

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

special
20p

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VICTORY TO THE INTIFADA!



FREE ALL PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

Since the end of February, the Zionists have slaughtered over 500 Palestinian people, all in the name of the 'war against terrorism'. The first phase of the onslaught started at the end of February; the second phase began at the end of March.

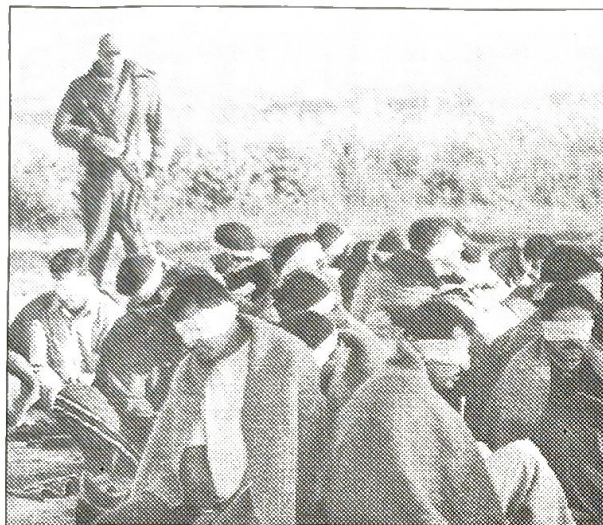
The toll is dreadful: 80 die in Nablus as helicopter gunships destroy the historic Qasbah. Untold numbers die in Jenin, pulverised by tanks and bulldozers. Dozens more are killed in Ramallah as the Zionists strain to sweep Yasser Arafat aside. Zionist troops use Palestinian civilians as human shields. They target ambulances and medical personnel, denying them access to the wounded, many of whom die as a consequence. Snipers shoot down women and children.

Soldiers loot property, vandalising and daubing racist graffiti as they move from house to house wreaking gratuitous destruction. Palestinian Authority institutions in Ramallah, such as the Ministries for Health and Education, are devastated. The 'war on terrorism' has become a war to destroy the Palestinian people, to break them completely and utterly, to abolish once and for all their demand for freedom. It is a war of a colonial power, backed by the world's single super-power, against a risen people.

In March 2001, Ariel Sharon promised to crush the Intifada in 100 days. The rabid racist failed. Once again he stands accused of war crimes, a charge to which he is no stranger. His bloody career dates back to 1953 when his 101 commando unit massacred 69 civilians in Qibya. It takes in the

mass murder of Egyptian prisoners of war in 1956. Most infamously it includes the carnage of Beirut in 1982: 25,000 dead in an adventure which included the massacres at Sabrah and Chatilah. His biography is also a history of Zionism since 1948: the most militarised society in the world today, where it is the norm for prime ministers to be former army chiefs (Sharon, Yitzak Rabin, Ehud Barak).

Yet the Palestinian people will not be put down. The history of Zionism is also the history of their struggle for freedom. For four years, from 1987 to 1991, they fought alone in the first Intifada. In the end they were defeated, not militarily, but because their inept leadership accepted the 1993 Oslo 'agreement'. In the seven years that followed, the neo-colonial character of the



The Israelis ape their US masters in Guantanamo: Palestinian detainees are blindfolded and starved, with numbers stamped on their arms. They were then bussed to an Israeli army base at Ofer and to Kedumim, an illegal settlement.

'agreement' became evident. The West Bank remained a tapestry of Palestinian enclaves surrounded by an ever-expanding network of Zionist settlements. The number of settlers has doubled since Oslo to over 400,000; their seizures of Palestinian land have continued. Precious water resources in the West Bank have been siphoned off to support the Israeli economy. A corrupt Palestinian Authority policed the agreement brutally, torturing and murdering opponents. In Summer 2000, the Barak government, supported by President Clinton, tried to impose a final agreement. Settlements in the West Bank would be annexed to Israel, with the Palestinian areas divided into three apartheid-style bantustans. The illusion that Oslo would lead to an independent homeland was exposed. Arafat had to reject the deal for fear of an explosion at home. That explosion came anyway on 28 September 2000 when the Zionist army gunned down unarmed demonstrators protesting the day after Sharon's infamous visit to the Al Aqsa mosque.

Despite every effort, the Zionists have failed to crush the second Intifada because its unity has remained unbroken. The Palestinian working class has imposed a unity on the Islamic and nationalist forces which Zionist terror has failed to break. The Popular Resistance Committees have become the authen-

tic organisations of the Intifada. Joint organisation and joint action have been the hallmark of the struggle. The Zionist escalation at the end of February was a result of the military successes of the united resistance against the army of occupation. And for all the talk of the 'terror' of suicide attacks, it was the assassination of Tourism Minister Ze'evi in October 2001 which most outraged the Zionists.

