

We Are All Palestinians Now

International Marxist-Humanist Organization

June 4, 2010

“We are all Palestinians now.” That was the chant by the mourners in Turkey as the bodies of the nine victims of Israeli shock troops were returned to Istanbul. It is our slogan today as well.

Those killed by Israel in the May 31 attack include eight citizens of Turkey and one citizen of the U.S. raised in Turkey. In murdering these nine people on the high seas – all of them unarmed civilians – the Israeli regime has exposed in a new way its descent into militarist barbarism. It has treated the citizens of a NATO member, Turkey, in the same manner that it has treated Palestinians, Lebanese, and other of its Arab neighbors for a more than a generation, ever since the Shatila massacre during the 1982 Lebanon war. Moreover, until very recently, Turkey was Israel's only predominantly Muslim ally.

This time, Israel used heavily armed special forces against boats full of civilian activists in a night attack. The outcome of this reckless use of troops trained in the use of extreme lethal force was entirely predictable, a war crime.

This murder in international waters was not the action of Israel's far right Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu alone. It was conducted under the authority of Israel's Labor Party Defense Minister, Ehud Barak. In this sense it represents the perspectives of the Israeli dominant classes as a whole, not just the far right.

We demand that the blockade of Gaza be lifted immediately. That territory has become the Sarajevo of the twenty-first century. Israel's blockade, which amounts to the collective punishment of an entire people, is itself an ongoing war crime as great as the May 31 attack on the high seas. Those brutalized and killed on May 31 were simply attempting to break the blockade by bringing in supplies like books, cement, kitchen appliances, and other items needed for reconstruction after Israel's brutal 2008 war against Gaza. In an attempt to protect the shipment, some of them carried out unarmed resistance against the Israeli shock troops.

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We also demand that Israel end its occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in order to allow the Palestinians to finally achieve a viable state of their own alongside Israel proper. This is the root cause of the entire conflict.

We support the Palestinian national liberation movement, especially those sectors that embrace socialist, feminist, and secular politics. We are therefore critical of the reactionary politics of the Islamist Hamas movement, while recognizing that the authoritarianism and corruption of the Palestinian Authority has opened the way for Hamas. We support those forces in Palestine, Israel, and globally that put forward socialist, democratic, and feminist politics.

Our critique of Hamas does not blind us to Israel's crimes. With the May 31 attack, Israel has declared its total lack of interest in a negotiated settlement. Its dominant classes believe that they can continue their present course of occupation and collective punishment indefinitely. They also believe that the apartheid wall they have constructed to enclose the West Bank will protect them indefinitely from armed attack. This is a grand illusion, one as great as the notion that such colonialist policies can survive in the 21st century.

Israel's rulers harbor these illusions because they believe they can count on the silence – and more importantly – the economic, military, political, and diplomatic support of the world's sole superpower, the U.S., and to a lesser extent, Britain and other Western powers.

Therefore we also support efforts around the world to boycott those corporations and institutions that aid the Israeli war and occupation machine.

– International Marxist-Humanist Organization Affiliates:

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