



**Myths
about
the UN**



**Black Hawk
Down actor
speaks out**

**No to war on
Iraq,
Afghanistan**

Solidarity with the Palestinians

Black Hawk Down actor speaks out

Brendan Sexton 111, who played the part of 'Aphabet' in *Black Hawk Down*, wrote the following critical account of the film and the US intervention in Somalia

When I first read the script to *Black Hawk Down*, I didn't think it was the greatest thing in the world—far from it. But I thought the script at least raised some very important questions that are missing from the final product. I was misled to think that the release of the film would allow for forums like this one—where some of these questions could be answered. In certain scenes, U.S. soldiers—before they even entered the now-infamous firefights in Mogadishu—were asking whether the U.S. should be there, how effective the U.S. military presence was, and why the U.S. was targeting one specific warlord in Somalia, Gen. Mohammed Farah Aidid.

As we moved closer to actually filming the script, the script moved further and further away from the little that existed of its questioning character.

In February of last year, another actor and I flew down together to Georgia for our "Ranger Orientation Training" at a place many of you might know—Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia.

In Atlanta, we caught a shuttle plane to Columbus, and on our flight, there were a bunch of guys with Marine haircuts speaking Spanish. It took us a few moments to realize these guys were "students" of the School of the Americas, the U.S. Army's own terrorist training camp for Latin America, which is stationed at Fort Benning. That started to put things into perspective.

US Army Rangers

For the next five days, we received a crash course in military training at Fort Benning, and I learned a lot. The U.S. Army Rangers, who we were portraying in the film, are an elite group of soldiers that only number 1,500 or so. Their average age is 19. They're not Special Forces, but they carry out "Special Ops"—or Special Operations.

While they trace their history back to wars that helped to ethnically cleanse Native Americans and to their exploits in the Civil War fighting for the South, the modern-day Rangers were created to help rejuvenate a defeated and demoralized U.S. imperialism after the war in Vietnam. Since then, they've been used in all sorts of interventions—from Lebanon to Grenada to Panama,



and, of course, Somalia.

The Rangers—whose motto is "Rangers lead the way"—are supposed to be the shining example of the Army. Their extreme training, tan berets and ugly haircuts are supposed to separate them from the hundreds of thousands of other soldiers.

Before you go to Rangers school, you go through the Rangers' own version of boot camp—which is called RIP, or the "Ranger Indoctrination Program." RIP is only about three weeks. In Rangers school, you get one meal a day and two hours sleep for about 10 weeks.

This is all meant to simulate the harsh conditions of war. But no matter how much you train and no matter how much you complete mock missions in life-sized mock cities at Fort Benning, it can't prepare you for actual combat, when the bullets are ripping past your head.

Client state

During the Cold War, Somalia was a client state of the former USSR, with the U.S. supporting the regime of King Haile Selassie in rival Ethiopia. When Haile Selassie was overthrown, the alliances switched, and the U.S. then backed the dictator Siad Barre in Somalia.

From the late 1970s onward, the U.S. sent about \$50 million a year in arms to Barre's regime to help him keep a tight grip on the country. When

repression wasn't enough, Barre exploited divisions among the different clans in Somalia. When Barre was overthrown, these clan rivalries exploded.

The civil war that followed caused a horrible famine that took 300,000 lives, as the warring factions took over the farms of rival clans and burned their crops.

Had the U.S. given Somalia constructive aid—like money for agriculture and infrastructure, instead of military aid—the famine most likely never would have happened. U.S. intervention was supposedly to stop this famine, but the reality is completely different.

The film *Black Hawk Down* paints the Somali people as wild savages. Elvis Mitchell, who reviewed the film for the *New York Times* when it opened in December, wrote: "The lack of characterization converts the Somalis into a pack of snarling dark-skinned beasts—intended or not, it reeks of glumly staged racism."

I think that's an accurate description. The Somalis are portrayed as if they don't know what's going on, as if they're trying to kill the Americans because they - like all other "evildoers" - will do anything to bite the hand that feeds them. But the Somalis aren't a stupid people. In fact, many were upset because the U.S. military presence propped up people tied to the old, corrupt Barre regime. The United Nations wasn't too favored either—because the UN was run at the time by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a former Egyptian official who also supported Barre's regime.