Now the struggle has entered a new and dangerous phase. The Zionists have undoubtedly inflicted a defeat on the resistance. The US has proved once again a vital ally in sabotaging the proposed UN investigation of war crimes in Jenin. Arab leaders have shown they are more concerned about the security of their own regimes than the plight of the Palestinian people. The British government echoes the US position, and continues to sell arms to the Zionists. The Labour Party is stuffed full of Zionists and anti-Arab racists; Peter Mandelson shares a platform with Benjamin Netanyahu. Yasser Arafat has secured a meaningless freedom at the expense of six others who are now held by British and US security personnel. But the Palestinian people are not alone against the US-Zionist-British alliance. Millions across the world have demonstrated their support for the Intifada. We must join in.

Robert Clough

Intifada THE FACTS

Since 29 March, the Zionist army has reoccupied Jenin, Ramallah, Qalqiliya, Bethlehem, Nablus, Hebron, Tulkarm, Deharyaha, Bir Zeit, plus dozens of towns and villages. The following is a list of war crimes the Zionists have committed since then.

- **Ambulances:** Since 29 March, ambulances have been denied access to the wounded on more than 350 occasions. 185 ambulances have been hit by gunfire. Peter Hansen, director of UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) said: 'I would strongly suggest that when 185 ambulances have been hit, including 75% of UNRWA's ambulances... this is not the result of stray bullets by mistake hitting an ambulance, this can only be by targeting ambulances.' 14 on-duty medical workers have been killed since the start of the Intifada; over 200 medical workers injured and 10 ambulances destroyed.

- **Human Shields:** 'In virtually every case in which Israeli Defence Force (IDF) soldiers entered civilian homes, they were accompanied by Palestinian civilians who were participating under duress. The forced use of civilians during military operations is a serious violation of the laws of

war, as it exposes civilians to direct risk of death or serious injury.' (New York-based Human Rights Watch)

- **Summary Executions:** There is extensive evidence of summary executions, but most witnesses are imprisoned. Human rights organisations have confirmed eight summary executions in the past month, with reports of dozens more.

Since the start of the Intifada, nearly 1,600 Palestinians have been killed, a quarter of them aged under 18. There have been 173 summary executions of which 65 were of civilians. Over 25,000 Palestinians have been injured, 35% by live ammunition. An estimated 2,000 people have permanent disabilities.

- **Targeting Civilians:** 'The orders were to shoot at each house. The words on the radio were to "Put a bullet in each window".' - Sergeant of Yoav Regiment of IDF Fifth Brigade, reserve unit that invaded Jenin (*Washington Post*, 26 April). Dozens of homes were bulldozed in Jenin with their occupants still inside. Of the 52 confirmed deaths in Jenin, at least 22 were of civilians. A further 6,400 Jenin residents still remain unaccounted for. (Human Rights Watch)

- **Arrests:** More than 5,000 Palestinians have been arbitrarily detained since 29 March 2002. They have no access to lawyers. Indefinite detention was made legal by military order No1500, subject to approval by a military tribunal, using secret evidence and there are numerous allegations of torture. 1,500 are still being held illegally.

- **Economic Damage:** The total loss to the Palestinian economy is estimated at \$3.2 billion (includ-

ing income only, not destruction of public and private property). 34,606 olive and fruit trees have been uprooted, 14,339 dunums* of land bulldozed or burned

- **Civilian infrastructure destroyed:** Before 1 March 2002: extensive damage to 4,000 buildings, including 7 hospitals, 30 mosques, 12 churches; 134 water wells destroyed. Since 1 March, in all re-occupied cities and towns, the vast majority of government ministry buildings, universities, libraries, media outlets, sewerage and water systems and electricity infrastructure have been attacked or substantially destroyed. Detailed targets are far too numerous to list, but according to Bir Zeit University, the goal seems to have been 'the complete destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure.'

Dalton Hilliard

* a dunum is approximately one quarter of an acre.



FRFI regular picket of M&S, Manchester

Free the hostages of imperialism

On 2 May, the Israeli army ended its siege of Yasser Arafat's Ramallah compound where he had been held prisoner since December 2001. The price of his freedom was the imprisonment of six Palestinians in Jericho under joint US-British custody. They included four members of the military wing of the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The week before, a kangaroo court convicted them of the assassination of Israeli Tourist Minister Ze'evi in October 2001. Hamdi Quran, accused of the actual shooting, was sentenced to 18 years, whilst his 'lookout', Basel Al Asmar, got 12 years. The getaway driver, Majdi Rimawi, received eight years, and Ahed

Gholmy one year. Ze'evi was a rabid Zionist who advocated the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people from the West Bank and Gaza.

The trial took place as the Israeli army besieged Ramallah with the aim of sidelining Arafat or removing him altogether. There was talk of storming his headquarters. Stung by the assassination of Ze'evi, Israel had long demanded the arrest of the PFLP volunteers involved. But the four militants were to become pawns in a bigger game. US and British imperialism, nervous about Sharon's aims, wanted Arafat's release. To this end they proposed that they have custody of the four PFLP volunteers. However the

Zionists also wanted Ahmad Sadat, head of the political wing of the PFLP, to be detained, and Fuad Shubaki, Arafat's financial aide, who was allegedly involved in arms smuggling. There was no question of a trial for these two; both were just bundled into the 'negotiations'. On 2 May, Arafat decided that his liberty was worth more than theirs, and handed them over to the US and Britain.

