

Freedom for Palestine! Cease-fire in Sri Lanka!!

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Relying the fond hopes of all those who greeted each other for a 'peaceful' and 'terror-free' 2009, the New Year has begun on a particularly aggressive note of war and destruction. Armed Israeli forces have mounted an all-out assault on Gaza, killing and maiming hundreds of Palestinians through air strikes, ground offensive as well as sea-borne attacks. Nearer home, the Sri Lankan Army claims to be advancing towards Mulaitivu, after having already captured the LTTE stronghold of Kilinochi. The LTTE claims to have killed more than 50 members of the Sri Lankan armed forces in retaliatory resistance and counter-operations, both around Mulaitivu and in capital Colombo.

Both these campaigns seem to have been timed deliberately at this particular juncture. Busy with the post-election change of guards, neither Bush nor Obama will have to face the heat on account of these wars, and the European Union and all other major players in international relations are preoccupied with the global financial meltdown and economic recession. Israel's attack on Gaza clearly enjoys the fullest backing of the US which sees Israeli aggression merely as a 'reply' to acts of military 'provocation' by the Hamas. The Sri Lankan military offensive may not enjoy that sort of explicit endorsement by the US and its allies, but Sri Lanka is out to seek international legitimacy for its action by projecting the whole thing as a crucial victory over "savagely terrorism". The history of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories in Gaza and West Bank goes back to four decades. Notwithstanding periodic changes of guards in both Israel and the US, the two establishments have always had the closest strategic partnership. Every military assault by Israel on Palestinian/Arab territory or people has enjoyed the protective political umbrella of the US and since 2001 the partnership has been reinforced by the US-led global 'war on terror'. While the US has gone on to invade and occupy countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, Israel has specialised in targeting the backbone of Arab resistance, Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon. But just as the US has got stuck in Afghanistan and Iraq, two years ago Israel too had to suffer a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Regrettably enough, the US-Israel axis has been emboldened not only by the silence of much of the Western world and big Asian countries like China and India, but also by the complicity and acquiescence on the part of sections of Arab rulers. Egypt and Jordan have already been pushed into so-called peace treaties with Israel, and they now look away, if not play willing accomplices, as the US-Israel axis targets the Palestinians, Lebanese and Syrians. In spite of such a division within the Arab ruling establishment, the Hezbollah had successfully withstood and defeated Israeli aggression two years ago, thanks to overwhelming popular support within the Arab world. This time too, the Hamas and Hezbollah have both called for organising mass protests and resistance across the Arab world and Israel may once again have to pay a heavy price for its military misadventure in Gaza. Reports of communist-led protests are also coming in from within Israel.

Interestingly, the Sri Lankans decry the Israeli action and would like to project their military operation in a different light than the ethnic cleansing unleashed by Israeli armed forces even as President Mahinda Rajapaksa hailed the fall of Killinochi as "the most honourable victory in the annals of military heroism that runs through many centuries" of Sri Lanka's history. Whatever truth there may be in Rajapaksa's military claims, the fact remains that Sri Lanka's aggressive military bid

to put an end to the “false Eelam struggle” and unite the whole of Sri Lanka under one single flag and as one single nation smacks very much of the Zionist politics of ethnic hatred and racist domination.

India has traditionally opposed the Israeli occupation of Palestine and since the disastrous IPKF experience in the late 1980s, officially India has favoured a political, and not military, solution of the Sri Lankan Tamil question. But over the last ten years as Indian foreign policy has started revolving increasingly around the US-Israel strategic axis, India too now effectively endorses the aggressive military strategy pursued by Israel and Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, the FBI has virtually taken over the ‘Indian’ probe into Mumbai terror attack and, through the newly set-up NIA, the US now has an ever tighter grip on various aspects of India’s domestic security as well.