Somalis good reason to be upset

The Somalis had plenty of reason to be upset with the U.S. presence, especially when the U.S. objective changed from "food distribution" to basically kidnapping Gen. Aidid. Aidid had climbed the ranks of Barre's regime, later helped to depose him and then became the U.S. government's "Public Enemy Number One."

There was nothing much different about Aidid from the other warlords vying for power. The main difference was that he wasn't yet ready to cut a deal with the U.S.



Warlords, dictators and terrorists are normally okay with the U.S., as long as they do the bidding of U.S. corporate interests. In fact, the U.S. promoted Aidid for a time. He belongs on that long list of former U.S. allies who commit atrocities with impunity, but once they step out of line are denounced as the “new Hitler”—a list that includes the likes of Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic.

What the U.S. tried to accomplish in Somalia was nearly unprecedented. The goal was to travel thousands of miles to a different continent and literally kidnap someone who was surrounded by armed men.

Disasters

The first few attempts to capture Aidid and his top lieutenants were disasters. First, U.S. troops attacked the wrong house, which turned out to be the office for the UN Development Program. Later, they attacked the offices of the charities World Concern and Doctors Without Borders.

Unfortunately, there’s little information out there on Somalia. What happened in 1993 is probably the most under-researched U.S. intervention of the past 50 years.

This is unfortunate because there’s much to learn from Somalia. For example, many people who were horrified by the destruction caused by U.S. bombs in Afghanistan called on the U.S. to use ground troops to minimize the killing.

Let’s not forget that U.S. ground troops caused much more devastation in Mogadishu—killing close to 10,000 people in a matter of just a few weeks. Let’s not forget that U.S. ground troops turned whole neighborhoods of Panama City to rubble in 1989, while killing thousands of people.

We can’t just question the tactics used by the U.S. military. We have to question the U.S. government’s claim that it has the moral high ground to intervene anywhere, at any time, in any way it so chooses.

Somalia, in certain ways, represents a recurring theme with U.S. interventions abroad. It’s one of the poorest countries in the world, coming face to face with the world’s richest and most powerful—much like Afghanistan.

One of the true tragedies of the war in Somalia was the support that it received from liberals and even radicals.

Vietnam Syndrome

When the world’s biggest military attacked a struggle for national liberation in Vietnam, it was met with dissent at home. This created what was called the “Vietnam syndrome”—the reluctance of the U.S. to commit ground troops abroad.

The Vietnam syndrome was a good thing. It meant that the U.S. had to pull out of Indochina, and it meant that the world’s biggest bully couldn’t as easily go wherever it wanted, thus saving millions of lives.

The 1980s saw the restoration of U.S. imperialism—baby step by baby step—with covert and overt operations in Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Panama.

But the rehabilitation really took place in the 1990s, with the reinvention of U.S. imperialism through what became known as “humanitarian intervention”—operations like “Operation Restore Hope” in Somalia, “Operation Restore Democracy” in Haiti in 1994, and interventions in the former Yugoslavia in 1995 and 1999.

When the U.S. was attacking genuine national liberation movements,

it was much clearer why U.S. intervention had to be opposed. But when the U.S. went up against the “evil dictators” in the interest of “helping people,” it became more confusing.

U.S. officials used the cover of “humanitarian intervention” for missions abroad that actually worsened people’s lives in those countries.

Afghanistan—bombing an already war-torn country, leaving more than 3,700 dead and hundreds of thousands more on the brink of starvation. Kosovo—2,000 dead in the 1999 bombing campaign, the war worsened the refugee crisis, and generations to come will grow up with high levels of cancer because of the U.S. use of depleted uranium. This is the “humanity” of U.S. humanitarian interventions.

This should teach us that, at best, the U.S. can only create a more violent, unstable world when it intervenes abroad.

Many people say that those of us who are against the war have no answers to the world’s problems. They say that we advocate doing nothing. But hindering the U.S.’s ability to intervene is actually doing something—it’s saving lives.

Plus, our movement can take up slogans and demands like “Money for jobs, not for war” and “U.S. out of the Middle East”—which, if won, could actually better millions of people’s lives.

That’s a project worth fighting for, and, if you’re not involved with that fight already, I encourage you to get involved.

The above is the text of a February 11 speech Brendan Sexton gave at a Columbia University forum on the war.

United Nations - friend or foe?

