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Britain/Palestine solidarity

“We are all Palestinians”

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Tens of thousands of people marched from Downing Street, home of the British prime minister to the Israeli state’s London embassy on Saturday July 19th. It was a nice way of underlining the active support virtually the entire British political class gives to the perpetrators of the carnage in Gaza. The slogan that united them was “in our thousands, in our millions, we are all Palestinians. At the same time protests were taking place all across Europe, including Paris, in defiance of a ban imposed by Francois Hollande’s “socialist” government.

It was at least as large as the July 10th demonstration called by striking public sector trade unions, but it was completely different in its make up and its mood. It was perhaps one of the most ethnically mixed major political events the city has ever seen. The usual range of socialist organisations was there, along with a smattering of trade union banners. What made it different was the loud, angry presence of thousands of predominantly young Muslims including large numbers of young women. They were not at all reluctant to carry the placards distributed by left groups with messages like “stop Israeli state terror” and “freedom for Palestine”.

The event had been called at very short notice, something that makes the turnout all the more remarkable. Nominally the organisers were a coalition of organisations including the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, the Friends of Al Aqsa Mosque and the Islamic Forum of Europe. But this was one of those events to which people were drawn by their own revulsion at the apartheid Israeli state’s ongoing massacre of Palestinians. It was an opportunity to convert into political action the rage people feel when they watch four children being deliberately murdered on a beach and the solidarity they feel with the people of Gaza as they endure a medieval siege conducted with modern weapons in 2014.

It was the desire to express solidarity and take political action which made this such a powerful demonstration. There were no placards or slogans expressing support for the reactionary Islamists of Hamas. Disappointingly for those who like to elide support for a Palestinian state with anti-semitism, there were no chants or posters to give them comfort. Instead there was a highly visible presence of anti-Zionist Jewish organisations.

All we can say for sure is that over the next few weeks the Israeli army will destroy more homes, hospitals and lives. We also know they will do it again within three or four years. We saw today that there is a groundswell of passionate fury against the denial of the rights of the Palestinian people. The best way to direct that energy is into the boycott and divestment campaign supported by a large number of Palestinian organisations. This is something which terrifies the Israeli state, not only because it punishes it financially but, just as importantly, it draws the parallel between Israeli apartheid and its South African role model.

From [Socialist Resistance](#).