Stop Israel's barbaric aggression

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Workers, youth and oppressed people around the world unite in support of the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance!

Israel has declared war on Lebanon. The entire Middle East trembles on the brink of another war, fomented by the aggressively expansionist state of Israel and backed as usual by the United States and its European allies. The League for the Fifth International appeals to the international anti-war and labour movement not to stand aside but to rally the maximum forces to oppose this barbaric aggression and to actively support the legitimate and heroic resistance of the Palestinian and Lebanese people.

In the past few weeks the Israeli army invaded the Gaza Strip. Now it is attacking Lebanon on land, from the sea and from the air - an action they have called ?operation Just Reward.? Their pretext is the capture of one Israeli soldier in Gaza by Hamas fighters and two soldiers captured by Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon. Israel has announced that it will degrade Lebanon's infrastructure and had begun to bomb Beirut's airport and certain key roads. Dan Halutz, the Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) threatened ?If the soldiers are not returned we will turn Lebanon's clock back 20 years."

Israel announced that it imposed an air, land and naval blockade on Lebanon. Israeli attacks have left at least 55 civilians dead including more than 15 children. The population of Beirut lives in fear of seeing their city, so painfully rebuilt, reduced to rubble again. The Palestinian refugee camps in the area live in apprehension as to what a full-scale Israeli occupation might mean. Another Sabra and Shatila, where anything between 700 and 2000 refugees perished at the hands of Lebanese Phalangist militias allied to the Israelis and with the latter's collusion?

Israel alone is responsible for this war. The goal of its ruling class is to crush the resistance of both the Palestinian guerrilla fighters (Hamas, Fatah and Islamic Jihad) and the Hezbollah militias in southern Lebanon. They hope to disarm and destroy the only forces in the region actively resisting their ?unilateral settlement? of the Palestinian question and the transformation of Lebanon into a disarmed buffer state.

The ?unilateral settlement? means the fragmentation of the little that remains of historic Palestine, its sealing off from Israel behind the monstrous apartheid wall and its conversion into a veritable ?gulag archipelago? of reservations, under IDF surveillance. At the same time, having manipulated the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, the remaining obstacle to making it as pliable and cowed as Jordan and Israel is Hezbollah. To this end are inflicting collective punishment of the whole Palestinian and Lebanese people, thus hoping to uproot the resistance fighters.

The imperialist powers in North America and Europe totally support Israel's war-drive as the recent declarations of Bush and Merkel demonstrated. They do so because Israel existence and actions directly serve their interests. Israel simply could not exist without the billions of US-dollars in military and financial aid it receives annually from its masters. Israel has been the world's largest recipient of U.S foreign aid for thirty years. For the 2005 fiscal year alone it received $357 million in economic support, $2.2 billion in military support and $50 million in assistance for migration and settlement. In addition, to help Israel out of
its economic slump, the U.S. provided $9 billion in loan guarantees till 2008.

Zionism was born as a colonial settlement project in the service of imperialism. When its founder, Theodor Herzl, tried to rally the support of the imperialist powers for a future Israeli State in Palestine, he praised its potential value with the following words:

"For Europe we would build there a part of the safety wall against Asia, we will bet he outpost of civilisation against barbarism." (The Jewish State ?, 1896)

The purpose of this Zionist spread of civilisation was and remains step-by-step to expulsion of the Palestinians from their homeland whilst playing the role of heavily armed guard for all imperialism's economic and strategic interests in the region. First they ethnically cleansed a huge part of the Palestinian population from its homeland in 1948. Then they occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. Since then they have been seizing more and more land on the West Bank. They have made, a Palestinian state unviable by depriving it of contiguous territory, defensible borders, economic independence. The entity the Zionists envisage is a glorified prison camp, a holding area, until such time as the opportunity presents itself to complete the job of seizing Palestine in its entirety.

The Israelis, and most of the Western media which unswervingly supports them, claim that invading Gaza was an act of self-defence necessitated by the capture of one soldier. But before his capture, during the month of June alone, 55 Palestinians had been killed and 222 wounded, most of these in the Gaza Strip. Israel was already fully engaged in trying to crush Hamas.

Both the Israelis and the Americans insist that Hamas is a terrorist organisation which threatens Israel. But Hamas had maintained a 17-month cease-fire, even doing so after Israel, the US and the EU imposed a blockade on the Palestinian national authority when Hamas won the elections and formed a government. The Israeli army started its latest wave of killings as part of a plan to destabilise and bring down the Hamas government democratically chosen by the Palestinian people.

In Lebanon too the Israelis and the western media claim that Israel simply had to react to free its soldiers. But Israel has imprisoned for many years not three but 9,000 Palestinians, among them many children and women.

The greatest war criminal on the planet, US president George Bush, claims that Israel is justified in its actions because it has a right to self defence??. But if Israel has a right to self defence? because two of its soldiers were captured by Hezbollah then what about the right to self defence of the Lebanese people which has been invaded by Israel in 1978, in 1982 and again in 1996 and is doing the same today? Why are Hezbollah ?terrorists? for holding two Israeli soldiers when Israel has taken thousands of Lebanese as hostages? They were only freed when Hezbollah forced their exchange with captured Israeli.

No socialist, no anti-war activist, no sincere democrat can stand aside in such times. The time has come for the anti-war movement, for the social movements, for the trade unions and for the communist, socialist and labour parties, for the whole working class of the world to mobilise against Israel's aggression in Gaza and Lebanon. We must break through the propaganda wall of the imperialist media and expose the reactionary character of Israel's state terrorism. We must mobilise solidarity from the workers and youth in the imperialist countries for the totally justified self-defence of the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance. Only pacifists and petty bourgeois cowards can wring their hands in despair and call for restraint on BOTH sides. To take sides with the oppressed against the oppressor is an elementary duty.