Many well-intentioned people still see the United Nations as some kind of alternative to imperialism. Below we review the arguments and put the anti-imperialist case

Isn't the United Nations a neutral body representing the international community? Can't it work in an unbiased way?

The United Nations was established by the winning powers in WW2. They redivided the world between them, with little concern for anyone else. The United Nations was created to give legitimacy to this new world order.

One of the first major activities of the UN was to create the state of Israel, thereby dispossessing the Palestinians. Shortly after this, the UN intervened militarily in Korea to back up the dictatorship in the South and preserve imperialist interests. In the Congo in the early 1960s, the United Nations used its 'neutral' cover to play an important part in the overthrow of the radical regime of Patrice Lumumba. This resulted in years of dictatorship and the continued plunder of the wealth of the Congo by Western interests.

Today, the United Nations is responsible for the sanctions on Iraq – sanctions which have killed hundreds and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people.

The idea of the international community also needs to be challenged. Are ordinary workers anywhere in the world are part of this 'international community'? Or does the term merely refer to Western governments and legitimise their continued interference in the affairs of Third World countries.

What about aid? Surely the UN is useful in providing humanitarian assistance?

In Afghanistan, Western aid agencies begged for a break in the bombing campaign, but the US-led

coalition simply refused. When the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance said it didn't want UN forces in Afghanistan, British forces, operating under the banner of the UN, simply seized Bagram Airport outside Kabul and said it was needed in order to distribute aid.

In other words, even at best humanitarian aid delivered by the UN is subordinate to the military machinations of the Western powers.



Two faces of the UN - the velvet glove (above) and the fist (below)



Moreover, aid itself is a political weapon wielded by the Western powers, including when it comes in a UN package. It never goes to Third World countries without strings. It is used to get governments and peoples in the Third World to follow policy prescriptions laid down by the West.

Because it is a tool for advancing the interests of the Western powers who control it, the UN has a terrible record on 'humanitarian' issues. Their sanctions on Iraq are the most glaring example. But you can also take examples such as Somalia. There, in 1992, the UN used fake pictures of famine to justify an invasion by 30,000 US troops who shot dead 5,000 Somalis and ended up causing real mass starvation.

But how we can provide aid to people who need it without doing so through the United Nations?

There are a number of alternatives. Some people favour demanding no-strings aid from the West; this means that the West should just hand over aid to Third World countries. Although this would be fair enough, it's very unlikely that any Western governments would do this. They will always use whatever weapons are in their possession to advance their own interests in such situations.

Moreover, if we could build a mass movement strong enough to make them do this, wouldn't it be better for that mass movement to organise direct aid – where workers and concerned people in the West donate aid which is delivered directly to fellow organisations in the Third World, eg to trade unions and other



The UN kills with bombs and sanctions, hardly an improvement on the more open imperialism of the US and its allies

bodies which represent ordinary people.

This is the most effective solidarity – grassroots solidarity. It is real solidarity and real internationalism, because it builds links between the peoples of the world, rather than between regimes and institutions which oppress us.

This kind of solidarity and internationalism is therefore linked to the fight for a better world as well, rather than applying a few band-aids while preserving the existing international order.

What about terrorism and also dictators in the Third World? Surely some kind of UN-sponsored international court is useful?

Firstly, if the US government wants to try the people who carried out the September 11 attacks, they can do what anyone else does. Assemble evidence, find the party the evidence points to and seek their extradition. The Taliban said that if the US presented them with a prima facie case in relation to Bin Laden, they'd hand him over. Bush bombed them and invaded Afghanistan anyway.

The main point, however, is that for those of us who are serious about a better world, it is pointless to get into the exercise of giving advice to the Western powers on how to carry out their policies. Rather, we need to turn the argument around and ask questions like, "How can the oppressed of the world get our oppressors off our backs?" and "How can we establish good relations with the mass of people

in the Third World and show them we are their allies, that the mass of people in the West are part of the solution and not part of the problem?"

As long as we debate on the terrain laid out by the Western governments and their flunkies, we will never get anywhere.

Just look at who the real war criminals are since WW2. Look at what the Allied powers got away with even in WW2, with Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the fire-bombing of Tokyo and also German cities. Look at what the US got away with in Vietnam. Look at Britain and France's dirty records in their colonial wars in the twentieth century. Does anyone seriously imagine the members of Western governments responsible for all this are going to be brought before international courts.