We demand the immediate release of these six hostages, along with the thousands of others the Zionists have illegally detained over the last two months. The British Labour government has no right to act as gaolers of the Palestinian people.

Andrew Orphanoudakis

Events

Scotland

Marks and Spencer pickets:

Glasgow Argyle Street:

Saturday 25 May, 1 June and 8 June
from 12 noon-3pm.

FRFI Public meeting:

Victory to the Intifada!

Thursday 30 May 7:30pm

City Halls, Albion Street.

Organise to spread the pickets all across Scotland!

Midlands

Marks and Spencer pickets:

Leicester City Centre

Saturday 25 May, 1 June and 8 June
from 12 noon-2pm

For further details, contact 07803 939 713

North West

Marks and Spencer pickets:

Manchester Market Street -

Saturday 25 May, 1 June and 8 June

Liverpool Church Street -

Saturday 1 June

Bolton City Centre -

Saturday 8 June

All are from 12 noon - 2pm

Next meeting of Manchester Victory to the Intifada group:

Friends Meeting House, Mount Street,

Wednesday 29 May

7pm. All welcome.

To contact: phone 0781 654 7066 or e-mail fightpov@freenetname.co.uk

London

Marks and Spencer pickets:

Oxford Street

(No 173, Tottenham Court Road end):

Thursday evenings 30 May and 6 June
from 6pm - 8pm

Wood Green:

Saturdays 25 May, 1 June, 8 June
from 12 noon - 2pm

Organising meetings take place at Sebbon Street Centre, Sebbon Street (behind Upper Street) N1.

Nearest tube: Highbury and Islington. Next meeting: **Monday 20 May, 7.45pm.**

All welcome.

For more information, phone 020 7837 1688 or e-mail victoryintifada@hotmail.com

Website www.rcgfrfi.easynet.co.uk or www.revolutionarycommunist.com

Boycott Marks & Spencer!

The campaign to boycott Israeli goods has been gaining ground in Britain. But the movement needs to unify around a symbol that embodies corporate support for Zionism. No company better deserves to be that symbol than Marks & Spencer.

M&S sells £240 million worth of Israeli exports annually. Under the banner 'Made in Israel', the company sells goods produced in the illegally Occupied Territories, often by exploited Palestinian labour. But the company's support for Zionism goes deeper.

M&S Chairman Lord Marcus Sieff wrote that one of the fundamental objectives of his company was to aid the economic

development of Israel. Simon Marks, along with relatives Israel Sieff and Harry Sacher, were key diplomatic allies of Zionist leader and first President of Israel, Chaim Weizmann. According to Weizmann himself, 'Zionism became the leit-motif of their lives, and they brought it qualities of which we stood greatly in need.'

After 1948, M&S did all it could to bolster the Zionist economy. According to Barry Kosmin, 'M&S was prominent, even essential, from the 1960s through to the 1980s...partly because of its strong historical links with Zionism; and partly for its success in getting Israeli goods to the British market-

place.' In 1998 Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu granted M&S the Jubilee Award, given to those individuals and organisations that have done the most to strengthen the Israeli economy. More recently, the Israeli ambassador held a ceremony in London to honour M&S for their support of Zionism. As an M&S spokeswoman recently confirmed: 'We are as close to Israel as we have ever been.'

A campaign to boycott M&S gives the broader struggle to isolate the Zionist state a much-needed focus for action, in the same way that the boycott of Barclays Bank did for the anti-apartheid campaign. Join us in building the boycott!

Picketing Marks & Spencer!

We have been picketing outside Manchester centre Marks and Spencer most Saturdays since shortly after the Intifada started. We have handed out thousands of leaflets and persuaded dozens of people not to shop there. We have irritated management and the security guards no end. We have also collected hundreds of signatures on our petitions. Between 25 and 50 people come each week to help. We are communists, Muslims, anti-imperialists, democrats.

On 20 April, after 18 months of activity, council officials tried to stop us by removing our stall under the pretext of clearing the city centre of 'dangerous obstacles'. After heated argument, they took it away with the backing of the police - but ten of us agreed to be summonsed to show we would not be intimidated.

Their action took place as we all started to learn the true horror of Jenin. The council was supporting the Zionists. Next Saturday, there were 50 of us with our stall to reclaim our streets for political protest. The City Council officials did nothing, although they could

see us from their CCTV. On 4 May, however, they did return. More argument, during which we showed them a solicitor's opinion that their action was illegal and liable to judicial review. The council officials retreated; our stall was intact. On 11 May the police were



CHOOSE THE RCG

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there to 'greet' us. They told us that they did not expect the council officials to appear - there had been an excess of zeal; our stall was not an obstruction. However, the police decided to take a lot of video of the picket. We are demanding copies of their film and an explanation as to why they took this action.

We now intend to extend the pickets to other cities - Liverpool and Bolton are next. Above all, we want to mobilise more and more people so that we can have a really effective campaign. Join us!

*Rahima Islam and
Shahida Choudhury*