

US Communists Must Take the Mask Off Maersk!

The Palestinian Youth Movement has launched a campaign to push the Danish logistics company, Maersk, to divest from the genocide in Palestine. As a major shipping and logistics company, Maersk plays a key role in the international imperialist system and is an active accomplice in the Zionist occupation of Palestine.

Maersk has a total global equity of over \$50 billion. In 2023, Maersk received a \$182 million contract with the US Department of Defense and has shipped over \$300 million in weapons and components to Israel since last October.

Targeting Maersk is an important intermediate goal for the Palestinian Liberation Movement. Maersk ships a significant portion of the weapons and necessary components that Israel needs to continue its all-out war on Palestine, a genocidal war effort that relies directly on aid from other imperialists. As of June 30, 2024, the US has provided \$6.5 billion worth of security assistance to Israel. In that same time period, Germany has sent \$351 million, the UK \$52.5 million, and Canada \$21 million¹. However, servicing the Zionist war machine only comprises about 14% of Maersk's total business. Here we have an important opportunity to exploit the contradictions within the imperialist system to the benefit of the international proletarian struggle.

Communists and other progressive forces must join this effort and also take it beyond simple calls for divestment. This campaign is impactful because it is not reformist; by attacking the veins and arteries of the war machine, the masses can directly strike at the heart of US imperialism.

The present movement for the liberation of Palestine is divided by many political tendencies based on the class divisions in Palestinian society and internationally. Internal to the Palestine national liberation movement is a dividing line between armed resistance against Zionism and collaboration. This contradiction will plague national unity efforts such as in the recent Palestinian unity government that presently includes both armed resistance groups, such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Lion's Den, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, as well as collaborators such as Fatah. Internationally, BDS efforts are dominantly taken up by liberal forces who are more than willing to keep their efforts within the confines of the bourgeois political establishment. However, by taking the "Mask off Maersk," we have a momentous opportunity to put forward the politics of armed resistance, the need for revolution, and directly oppose collaboration and liberal conciliation.

We must expose the nature of the imperialist system to the masses and raise the call to take action against this system wherever it is vulnerable. Part of this means elevating the present consciousness of the masses about the role of logistics companies in the imperialist system in general and in imperialist wars in particular, like in Palestine. In our present situation, imperialists rely on logistics and related telecommunications to coordinate the flow of capital and commodities. The US lacks sufficient ships to operate its empire and today companies such as Maersk serve a key function in the imperialist system.

With the titanic scale of this system and its complexity, the flow of commerce changes drastically when it's impeded. When the Houthis of Yemen launched a blockade in the Red Sea, they suspended global trade and bankrupted Israel's Eilat port, which had previously handled almost 10% of Israeli trade. This blockade skyrocketed the cost per container from \$1,700 to \$4,500 for trade taking the route between

¹ <https://archive.ph/s0GNj#selection-2087.80-2087.92>

Europe and China². Workers have many times organized themselves in the spirit of internationalism as well, like in 1920 when British dockworkers refused to load weapons they knew were going to be used against the Soviet Union after its socialist revolution.

Millions of members of the proletariat in the US alone live within a stone's throw from logistics and shipping facilities that fuel wars around the world. These massive companies hide in plain sight and it's our responsibility to expose these perpetrators of war as part of the international struggle against imperialism.

While the present consciousness of the proletariat in the US is quite low as is the present role of communists within the labor struggle, we must make this effort in line with our present conditions. This means going beyond calls for "unity" between the US proletariat and the people of Palestine and sharpening the political content of our agitation and propaganda against the nature of bourgeois class rule.

Victory for Palestine is victory for the international proletarian revolution. In the same way, socialist revolution in the United States is a victory for Palestine. That is because socialist revolution in US must be an anti-imperialist revolution. It must extend the right of self-determination to all oppressed nations under US domination and "Israel" is nothing but an extension of US imperialism. As communists, we must draw a thick line of demarcation between proletarian anti-imperialist socialist revolution and social-chauvinists. We can't be fooled by "MAGA communists" or Berniecrat social democrats who both seek to simply oil the US welfare system with the blood and sweat of oppressed nations.

Any successful leadership that US communists can provide the Palestinian National liberation struggle will stem from our own ability to lead the proletariat to victory in our own country.

² <https://www.railfreight.com/business/2024/03/13/container-rates-surged-amid-red-sea-blockade/>