International courts are instruments of Western governments' policy, masquerading as impartial, legal institutions. First comes the big propaganda campaign about some Third World tyrant, then comes the Western bombs and invasion, then comes the trial to legitimise the propaganda, bombs and invasions.

But is there really any alternative to the United Nations?

Yes, certainly. It is the alternative of projects like Workers Aid to Afghanistan. This provided aid directly from workers in the West to secular workers' organisations in Pakistan who channelled it into Afghanistan.

Not only does workers' direct aid build up solidarity between the workers

and oppressed of the whole world, it means there are no fat cat bureaucrats skimming off huge administrative fees or state officials in Third World countries grabbing the aid for themselves.

So even at the most basic level, it is more effective than UN aid. In the big picture scenario, it means undermining the use of aid as a political weapon by the Western ruling classes and, instead, promoting the common interests of workers the world over.

This kind of solidarity used to be very common on the left. Unfortunately, as much of the left has become institutionalised over the years, it is now quite rare. Many on the left prefer now to help run capitalism, rather than struggle for its overthrow.

The kind of alternative aid which can be developed therefore asserts the political independence, too, of the oppressed from the institutions of our oppressors.

So we are advocating a working class, rank-and-file response which is both a realistic alternative to Western interference and domination and a part of struggling for fundamental, global social change.

OK, you've got me convinced. Now how can I get involved?

See page 20.

Scott Hamilton of Auckland's Anti-Imperialist Coalition and **Philip Ferguson** of Christchurch's MidEast Collective contributed the anti-imperialist arguments

Peace is not good enough

During the campaign against the war on Afghanistan, some leading 'peace' campaigners put their cosy relationship with Helen Clark ahead of the rights of the Afghan people not to be bombed by the West. One notable peace campaigner preferred not to speak out because it got in the way of her coffee soirees with Clark. Some 'peace' luminaries were even happy to play some kind of role in helping the West cobble together a regime of underlings in Kabul.

Abroad various 'moderate' left and 'peace' people not only failed to work to build an anti-interventionist movement, but actually supported the West's war on Afghanistan, arguing that this was somehow 'different' to the usual imperialist wars in and on the Third World.

Peace or freedom?

For some of the peacenicks, peace is what is primary, not justice, let alone human emancipation. But peace in the Third World is more often than not the peace of the grave, rather than the peace of prosperity and freedom.

As radical Jamaican musician Peter Tosh once addressed such people, "Everyone is talking about peace, but no-one is talking about justice; I want equal rights and justice."

The fight against the intervention in Afghanistan revealed that there is only one basis on which a consistent struggle can be waged – the basis of class-oriented anti-imperialist politics.

At the end of the day, the middle class in New Zealand has little reason to support the peoples of the Third World against domination and plunder by the West. Even the most 'advanced' liberals from the middle class merely



Wellington demo after Sept 11 called for 'reconciliation not revenge'. But people in the Third World need liberation!

want to alter the terms on which the domination and exploitation take place.

Since the Western powers are themselves tending these days to replace exhausted dictatorships in the Third World with shiny, new 'democratic' regimes even more beholden to them, the liberal peacenicks' politics fit in quite well with Western foreign policy.

Not surprisingly, there has been a huge increase in the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), many of which are bound by all kinds of threads to Western governments and policy, despite their name.

By contrast, the working classes of the First World have every reason to support the peoples of the Third World. For a start, we are exploited by the same global class of capitalists, who are overwhelmingly based in the First World. And the same politicians who have overseen cuts in workers' living standards in the West over the past two decades are the ones organising the bombings, sanctions and interventions in Third World countries.

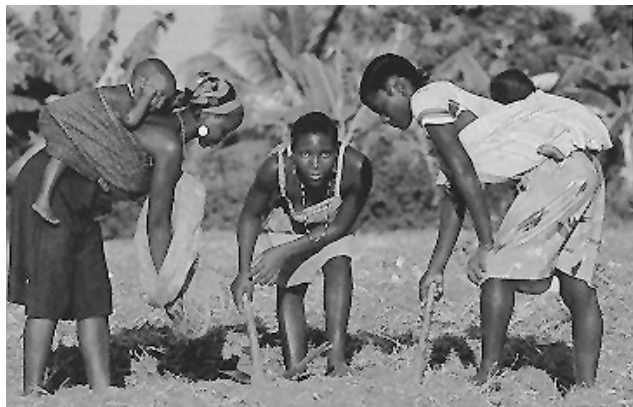
Also at issue is the struggle of workers in the West for emancipation. The class struggle of Western workers

simply cannot be pursued effectively if one day workers here strike against their bosses and the next day line up behind their bosses against the people of the Third World. To fight our exploiters at home we need to differentiate ourselves from them on every issue, establish an independent class position, and oppose our exploiters' policies at home and abroad.

