

Tel Aviv suicide bombing: An atrocity that benefits Zionism and imperialism

The Editorial Board
20 April 2006

The *World Socialist Web Site* unequivocally condemns the suicide bombing Monday at a fast-food restaurant in Tel Aviv, which killed at least nine people in addition to the young man who took his own life. Such massacres of innocents do nothing to advance the struggle of the Palestinian people against Israeli oppression and occupation. On the contrary, terrorist actions confuse and mislead the masses, politically strengthen both the Israeli regime and its imperialist sponsor in Washington, and make it more difficult to develop a united struggle of Jewish and Arab working people against the capitalist system.

A spokesman for Hamas, which now heads the Palestinian Authority, defended the bombing, declaring, “This is the natural result of continued Israeli aggression and escalation and can only be considered a form of self-defense.” Another official, Saeed Syam, the interior minister, told reporters: “We are not a great power who can confront the planes and the missiles of the occupation, but our people have the will and the right to defend themselves and to confront as much as they can the arrogance of the occupation.”

It is certainly true that the unrelenting pressure of Zionist occupation on the Palestinian population of the West Bank, as well as the continued encirclement of Gaza after the Israeli withdrawal, creates mass suffering and anguish that find an expression in suicide bombings. But the task of a genuinely revolutionary political leadership is to offer an alternative—and effective—means of struggle, not to promote and justify such self-defeating actions.

How does it “defend” the Palestinian people to destroy nine innocent lives—a French tourist, two Romanian immigrants, a young Jewish man rushing to the hospital for the birth of a child, a Jewish woman killed in front of her husband and children, a middle-aged security guard (hired after a previous suicide attack in January), an elderly man, and two other Jewish workers who had stopped for a quick bite at the falafel and shawarma stand?

This was not a military target, nor a group of fascistic settlers engaged in the armed seizure of Palestinian land. According to press accounts, the target was “a restaurant

popular with blue-collar Israelis and immigrant workers,” and the bombing was timed for the lunch hour to maximize the casualties.

A report in the *Times* of London included interviews with two youth who worked at the restaurant. Jachun Ismailov and David Manshirov, both 17 years old, emigrated to Israel with their families from the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan. Both were injured in the January bomb attack, returned to work, and were injured even more seriously April 17. The *Times* interviewed them in adjoining hospital beds, and both said they would return to work again after recovering, because, as Ismailov explained, “the economic situation at home was not good.” Manshirov, a cook, added, “If I don’t work, who will pay the rent?”

Then there is the fate of the bombers themselves. How does the self-destruction of Sami Hammed, and the prior suicide of another young Palestinian man three months ago, contribute to defending the Palestinian people? No one knows what these young men, just beginning their lives, could have contributed to the development of Palestinian society, and to humanity as a whole. Instead, Hammed’s family will undoubtedly see their home near Jenin bulldozed, dozens of Palestinians will be arrested, and the Zionist police state on the West Bank will tighten its grip.

In different ways, the responses of all the major Palestinian groups confirmed the dead-end of the bourgeois nationalist movement 13 years after the Oslo accord that inaugurated the cynically misnamed “peace process.” None of these groups, whether rejecting or adhering to Oslo, offers a way forward to the Palestinian masses.

Islamic Jihad, which has rejected both Oslo and the current ceasefire with Israel, issued a statement taking responsibility for the attack, which was carried out by Hammed, a 21-year-old adherent from the northern West Bank village of Qabatiyah, near Jenin. Within hours of the explosion, Islamic Jihad members were distributing videotapes of the suicide bomber, using this youth’s self-destruction to promote their reactionary Islamist ideology.

Hamas, the main Islamic fundamentalist party, has only

tactical differences with Islamic Jihad, rejecting Oslo, but choosing to maintain a tacit ceasefire with the Israeli authorities over the past year in order to concentrate on local organizing and welfare programs which led to its election victory in January over Fatah, the secular nationalist party that has long dominated the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Far from representing intransigent militancy, Hamas uses suicide bombers as bargaining chips in its efforts to secure a deal with Zionism and American imperialism. As Ghazi Hamad, spokesman for the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority, told CNN Wednesday, “If Israel is ready now to stop all kinds of attacks and aggression against our people, we can keep the situation calm there also.”

He blamed the Israeli government for thwarting Hamas’s efforts to dissuade militants from launching suicide attacks. “We are not against political compromise,” he said. “If our problems can be solved by peaceful means, we are not against this... The question is on the Israeli side. They don’t want to be convinced there is a Palestinian partner who can talk.”

Nor does Fatah offer any viable alternative. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned the Tel Aviv bombing and vowed to arrest those involved, although he shares political responsibility for the capitulation to Zionist oppression and occupation which has fueled such desperate acts.

Abbas is the political representative of that section of the Palestinian bourgeoisie that enriched itself by exploiting the structures set up under Oslo, when the Palestinian Authority received billions from the European Union, the United States and various international agencies. The Fatah leadership hopes to return to power through collusion with the EU, the United Nations and the Bush administration.

Meanwhile, the bloodbath continues in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Last week Israeli artillery fire and air strikes killed at least 16 Palestinians in Gaza, all of the attacks being justified by the Israeli government as retaliation for the firing of rockets into southern Israel that killed not one person.

The Israeli government also revoked residency rights for four Hamas officials who represent constituencies in East Jerusalem. This will deprive them of the identity cards necessary for movement into the occupied city and force them to remain in the West Bank.

There were warnings that this step was to set a precedent for more sweeping actions to deprive Jerusalem Palestinians of their residency rights, as part of the larger Zionist project of expelling the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem and portions of the West Bank as well, and replacing them with Jewish settlers.

In Washington, the Bush administration issued a predictable denunciation of the Tel Aviv attack. This is a government which has slaughtered tens of thousands of Iraqis in its counterinsurgency campaign, and regularly drops bombs on Iraqi towns and villages that dwarf the primitive weaponry used by Palestinian suicide-bombers.

At the United Nations, Israeli ambassador Dan Gillerman echoed Bush’s infamous “axis of evil” speech, declaring that Syria, Iran and the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority constituted an “axis of terror.” The right-wing press in both Israel and the United States sought to link Iran to the latest bombing—without presenting any evidence—in order to exploit the attack to advance their campaign for war against Iran.

The *World Socialist Web Site* opposes the crimes of imperialism and Zionism against the Palestinian people. Israel illegally occupies Palestinian land, seized not only in the 1967 war, but in the original establishment of the Zionist state in 1948, when 700,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes and 400 villages eradicated. To this has been added the crimes of the Arab bourgeoisie, which has betrayed the Palestinian national struggle repeatedly, using the Palestinians as bargaining chips in their maneuvers with the imperialist powers.

The defense of the Palestinian people cannot, however, be based upon a nationalist program that accepts the capitalist system which is at the root of their oppression. Nor can it be based on methods and tactics that spread disorientation and division among working people, such as indiscriminate terror-bombs. The way forward in the Middle East is the development of a united struggle of workers of all nationalities and cultures—Arab, Jewish, Kurdish, Turkish—against the bourgeois rulers in all these countries and their imperialist patrons, on the basis of a socialist program.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact