

Checkpoints & Tritonal

The Distance From Rojava to Palestine

The Renegade

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Separated geographically by a desert and a river, separated politically by a series of checkpoints. The Euphrates, then an anthropogenic river in the converse direction, traversing the Syrian desert. A river of metal bars and barrels draped in blood-drenched monotony of tricolor state aesthetic, followed by blue bands of Zionism at the first checkpoint of Israeli occupation at the end of that river.

In between, anxious regime conscripts sent to their deaths in defense of outposts surrounded by Daesh and the naked desert, oil fields, and Shi'a paramilitaries force fed with a steady diet of tritonal and assorted projectiles. Each grain of sand saturated in the shadow and consumed in the dye of checkpoint flags, each stone impaled by mass securitization and state panopticon. 400 kilometers.

It ain't much between us. If you think the struggles in Rojava and Palestine are distant from one another, don't.

The skies along the Euphrates remain contaminated with Israeli pilots. Of all the airstrikes I have seen and felt from the Turkish Air Force, Russian Air Force, US Air Force, the Israeli airstrike somehow feels the most wicked upon realizing its origin. It is serving the most active genocide just across the desert from us, facilitated with resources stolen from workers by the US military-industrial complex. This nearby airstrike, among many others I have experienced, deepened my will as an internationalist, as many airstrikes have for millions of marginalized people throughout the last century. This is why there is not a single JDAM that can damage the will of the Palestinian people nor any marginalized people. The imperialist does not seem to understand that the more intense his violence is, the deeper a resister's will becomes.

Israeli imperialism has bolstered state fascism across the region. In Syria, the regime benefits from a renewed legitimacy of Baathist soft power, as many Arab power structures feel they have no other option but to seek collective defense under the state constellation. At regime points, the pan-Arab tricolor can often be found alongside the flag of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Keeping Aleppo and other Syrian cities in a condition of perpetual destruction, Israel accelerates the Syrian exodus, stripping Syria naked to secure Golan and regional hegemony over the Levant. This is also why Israel enables Palestinians to join the Turkish occupation of Afrin, boosting recruitment of the Turkish state's proxy forces while strengthening the northern front against the Syrian regime.

Israeli state policy is to scatter Palestinians like dust, resettling them elsewhere so that Zionists have more living space (Lebensraum, in Nazi terms). Israeli Bank Hapoalim has been complicit in the resettlement of Palestinians to the Turkish-occupied areas, Bank Hapoalim

accounts frequently used in the construction of new settlements in occupied Afrin. Bank Hapoalim also just happens to be the largest financial source of Israeli settlement projects in the West Bank.

Olive groves are occupied in Afrin and the West Bank alike. A sacred crop defended by oppressed peoples for centuries.

Expansion deeper into Syria is no doubt in the long-term plans of Israel, just as it is for Turkey and NATO. Zionism yearns to become Greater Israel, the Turkish Republic yearns to become Misak-i-Milli, the United States yearns to Manifest Destiny, Muscovy Cossacks yearn to expand the Russian frontier, Nazi Germany yearns to realize Lebensraum. Same shit, different flags, different checkpoints, all united in their essence of state-driven settler colonialism.

The Turkish state has consistently gone to Israel to keep its military modernized. The value of Israel-Turkey arms deals since the 1990s has amounted to roughly \$9 billion USD, not including joint trainings and operations. Most of this involves the Turkish state purchasing from Israel, including the modernization of Turkey's F-4 and F-5 fleet, as well as the upgrading of Turkey's Israeli-contracted Sabra tank arsenal, all of which used against the Kurdish people.

Military-industrial complex relations deepened further in October 2022, when Israeli and Turkish officials exchanged visits to strengthen their settler-colonial marriage. Though arms deals have been suspended for now, it is likely only a matter of time before their resumption. Even with the supposed suspension, Turkey has continued to export weapon components and firearms to Israel under Chapter 93 of WCO Harmonized System code, according to the state's own Turkish Statistical Institute.

In the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Palestinian guerrillas of PFLP, Kurdish guerrillas of PKK, Armenian guerrillas of ASALA, German guerrillas of RAF, and numerous other international guerrillas fought side-by-side in a shared revolutionary struggle against the Israeli state, sparking an unprecedented flame of internationalism in West Asia that would later materialize again three decades later in the Rojava revolution.

The PKK gave 13 martyrs in this defense of the Palestinian struggle in 1982, its internationalist praxis beginning alongside Palestinians defending Beqaa Valley from Israeli imperialism.

Palestinian and Kurdish revolutionaries have not forgotten about this radiant beacon in internationalist history, and nor should you.

“We, the Palestinians, suffer the same pain due to the Israel occupation and the violent policies they impose on our people...We struggle together against Zionism, against imperialism and bigotry...Who is going to say that those Kurds in Turkey who are fighting the government are not the indigenous people? Nobody can say that...They have a right in Rojava to self-autonomy because that is just...Long live Palestine, long live Kurdistan!”

-PFLP guerrilla Leyla Khaled at the February 2020 conference of the People's Democratic Party (HDP)

“Let everyone realize that Kurdish and Arab blood were and still are united and pure in defense of the dignity and freedom of the Kurdish and Palestinian peoples, from the days of Saladin to the

dozens of Arab comrades who fell martyr in the mountains of Kurdistan...The important point, my brother and comrade, is that the factors that bind us are a thousand times greater than the factors that divide us, in spite of the tyrants, agents, and racists. Victory to occupied Jerusalem.”

-Rojavayî guerrilla Polat Can, who would later become a commander in the People’s Protection Units (YPG), in a letter to Palestinian writer Mazen Safi in 2009

“Since the emergence of the PKK, we have been against Zionism. We compared the genocide of the Kurds in Turkey with Israeli Zionism and the Apartheid regime of South Africa. Since its founding, the PKK has fought side by side with the Palestinians. In 1982, 13 of our cadres fell in the fight against the occupation of Lebanon by Israel. The Israeli state also participated in the international conspiracy against Abdullah Öcalan, and murdered four of our comrades in Berlin. No doubt, we will never forget the support the Palestinians gave to the Kurdish people in the 1980s. Our attitude towards Zionism has always been ideological. Until today, we stand on the side of the Palestinians and all those who are fighting for a democratic solution in the region.”

-Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) executive council member Mustafa Karasu in a 2017 article for the Internationalist Commune

Palestine and internationalism are two terms often used in the same sentence, but how much are you actually considering internationalism in the Palestinian struggle?

Be careful not to reduce resistance to understanding your enemy. The question of what you are resisting often has an easier answer than the question of what you are building. Surely a great step has been made in the ongoing university resistance, but this time it was limited to Palestine. Where do you go from here? What will your demands be next time? What will you build toward and not just resist against? Do you know the struggle you fight for just as well as you know the enemy? What are you building comrade?

I end with a few more questions for you to ponder:

How would you feel when an Israeli JDAM detonates a couple fields away from you, how would you respond? How are you politicizing your emotions that come from what you see, what you feel? What is the distance between you and genocide in reality? What are you simply reacting to, and what are you responding to? It is on us to carry the will of the martyrs.

If you have some extra change to spare, consider contributing to Gaza Mutual Aid to directly support those affected on the ground, or sending some to our comrades on the university front who have been battling not only Zionist power structures but also the prison-industrial complex on campusbailfunds.com

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