For this reason the League for the Fifth International calls for the victory of the resistance fighters and the
defeat of the racist Zionist state, just as in Iraq and in Afghanistan we call for the defeat of the American and British imperialist occupiers and their assorted allies. If the present conflict were to spill over into a military confrontation between Israel and Lebanon, Syria or even Iran we would stand for the military victory of the latter.

Immediately the workers, the anticapitalist the anti-war movements should call mass demonstrations against Israel’s war of aggression. We must organise a mass boycott of Israeli goods both by transport workers and by consumers. Israel blockades Gaza and Lebanon and impoverishes millions - we must blockade it and hit the Israeli capitalist class. We must encourage and support forces across the Arab world to take to the streets to force their cowardly governments to act, to impose an oil embargo on the USA and the EU. The imperialists have not been is such a weak position for many years. The price of oil is already soaring. The stock markets are trembling. Their economies are very vulnerable. More importantly the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan is a bloody quagmire for the imperialist forces. At home the population increasingly hates the war and the cost of it in both human lives and in terms of the constant hysteria about terrorism and the encroachment on their own human rights.

Even in Israel a small but courageous Israeli anti-war movement protests against the wars launched by their rulers. If Israel creates its very own quagmire in Lebanon, this movement will grow to mass proportions. Our anti-Zionism must have nothing in common with anti-semitism- the ‘anti-imperialism’ of fools! Our solidarity must be with Israeli opponents of Zionist colonisation as well as the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance fighters. Indeed the Zionist state can far more easily be toppled from within as well as from without, with far less suffering for the exploited and oppressed, if all these forces unite and are joined by mass forces across the middle east and in the imperialist heartlands.

We place no political confidence in the reactionary Islamist projects of Hamas or Hezbollah, or in the Iranian or Syrian regimes. But every successful blow against the Great Powers and their Zionist regional gendarme will be a victory for the workers, youth and oppressed people around the globe. Indeed it would also improve the conditions for the working class in Iran and Syria to struggle against their own rulers and overthrow them in a socialist revolution.

As long as the Apartheid state Israel exists there will never be peace. Every so-called solution that prolongs the existence of this inherently racist state makes inevitable the continued existence of millions of Palestinian refugees. This is why one cannot be a socialist and at the same time advocate a two-state solution, i.e. the continued existence of Israel. Socialism means anti-Zionism, means support for the Palestinian liberation struggle and an internationalist working class solution for the Middle East.

But what is painfully clear is that the weak and fractured states of the Arab world, plus Iran, cannot and will not fight back against imperialism and its Zionist agent under their present regimes. Some like Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Bashar al-Assad, presidents of Iran and Syria, are long on the Islamist or Arab nationalist rhetoric and short on action. Their strategic situation makes them back Hamas or Hezbollah from a safe distance in an effort to thwart Israel and Washington’s plans for total domination of the region. But they are far from pursuing anything like a consistent anti-imperialist course of action.

It to the oppressed and exploited masses of the region that we must look if a real solution to the problem of expelling imperialism and breaking up the Zionist state is to be found. Only a mass revolutionary movement of the workers, of the urban and rural poor, can do this. The viciousness of the regimes testifies not to their stability but to the boiling social contradictions clamped under the heavy lid of the secret police, the torturers, the armed forces. Imperialism and Zionism - which repeatedly weaken and humiliate these regimes - are thereby fuelling the eventual social explosion.
It will begin not only around anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist slogans but around revolutionary democratic demands aimed at the Arab ?nationalist? and Islamist dictatorships that infest the region. It will include social and economic demands - for jobs, housing, hospitals and schools all the things that neoliberal capitalist penetration and native capitalism alike have failed to provide. All the things that the vast oil wealth has failed to supply to the people because it was siphoned off by the western oil companies and by the corrupt Saudi and Gulf state royalty. The bankrupt strategy of a revolution by stages - first an anti-imperialist and bourgeois democratic state and only later a socialist one - must finally be thrown into the rubbish bin. The struggle against imperialism can be won only if it moves directly into a struggle against ?national capital? and its Islamist and nationalist dictatorships. It must end in the establishment of workers? states, united in a regional federation, multinational, secular based on democratic councils of workers and all the exploited and oppressed.

The fight for the ultimate liberation of the middle east from imperialism and all its agents is an ongoing one. Today it means mobilising a mass movement within the Middle East but also in the imperialist countries whose rulers are eagerly supporting Israel, demanding the crushing of Hamas and Hezbollah and the abject surrender of the Lebanese Syrian and Iranian governments to their wishes. On the streets of New York and Washington, London and Paris and in Cairo, Damascus and Teheran we must raise the call

* End the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. End the Israeli blockade.
* Halt the genocidal crimes of the Israeli Defence Force against the Palestinian and Lebanese people.
* For the immediate and unconditional release of all Arab prisoners in Israel
* End the blockade of the Palestinian Authority by the USA, EU and Israel: recognise the democratically elected Hamas government.
* Blockade the blockaders; for workers sanctions and a boycott of all Israeli trade and goods.
* Support the Palestinians and Lebanese resistance! Defend Syria and Iran in the event of Israeli or US military attacks!
* Down with the Zionist state for a bi-national and secular Arab and Jewish workers republic in Palestine!
* For a Socialist Federation of the Middle East!

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