Only the working class has a real stake in consistently opposing imperialism and supporting the oppressed peoples of the Third World, because our exploiters and theirs are the same. And only the working class has the power to prevent Western intervention, because we are the people who create all the goods and services that make the world go round.

An antiwar movement that is serious about establishing a permanent peace across the globe has to fight to remove the causes of conflict. The causes are bound up with the terrible inequality and other injustices that are entrenched in the global order of capitalism. Thus we have to orient to the working class – the only class in NZ and other Western societies that has a reason and an interest in fighting for a better world, and the only class with the potential power to bring this about.

In short, we need to build a militant anti-imperialist movement, not a mealy-mouthed peace movement. Such a movement must orient to the working class and work to raise the political consciousness of workers with the goal of putting an end to inequality, exploitation and oppression and establishing a new world of plenty and freedom. Only the establishment of such a world can consign war and the weapons of war to the museum of the past.



'Peace' usually means the peace of relentless oppression for Third World people. What they need from us is solidarity with their struggles, not calls to make peace with their oppressors in the West.

Palestine - solidarity urgently needed

As we go to press, Israeli troops continue to run amok in Palestinian areas in the Occupied Territories on the West Bank. Tanks, armoured personnel carriers and heavily-armed soldiers are terrorising a largely-defenceless Palestinian population.

Forty years ago the Israeli state's friends and allies administering apartheid in South Africa similarly ran amok, committing the Sharpeville massacre. Sharpeville became a byword for the brutality of the apartheid regime. Whereas the rulers in South Africa decided, under mass pressure, to call it a day on apartheid there, the Israelis have continued on, confident of support from Western governments.

Abominated

Around the world, the apartheid regime in South Africa was abominated. The biggest anti-apartheid protests in the world, outside of South Africa itself, took place in New Zealand. Although it had much earlier roots, the anti-apartheid movement here reached mass proportions in the 1970s and, especially, the 1980s.

After the huge and militant protests of 1981, around the Springbok tour of that year – see revolution #16 and #17 for twentieth anniversary accounts – sporting contact with South Africa was no longer tenable. Protesters here

braved the batons and other violence of the riot police and brutal attacks by tour supporters in order to help isolate South Africa and show solidarity with the oppressed black majority there.

Opposing apartheid in South Africa was the 'great cause' worldwide, and especially in New Zealand, in the 1980s. Twenty years on we need to work to make the dismantling of apartheid Israel the same kind of 'great cause'.

How far we have to go

A number of protests have taken place in NZ recently – big pickets of the Israeli Consulate in Wellington, starting on April 3, and a march of 4-500 people in Auckland on April 6. These are good starts, but they also reveal how far behind we are in this work compared to the rest of the world (see pp22-23).

There is one hell of a lot to do. However, even the anti-apartheid movement here began with just a tiny core of committed activists. We need



such a core now to work and build, to ensure we start to generate a momentum in support of the Palestinians and the ending of apartheid Israel similar to the kind of momentum created here in support of the black struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

The Palestinians have been turned into refugees and outcasts in their own country for over 50 years already. Let's work to make sure they don't spend the next 50 in the same state. Let's make their cause our cause – the cause of all workers and progressive people in New Zealand.

Middle East Information and Solidarity Collective

This is an anti-imperialist workgroup established by supporters of *revolution* magazine. We concentrate on the Middle East because it is the area in which the contradiction between the rights of oppressed people in the Third World and the inhumanity and intervention of imperialism is currently sharpest. In particular, we focus on the struggle of the Palestinians for freedom and the right of the Iraqi people to run their own country without Western sanctions and bombings. We counter the racist images of Arabs prevalent in the Western media, showing that their struggles are completely rational and deserving of our support.

