate murder by the state of Israel—they have every right to defend themselves, including through force. Second, the targeted murder of Israeli civilians by Hamas and its allies is a despicable crime which is totally counterproductive for Palestinian liberation. With Gaza now facing starvation and mass murder at the hands of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the international workers movement must urgently oppose this onslaught. But to advance and triumph, the struggle for Palestinian liberation needs a totally different road from everything on offer, whether Islamism or secular nationalism. What is needed is not empty sentiments of empathy from the cabal of left liberals and fake socialists but a revolutionary road for Palestinian liberation.

How to Defeat the Zionist State

To defeat one's enemy, one must exploit its weaknesses and neutralize its strengths. The resilience of the state of Israel comes from the fact that the millions of Jewish people living within its borders see it as the only way to defend themselves in a hostile region. As long as this is the case, Israelis will fight to the death to defend the Zionist state. This was all part of the plan from the time British imperialism decided to back the Zionist project. Today the U.S. and Israel secure their interests in the Middle East by violating the national rights of the Palestinian people and fostering a permanent state of hostility between Jews and Muslims. The combination of a militarized population and imperialist backing gives the Israeli state its strength and appearance of invincibility.

However, this structure is brittle and is maintained only by a siege mentality fostered by the ruling class. The weak point is precisely that it is a militarized theocratic state ruled by an ever more extreme clique of corrupt fanatics. Israeli working people face conscription, religious regimentation and brutal working and living conditions. Resistance to any of this is labeled as betrayal of Jews. This situation creates deep racial, social and political fissures in Israel, which must be exploited to break the Zionist state and liberate Palestinians.

The Hamas strategy of *jihād* does none of this and plays only to Israel's strengths. By targeting Israeli civilians, they have succeeded only in rallying all Israelis behind the hated Netanyahu government, guaranteeing that the whole society will be united behind the bloody military response against Gaza. A military

confrontation under these conditions will bring defeat and untold death to the Palestinian people. There can be no victory without breaking the link between the Jewish working people and their rulers, and this cannot be done without recognizing the democratic right of the Israeli Jewish people to live as a nation in Israel/Palestine.

Islamists and Palestinian nationalists are always caught between either directing their fight against the entire Jewish people in Israel or accepting cohabitation with the Zionist state. Both are dead ends. The key is to drive a wedge between the Israeli people and the theocratic state. This can only be done with a Marxist military and political strategy, based on the understanding that the interrelated class and national conflicts cannot be resolved within the bounds of private property. Only from this starting point is it possible to elaborate a program corresponding to the interests of both Palestinians and the Israeli working class.

Taking the question of the land, Palestinians justly want restitution for the historical crime carried out against them. Within existing social structures, this is impossible to reconcile with the right of Jewish people to keep the land they have often lived on for generations. But Israel, like all capitalist societies, is extremely unequal. Most land and property is controlled by a tiny fraction of the population while the majority struggles to get by. By targeting this parasitical layer for expropriation, it is possible to both start bringing justice to Palestinians and improve the conditions of Jewish working people.

On the military level, it is necessary to exert the maximum pressure on the IDF to show Israeli society that Palestinian oppression comes at an unbearable cost. Blindly launching rockets on Israeli cities only increases the troops' willingness to fight. Instead, the entire Palestinian population must be mobilized to oppose every inch of territorial encroachment and to break the siege of Gaza and the West Bank.

But armed resistance alone cannot bring victory: it must be combined with a perspective of class struggle inside Israel. This requires struggles for the economic liberation of workers, against racial discrimination of Arabs and non-white Jews and for the separation of religion and state. These *must* be connected to breaking the main obstacle standing in the way of any social progress: Israel's oppression of Palestinians. The overarching task of revolutionaries in Israel is precisely to fight for the workers movement to take up the cause of Palestinian liberation, in struggle against the Zionist labor leaders.

Crucially, the class struggle in the cities must also be brought inside the Israeli army, with a perspective to split it. The IDF is overwhelmingly composed of conscripts who are forced to serve. If military service is no longer seen as vital for the survival of the Jewish people, if the cost of oppressing Palestinian people becomes too great and if conflict within Israel reaches a boiling point, the Israeli army can and will crack.

More than 75 years of brutal history have completely intertwined the fates of Israeli Jews and Palestinians. The liberation of Palestine requires the breakup of the Zionist state, which is impossible without the liberation of the Israeli working class. In turn, the economic, democratic and social advancement of Israeli workers, and even their continued existence in the Middle East, requires the end of Palestine's oppression, which is the very foundation of the Zionist state.

