

IRAQ, PALESTINE, HAITI AND EVERYWHERE: The Cry for Freedom

On March 20, 2004, the people of New York City, the United States and the world are uniting with their sisters and brothers in Palestine, Iraq, Haiti, Afghanistan the Philippines, Colombia, and everywhere, joining in their call to be free of occupation and oppression and standing with them in their struggle for liberation, saying not only that the world continues to say NO to war, but also that the world says YES to resistance and YES to liberation – everywhere the vicious hands of colonialism and imperialism reach.

The struggle for Palestine is pivotal for all who wish to stand against the encroaching, expanding forces of empire and repression; a people, dispossessed, over 5 million made refugees by the armies of Zionism and empire, brutalized by the military assault of the most powerful army of the world and its fourth-most powerful surrogate, forced into walled Bantustans, continually pressured to be driven from the land, subjected to institutionalized state apartheid and racism, criminalized around the world and in their own homeland, have continued to resist, to struggle, and to declare that they will not be driven from their land, that they will not sacrifice their rights, their humanity and their dignity. The people of Palestine have stood for over five decades refusing to be engulfed by the forces of colonialism and occupation, continuing to struggle for their liberation, for their full return to their land, for an end to apartheid. They have been an unbreakable, steadfast pillar that all the forces of money, of power and of military might cannot collapse. At tremendous human cost and drawing on great popular reservoirs of humanity, strength and resistance, the Palestinian people have stood to declare that occupation, oppression, dispossession and apartheid will not be accepted. Where Palestine is attacked, where Palestinians are made refugees, where apartheid laws oppress Palestinians and apartheid walls imprison Palestinians, where thousands upon thousands of Palestinian political prisoners are tortured in Zionist jails, where soldiers in tanks and bulldozers roam Palestinian streets shooting, bombing, killing and destroying Palestinian homes and Palestinian land, all people around the world who desire justice, liberation, freedom and justice are attacked.

Billions of U.S. tax dollars – expropriated from working-class people in the U.S. who would greatly benefit from their use for housing, healthcare, education and jobs instead – go to fund the apartheid oppression of the Palestinian people. The guns that kill Palestinians and the bulldozers that tear down Palestinian homes are funded by the U.S.; U.S. military might wages war on Palestinians just as surely as it does upon Iraqis and Afghans, and just as surely as U.S. troops enforce and support the return of reactionary death squads to Haiti through a vicious U.S.-backed coup, and as U.S. planes bring devastation to the Colombian people. Since the transfer of colonial power in Palestine from the British to the Zionists in 1948, the Zionist state has pushed forward the agenda of U.S. empire in the Arab countries. The role of the Zionist army is joined now by that of the U.S. army in Iraq – dual armies of colonization and empire, dedicated to the destruction of self-determination and national independence for Palestine, Iraq and all Arab people – and all around the world. These dual occupations serve to keep all in the region under U.S. control, financially and politically, ensuring U.S. strategic hegemony over the vast resources of Arab countries at the same time they ensure that the people of the region are prohibited from determining their own future. Indeed, observing Palestine indicates precisely why the internationalization of the occupation of Iraq – its transfer to United Nations control – is no solution and, indeed, only a cover for the further subjugation of the Iraqi people. It is the United Nations that legitimized the transfer of colonial control to the Zionists in Palestine in 1947 and the United Nations that declared that the Palestinian people should have no voice in their own destiny, just as the United Nations for years oversaw the slow murder of Iraqis through sanctions and “Oil for Food” and today legitimizes the U.S. occupation of Iraq. The United Nations has served as a consistent cover for U.S. military and economic empire and adventurism; it has been colonized peoples themselves who have struggled for and ensured their own liberation, seeking their allies among each other rather than in the corridors of power.

Just as the occupations are part of an unbroken chain of repression and colonialism binding Palestinians, Iraqis, Afghans, Haitians, Colombians, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos and many others under the thumb of empire and exploitation, our collective response is part of a long tradition of solidarity and common resistance to the programs of imperialism. Just as the U.S. is waging war around the world, it is also waging war inside our own borders – a war on people of color, on workers, on immigrants, a war that seeks the subjugation of the people of the U.S. as it seeks the subjugation of the people of Iraq, Palestine and Haiti.

Our natural allies, as we struggle for jobs, for decent schools and accessible education, for quality healthcare for all, for affordable housing, for human needs, are not to be found in the corporations that bust unions at home as they compete for billion-dollar contracts in Iraq, nor among the candidates – Democrat and Republican – who compete to see who is better-suited to serving their interests. Our allies are to be found in the people of the world – the people of Palestine, continuing their steadfast struggle after fifty-six years, the people of Iraq who bravely demand democracy in the face of military occupation, the people of Haiti who march for their democracy in the face of returned death squads, the people of Venezuela defeating yet another U.S. backed coup against President Hugo Chavez, the people of Colombia, the Philippines and Korea who continue to resist U.S. military force in their nations, the people of Puerto Rico who continue to refuse colonialism. We can build a popular resistance at home that stands for the possibility that indeed, another world is possible, that rather than conceding to empire, empire can be undone – that says that Palestinian refugees will return home, that all of historic Palestine will be free, that we will have social justice here in the U.S., that the occupation of Iraq must end now, that democracy must return to Haiti. The Palestinian people have been leading in this struggle for decades. Let us take their hands collectively and move forward – FOR JUSTICE AND AGAINST OCCUPATION!

END THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ! FREE PALESTINE NOW!

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