This support is not because we see them as helpless victims - it is a question of working class solidarity across frontiers, in support of the rights of people struggling for the same things as most people in the West want.

Moreover, this internationalism is vital to the development of real class consciousness in the West. Class consciousness is not about a group of workers in NZ just fighting for a wage rise - it is about workers here seeing themselves as part of an international class. This means making common cause with workers around the world against our own government, the NZ government, and its allies in Washington, Canberra, London and other imperialist centres.

As long as workers in the West remain passive in the face of oppression in the Third World, or even go along with it, we will never pose a serious threat to our own rulers and exploiters.

While focussing our main attention on information and solidarity with the Palestinians and the people of Iraq, as against Western domination and oppression, we also condemn the part

played by those who have sold out the Palestinian struggle and act as Israel's fifth column: the PLO leadership around Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority.

- * Western Hands off the Middle East and Afghanistan
- * End the sanctions and bombings of Iraq
- * End Israeli repression of the Palestinians and Western backing of Israel
- * For the dismantling of the apartheid-like state of Israel
- * For a democratic, secular Palestine - a free, socialist Palestine without distinction between Jew and Arab; full equality for all
- * No deals which betray the rights of the oppressed - eg Camp David and the Oslo Accords

Come along and get involved - see p20.

Behind the war on the Palestinians

The article below is a reprint of a 1994 pamphlet by the British Marxist organisation **Workers Fight**

When the last Israeli troops left the Gaza strip in May 1994, they were accompanied by stones hurled by thousands of young Palestinian protestors and rifle volleys were shot in the air as a sign of victory. Indeed the young demonstrators had every reason to feel a sense of victory.

It was them, their friends, their brothers and their sisters, whose resilient defiance against the Israeli authority, through on-going rioting and stone throwing at Israeli troops, forced the Israeli state into making concessions. Since 1987, it was their *Intifada* - which means both the "awakening" and the "uprising" in Arabic - and their "war of the stones", as it came to be known, which maintained a state of ungovernability over much of the Israeli-occupied territories. This was particularly so in the refugee camps in which the poorest layers of the Palestinian people are impounded by the Israeli state.

Demoralising

Over nearly seven years, hundreds of Palestinian youth were shot, thousands were arrested and jailed. Yet day in and day out, they went back onto the streets, constantly pulling more youth into the fight. Their mobilisation made it impossible for the Israeli state to consolidate its rule over the occupied territories. Even more worrying for the Israeli state was the increasingly demoralising effect of the "war of the stones" on its own soldiers. They could no longer be described as carrying out the "noble" task of defending the very existence of the Israeli state against terrorist groups and hostile Arab dictators.

The only "enemies" that Israeli soldiers ever confronted now were 15-year old Palestinians hurling stones at them, against whom they were ordered to use their heavy automatic weaponry. They were constantly surrounded by



A trophy kill: Israeli soldier takes picture of two of his fellow soldiers standing over a Palestinian they've just killed

the hostility of an impoverished population. This was leading more and more Israeli soldiers, and even officers to question the whole policy behind the dirty job they were ordered to do.

Without the "war of the stones", the so-called "historical" handshake between Yasir Arafat - Israel's most wanted public enemy - and Itzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister and former Israeli army chief of staff during the Six-Day War, would not have taken place in Washington on 13 September 1993. Nor would a series of subsequent discussions have led to the final agreement signed in Cairo on 4 May this year, paving the way for the handing over of power by Israel to Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in newly-created "autonomous areas". So, yes, seeing the backs of the Israeli troops in the Gaza strip, in mid-May, was the achievement of the Intifada youth, and theirs alone.

Today's concessions by the Israeli state may be limited. They may well be loaded with all kinds of hidden schemes which have nothing to do with the aspirations of the Palestinian people. But the mere fact that the

Israeli state was forced, eventually, into agreeing to these political concessions, amounts to a recognition that the policy followed for decades by all successive Israeli regimes - a policy which involved turning the Palestinians into refugees imprisoned in their own country, with the Israeli population as their wardens - has been a failure.

Zionism and its roots

The Israeli state and its policies cannot be dissociated from two primary factors - on

the one hand the Zionist movement and, on the other hand, the complex operation of imperialist rivalries in the Middle-East.