How to Defeat Imperialism

Israel is backed by the U.S. and all the other imperialist powers, as seen once again with their unconditional support of the onslaught against Gaza. Thus, the liberation of Palestinians requires a strategy to confront and defeat imperialism in the Middle East, and ultimately worldwide. But nationalists are utterly incapable of doing so, placing their faith in the UN and the "international community" or relying on the Arab states to push back against the U.S.

The UN is a den of thieves dominated by the U.S. and the "great" powers, who are themselves responsible for the carving up of Palestine and its continued oppression. The consensus among imperialists is thoroughly pro-Israel. Even if they broker a cease-fire or peace deal, it would necessarily reflect their interest, which is to maintain the Zionist state as their outpost in the region. From the PLO to the BDS campaign, any strategy which relies on the robbers of the world can only intensify the oppression of Palestine and lead to defeat.

As for the Muslim states, from Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon to Iran, they have a hundred times over stabbed the Palestinians in the back for the sake of their own opportunistic interests. The sheiks, dictators and mullahs lording over the Muslim world will "defend" Palestine only to the extent that it helps their own economic and military aims and strengthens their own position. Any strategy tying the struggle for Palestinian liberation to them will necessarily end up in betrayal.

What is needed is a strategy based not on the "international community" of imperialists and regional capitalist rulers but on mobilizing the *international working class* against all imperialist and capitalist powers. What is needed is an alliance of workers and peasants throughout the Middle East to throw out the U.S. imperialists and liberate the entire region. This includes Israeli Jewish workers who have no interest in continuing to be used as pawns for the U.S. Furthermore, fighters for Palestine must build an international front with American, British, French and German working-class organizations to stop arms shipments to Israel. These workers are the ones handling this cargo. And it is their struggles which are the surest way to weaken imperialism and advance the cause of Palestinian liberation.

But we can see that these most reliable allies are the ones rejected by the pan-Islamists and nationalists. In allying with the

Arab rulers, they ally with the exploiters of the Arab masses. And American and European workers, including Jewish workers, will never be won to a struggle waged under the Islamic banner and for the destruction of all Israelis.

Socialist Cheerleaders for Hamas

Following the Hamas offensive against Israel on October 7, pro-Israeli media have unleashed a massive propaganda campaign to justify Israel's bloody military retaliation and whitewash Palestinian oppression. To counter this, so-called communists and socialists from the Socialist Workers Party in Britain to the Communist Party of Greece have swept under the rug the criminal targeting of civilians by Hamas in the name of Palestine's right to defend itself.

Not only does this drag the name of communism in the mud by associating it with the crimes of Hamas, but it also accepts that the Palestinian people will continue to be led by these fanatic Islamist butchers. They know full well that Hamas will not bring about Palestinian freedom yet remain silent on the issue out of empty liberal solidarity.

The entire Hamas strategy is to provoke a strong Israeli reaction, effectively strapping a suicide vest on all of Gaza. It is necessary to unequivocally stand in defense of Gaza against the bloody retaliation by Israel while at the same time opposing this disastrous strategy.

Some leftists such as Left Voice, U.S. section of the Trotskyist Fraction, whisper at the end of their article that "we are on the side of the resistance of the Palestinian people, without suggesting that we share the strategy and methods of Hamas, whose goal is to establish a theocratic state" (7 October). That said, nothing they write is aimed at breaking the hold of nationalism and Islamism on the Palestinian liberation struggle. They like most of the left take on the role of liberal cheerleaders, who cannot be critical of oppressed groups even as they are being led toward the abyss.

The role of the pseudo-socialist left is all the more despicable given the Palestinians' desperate and ever-growing need of a viable road for liberation. Events are rapidly moving toward a level of carnage and reaction unseen in decades. If socialists do not fight for a revolutionary solution to the conflict, the growing desperation of the Palestinian people will be channeled once more into the arms of Islamist reaction while Jews are pushed deeper into the arms of Zionism. This carnival of reaction will not stay within the borders of Israel and Palestine but will spread far and wide over the Middle East and the world. It is the urgent task of socialists to break this cycle.

Defend Gaza!

Israel out of the West Bank and Golan Heights!

For a socialist federation of the Middle East!

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

For contact and subscription information:

spartacist@spartacist.org • icl-fi.org • ✉ @SpartacistICL
ICL, Box 7429 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA

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