Oppose the Israeli assault on Gaza!

Resolution of the SEP Third National Congress

9 August 2014

The Third National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States unanimously adopted this resolution on August 6.

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1. This Congress of the Socialist Equality Party denounces the US-backed Israeli war in Gaza as a war crime against a defenseless population of 1.8 million Palestinians.

2. The steadily spiraling death toll has now surpassed Israel's previous deadliest attack on the impoverished territory, Operation Cast Lead in 2009. In roughly a month, thousands upon thousands have been killed and maimed, in their overwhelming majority civilian men, women and children. The entire population is being deprived of water, electricity and food as houses and essential infrastructure are reduced to rubble.

3. Gaza stands as a warning to workers all over the world. Reflected in the savage Israeli attack are the immense tensions generated by the breakdown of world capitalism. And expressed in the support of Washington and the other major imperialist powers for Israel's actions is their own readiness to employ similar murderous violence against any serious challenge from the working class.

4. Israel would not be able to wage the war on Gaza without the unstinting support of US imperialism. The empty words of sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians from the Obama administration as it rearms the Israeli military machine for more killing is an example of two-faced hypocrisy with few equals.

5. The massacre in Gaza is an expression of the historic failure of the Zionist project to overcome its intractable internal contradictions, and of the breakdown of the entire imperialist-imposed state system of the Middle East, of which this project was a part. War is raging not only in Gaza, but across the artificial lines drawn by the Sykes Picot agreement in World War I, engulfing Syria and Iraq and increasingly threatening to draw in Lebanon and Jordan as well. In the end, Israel will prove no more viable than any of these Arab states.

6. The Mideast-wide crisis is a particularly sharp manifestation of the conflict between a globalized economy and the capitalist nation state system, which has been immensely intensified by the capitalist economic crisis.

7. Sixty-six years after the founding of Israel through the expulsion of the Palestinians and seizure of their land, and 47 years since the Six Day War of June 1967 and seizure and occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, Israel is locked in an endless cycle of war and repression.

8. In a tragic irony, a state that justified its existence as a supposed haven for Jews from Hitler's crimes is employing methods of collective punishment in Gaza that resemble nothing so much as the actions of the Nazis in the Warsaw Ghetto.

9. Working people all over the world are horrified and incensed by the wanton killing of innocent civilians in Gaza. The insanity of this violence grows out of the reactionary attempt by the Zionist state to resolve conflicts that are absolutely insoluble on the basis of the current national state setup. Nor, for that matter, can they be overcome through the creation of a new Palestinian mini-state envisioned in the so-called "two-state solution."

10. There is no way out of this bloody quagmire outside of uniting Israeli and Arab workers and youth in a common struggle.

11. Historically, Zionism was able to win a mass following as a result of the catastrophic defeat suffered by the working class with the triumph of Hitlerite fascism in Germany and the subsequent genocidal crimes of the Nazi regime. This, combined with the betrayals of the revolutionary struggles of the working class at the hands of Stalinism, enabled the Zionists to present the establishment of a separate Jewish state in Palestine as the only salvation for the Jewish people. It has always been a movement that feeds off of pessimism and reaction.

12. The present Israeli political situation, which allows the Netanyahu regime to mobilize popular support for its crimes, is a manifestation of a broad political disorientation that is bound up with developments internationally as well as within Israel itself.

13. The nominal "left" in Israel, following the same

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trajectory as pseudo-left layers in Europe, North America and internationally, has moved to the right along with the rest of the Zionist political establishment, providing either explicit or tacit support to the onslaught against Gaza.

14. A significant factor in the present events is the temporary derailment of the Egyptian revolution. This not only served to further isolate the Palestinians in Gaza, but also cut off the possibility of the working class in Israel being influenced by a successful social revolution on its doorstep, posing the possibility of a united struggle.

15. Nevertheless, there is a working class in Israel, which is beset by the same objective class conflicts that characterize every country.

16. The military camarilla that controls the Zionist state uses war and repression against the Arab masses as a means of deflecting outward immense internal tensions. Israel is one of the most socially polarized countries, with a poverty rate higher than that of Mexico. At the same time, it has one of the highest per capita concentrations of billionaires in the world.

17. In 2011, in the wake of the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, hundreds of thousands of Israelis participated in the largest protests in the history of the country to denounce social inequality and government privatization programs. The assault on democratic rights and the mobilization of extreme right-wing forces that has accompanied the attack on Gaza will be directed against all opposition to the policies of the Israeli ruling class.

18. The SEP rejects the attempts by both the Zionist and Arab bourgeoisie, as well as elements of the pseudo-left, to portray the population of Israel as a unified, xenophobic and anti-Arab mass. The central question posed is the building of an independent political movement of the working class. Those who write off the Israeli workers reject the possibility of developing such a movement anywhere.

19. The immense suffering of the Palestinian people is bound up with historic betrayals carried out on the basis of bourgeois nationalism. Arab states, which in a previous epoch claimed—falsely—to speak as the champions of Palestinian liberation, today act openly as the accomplices of Israel. Chief among them is Egypt. The regime of military strongman Gen. Abdel-Fateh al-Sisi is the end product of the protracted attempt of the Egyptian bourgeoisie to crush the revolutionary struggles that erupted in February 2011.

20. The Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority of Mahmoud Abbas have played a similar role. Under the discredited banner of a two-state solution and in return for the enrichment of a layer of top officials, they have accepted the job of policemen in a West Bank divided by settlements, security roads and walls. Hoping to play the same role in Gaza, they too have served as Israel's willing accomplices in the present war.

21. The Hamas movement in Gaza, while suffering relentless assassinations and attacks, has no perspective for defeating Zionism, US imperialism and their Arab accomplices. Its Islamist ideology represents the interests of a section of the Palestinian bourgeoisie.

22. We reject the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign supported by much of the petty-bourgeois pseudo-left as politically bankrupt. Why stop at Israel? Why not the United States, which is behind not only the slaughter in Gaza, but crimes all over the world? The aim of this movement is to further the two-state solution, i.e., the creation of an unviable mini-state that could serve only as a prison for the Palestinians.

23. The fate of the Palestinian struggle, and that of the Arab masses as a whole, has thoroughly vindicated Leon Trotsky's perspective of permanent revolution. It established that in the imperialist epoch, the realization of basic democratic and national tasks in the oppressed nations, which in a previous epoch were associated with the rise of the bourgeoisie, can be achieved only through the independent political mobilization of the working class on the basis of a socialist and internationalist perspective.

24. The terrible events in Gaza pose with utmost urgency the struggle to unite the working class, Arab and Jewish alike, across all national and sectarian barriers, in the fight against imperialism, Zionism and the Arab bourgeoisie, and for a socialist federation of the Middle East as part of the struggle to put an end to capitalism on a world scale. The struggle for this perspective requires the building of sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International throughout the Middle East.

25. This Congress demands the immediate withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from Gaza, an end to all bombing and shelling, and the lifting of the Israeli-Egyptian blockade that has imprisoned and starved the Gazan population for the past seven years. It calls upon the American working class to demand an end to all US aid to the Israeli state, the withdrawal of all US military forces from the Middle East, and a massive emergency program of humanitarian and economic aid for the Palestinian people.

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