

## Statement on the Israeli - Hamas Ceasefire

International Secretariat, League for the Fifth International Fri, 21/05/2021 - 18:03

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The ceasefire agreed between Israel and Hamas represents a victory for the Third Palestinian Intifada in all its components ? Hamas?s unquelled rocket bombardment, the heroic resistance of the population of Gaza and the uprising of the youth on the streets of the West Bank and Israel itself.

Equally, it marks the failure of Netanyahu's ploy to cobble together a new coalition government and to avoid yet another election, not to mention the courts.

The huge surge of solidarity by pro-Palestine forces in the USA, in Europe and across the Palestinian Diaspora has played an important part in obliging Israel to halt its murderous bombing campaign. The ceasefire?s positive consequence, if it holds, is to make Israel?s push to ethnically cleanse East Jerusalem and legalise its West Bank settlement, more difficult to resume and more costly were it to try.

Thus, Netanyahu has little to show for his onslaught, despite all his claims to have degraded Hamas?s infrastructure of tunnels and assassinated many of its leaders. Instead, he has united the Palestinian masses, especially the youth, in a way not seen for decades. As for Hamas, it has mightily increased its prestige vis-a-vis Abbas and the Palestine National Authority, PNA, and given itself new martyrs.

Of course, the victory was not primarily a military one, how could it have been, given the huge disparity of the forces on either side? But, faced by such a powerful military machine, survival with one's forces largely intact is a victory in itself. The real victors, however, are the masses, the young people risking life and limb on the streets in all parts of historic Palestine. It is this largely unnamed but militant mass action that holds the key to the liberation of Palestine ?from the river to the sea?. Hamas?s enhanced position is due not mainly to its rockets ? ineffective except as proof of undaunted resistance ? but to its refusal to collude with the attempt to destroy the Palestinian nation.

By contrast, Mahmoud Abbas and the PNA, will find it difficult, if not impossible, to recover from the total impotence they have displayed. The youthful and more left wing forces in Fatah, however, obviously played an important part in initiating the historic one-day general strike on May 19. The prospect of mass action by virtually the whole people, and the international effect of the resistance, blew away Israel?s carefully concocted ?terrorism? narrative.

It is the Israeli leadership that is now divided as will be seen in the resumed struggle for a new government or an election that has any clear result. For all its military might and high-tech sectors, Israel remains a client state of the USA and it is now clear that Biden has a different strategy for the Middle East from Trump, or even Hilary Clinton and Obama.

Changes in geo-strategic priorities plus the growth of left wing forces in the USA, and indeed in the Democratic Party, including in Congress, explain why Biden proved unable and unwilling to give Israel unconditional support for its actions, in the way past presidents have done. Biden puts this down to his

"quiet diplomacy", but you do not need to shout when you are the paymaster.

Biden is moving closer to the leaders of the European imperialist powers, who see placating the regional powers; Saudi and the Gulf States, Egypt and Turkey, as more important than supporting any further Zionist expansion. Any decline in US support is likely to exacerbate the already obvious divisions within Israel, undermining its artificial class unity and leaving it ever more openly dependent on its vile racist doctrines.

If the Palestinians' tactical gains are to be consolidated and extended, and the pro-Israel balance of forces is to be undermined for good, the mass actions, frequently led by the youth, must go on. Through such actions, whether demonstrations, support for strikes, prevention of arrests, or occupations of threatened homes and buildings, a new leadership can be generated.

The forces of the Intifada in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza need to be consolidated in local councils of struggle that can upstage the old leaderships, replacing all those who collaborate with the occupiers. A democratic representation of the Palestinian people needs to come into being and formulate demands that express its fundamental interests:

? An immediate end to the siege and blockade of Gaza by land sea and air, and the rebuilding of its roads, homes, schools and hospitals.

? An end to the military occupation and fragmentation of the West Bank and the ethnic cleansing of cities and towns, including Jerusalem.

? The right to return of all the refugees, and their families, driven from their homes since 1948.

? An end to Apartheid rule over Israel's Palestinian citizens.

Internationally, supporters need to break the bans and reject the fake antisemitism charges, whilst of course condemning any real anti-Jewish slogans or acts. As the growing number of progressive Jews never cease to emphasise, real antisemitism can only bolster Zionism. Their own calls for solidarity with the Palestinians are both the best antidote to antisemitism and a source of enormous support for the cause of Palestinian liberation.

Given the ceasefire, there will probably be a return to talk of a New Oslo or Camp David. The fate of those agreements at the hands of successive Israeli governments and with the collusion of US administrations and European governments acting as dishonest brokers, proves that this would be a trap.

The 'two states solution' was never a viable proposition. How could it be when it assumed that Israel would continue to hold 78 percent of Mandate Palestine, with its natural resources, and would continue to deny the right of return of Palestinian refugees? A democratic two state solution would first have to right these historic wrongs and then be democratically agreed by both peoples concerned. Only if the objective and subjective conditions for such a settlement existed would this have been possible. Otherwise, self-determination for one would have been its denial for the other. Such conditions are impossible even to imagine, let alone achieve.

The "two states" was never more than a phantom that allowed the existing leaderships, not only of Israel but also of the Palestinians, of the supposedly pro-Palestinian Arab states and of the imperialist powers, to continue their charade of negotiations, while Israel changed facts on the ground.

Today, those facts mean that there is, in reality, only one state power on Palestinian territory and, indeed, it stretches "from the river to the sea". The goal of the Palestinian struggle should be to overthrow the Apartheid state regime that controls that territory and replace it with a state that recognises equal

citizenship and full democratic rights for all its citizens, including the right of return. It should be a secular state with no privileges for, or discrimination against, any religion and with equal language and cultural rights for the two nations which compose it.

These are simply democratic rights, already recognised to one degree or another by many other nations, but to achieve them against the existing settler state will require a revolutionary struggle. In that struggle, supporters of the League for the Fifth International will argue the need to resolve the most fundamental question of all: ownership of the land and its economic resources.

Just as two individuals cannot both have exclusive private ownership of anything, neither can two peoples both have exclusive ownership of a territory. The only progressive solution is common ownership, that is, the socialisation of the principal components of the economy. That is why our programme for Palestine is the permanent revolution, which will no doubt begin with the struggle for democratic rights, the Intifada, but can only finally achieve them by socialist measures.

Victory to the Intifada - down with the Zionist Settler State!

International Solidarity with the Palestinian struggle!

For a workers' boycott of Israel!

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