The Indian people must therefore come out ever more vociferously against the Israeli attack on Gaza and also for an immediate cease-fire in Sri Lanka. The more India endorses the marauding military expeditions of the US-Israel axis, the more India weakens her own battle against terrorism. A free Palestine remains the most crucial unfinished agenda of the contemporary global battle for peace, justice and democracy and the Indian people must throw their entire weight behind the just forces of Palestinian resistance and for a dignified political resolution of the Sri Lankan Tamil question.

CPI (ML)

Over 150,000 in Israel Protest Gaza Deadly Military Operation

(with inputs from Communist Party of Israel)

Over 150,000 people demonstrated in Israel on Saturday, January 3, 2009, against Operation Cast Lead: in the northern Arab town of Sakhnin and in Tel-Aviv. The demonstration in Sakhnin was, by far, the biggest such protest in Israel. According to one report it was the largest protest held by the Arab-Palestinian in Israel in many years. Marchers held Palestinian flags and pictures of children said to have been killed during the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) operation. The protest opened with a minute of silence, in memory of Palestinians killed in Gaza since the operation began.

The event was attended by several Arab Knesset members including Muhammad Barakeh and Hanna Zweid (Hadash – Democratic Front for Peace and Equality – Communist Party of Israel). Also, dozen of thousands of peace activists arrived at Rabin Square in Tel Aviv Saturday night to protest against the military operation. The protesters marching in the streets and carrying red flags and banners flags reading “Stop the fire” and “Children in Gaza and Sderot wish to live.” Knesset members Dov Khenin and Muhammad Barakeh (Hadash) were among the political figures who attended the rally. “I came here to demonstrate along with thousands of citizens in Tel Aviv and all across the country, Jews and Arabs alike, who are calling to stop this war, which is a disaster. It hasn’t solved the security problems in the south, and nothing good will come out of it,” told Khenin. “We came here to demand an end to the war, an agreement on a ceasefire, the opening of the border crossings and a prisoner exchange deal,” he said. “This will be the outcome anyway, and no unnecessary blood should be spilled in the meantime.”

The demonstrators chanted “Defense Minister Barak, how many children have you murdered today?” Hundreds of right-wing activists demonstrated opposite the leftists in support of the IDF’s ground incursion in Gaza. During the last week, and across the country, 471 Arabs and Jews have

been arrested in protests against the deadly Israeli operation in Gaza, 149 of those minors.

CPI(ML)-led Protests Against Brutal Aggression on Palestine

In New Delhi, the chilly-cold weather at the Parliament Street on 2nd January of the new year was warmed by the protest when CPI(ML) and AISA members assembled to express their wrath against the brutal aggression on Palestine and killing of hapless children and civilians. Party members burnt the effigy of imperialist Israeli and US governments and expressed solidarity with the struggle of Palestinian people against Israeli imperialism and war. The highlight of the protest was a large participation of Palestinian students in the CPI(ML) protest.

In Lucknow the Party members assembled in front of the UP Vidhan Sabha and demanded and immediate end to the Israeli aggression against Palestine. Later an effigy of Israeli-US nexus was consigned to flames. Protest was also held in several district head quarters of the State including - Varanasi, Kanpur, Muradabad, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Ghazipur, Mau and Devaria. In Chandauli the protest was held at four centres of the district - Chakia, Naugarh, Dhanapur and Mughalsarai. It was also held in three centres of Ghazipur district - Dildarnagar, Bhadaura and dist. HQ. UP's Party State Secretary Comrade Sudhakar Yadav led the protest in Sonbhadra Dist. The protests in UP have sent memorandum to the President of India asking her that India strongly condemns the Israeli aggression and intensifies diplomatic efforts to stop the war on Palestine.

In Jharkhand too State-wide protests were held on January 3 and 4. Party called upon the people of Jharkhand to unite against the Israeli offensive and US-Israel led global war on the people and their livelihood. The protests among other places were held in Lohardaga, Ramgarh, Barhi, Dhanbad, Bagodar, Giridih and Rajdhanwar. Effigies of Israeli prime minister and George Bush were burnt at many places.

P.S.

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