The Zionist movement emerged a long way from the Middle-East, in Eastern Europe where relatively numerous Jewish communities were to be found in the latter part of the 19th century. Before that time, a balance had been established over the centuries between the mostly urban Jewish communities and indigenous populations which were still overwhelmingly tied to the land. In the countryside the Jewish communities provided many of the craftsmen and traders that were indispensable for a farming economy, while in the towns they often provided the skills needed in administration.

This balance was disrupted by the late emergence of capitalism in Poland and Russia. Being late-comers, compared to the rest of Europe, the bourgeoisies of these countries were born crippled and degenerate even before they had time to develop their grip over society. To the weak Russian and Polish aspiring bourgeois, whose future looked already so bleak, the long-established Jewish petty-bourgeois were not only potential rivals, they also made easy scapegoats. Thus

anti-semitism grew out of the impotence of aspiring bourgeoisies who were looking for someone to blame for their own incapacity.

The dictatorial regimes of Eastern Europe, particularly the tsarist regime, were also quick to see the use they could make of anti-semitism to split and stifle any opposition - whether the liberal opposition of the bourgeoisie or the more radical opposition of the emerging working class. Pogroms, in which rioters went on the rampage, killing and looting Jewish houses, while the authorities were looking the other way - when they were not leading the rioters - became part of urban life in the last two decades of the century. This wave of pogroms led to a massive emigration of East European Jews towards Western Europe and, above all, to America. Although in fact the anti-semitic disease even spread to Western Europe during that period, where it became one of the distinctive propagandistic weapons used by the most reactionary political currents.

Zionism emerged against this background, as a reaction against both anti-semitism and the emigration wave it had triggered. Theodor Herzl was its most famous promoter. His "State of the Jews", published in 1896, argued that the only way out of persecutions and disintegration through emigration across the world, was for the Jews to build their own state somewhere. Herzl, an admirer of Cecil Rhodes, thought in terms of Western colonial interests. If a Jewish colony were set up in, say, Palestine, though Cyprus, Uganda and even China were mentioned as possibilities, the Jewish people would form "a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation as opposed to barbarism".

Socially, Zionism was the expression of a Jewish middle-class who aspired to a share of the social cake and were prevented from getting it by their non-Jewish rivals' usage of anti-semitism. It contrasted sharply, for instance, with the socialist movement that was then emerging among Jewish workers and craftsmen in Poland, who saw anti-semitism as the ultimate weapon used by the property-owning classes to divide and oppress those who had nothing.

Like all nationalisms, Herzl's Zionism set itself the task to forge an ideology and a set of values with which people from very different social and geographical backgrounds could



Theodor Herzl, 1860-1904: founder of Zionism

identify, thereby putting their "national" identity first and forgetting all social differences. To this end, all sorts of justifications had to be dug up from ancient history, as well as a common language, Hebrew, which had long since ceased to be used except for religious purposes. Indeed, there was absolutely nothing natural, let alone rational, in the idea that all these Jewish communities which had been scattered across Eastern Europe and separated for so long, often for centuries, had something specific in common. Such a bizarre concept would probably have never won much credit just on the strength of the half-baked so-called historical justifications produced by Zionist propaganda, if it had not been for anti-semitism itself which proved the most effective propaganda tool for Zionism.

Zionism was a utopia, but a fundamentally reactionary one since it advocated turning the clock back to ancient times in a certain sense. In addition it was an absurd utopia in that it purported to create a state which would have been a shelter for all persecuted Jews and would have protected them from the violent conflicts which had generated anti-semitism - as if any part of the world could have been left untouched by the spasms of the capitalist system. And like all nationalist ideologies, it eventually became a justification for, and an instrument of, oppression.

A weapon for British imperialism

For a long time Zionism remained a minority idea among the Jewish

communities of Eastern Europe. True, there was a steady trickle of Jewish settlers moving to Palestine, so that by 1914 they represented about 14 per cent of the half-a-million strong population. But there was no question of a Jewish state or anything of the sort. While there were the odd clashes with the Arab feudal landlords, there was plenty of space for the Jewish settlers to coexist with the Arab farmers. Even in Palestine, Zionism was having a hard and unsuccessful time gaining credibility. But World War I and the games played by imperialist powers in the Middle-East offered the Zionist leaders a new opportunity.

Among the war aims pursued by the British and French governments was the break up of the Ottoman empire which was allied to Germany and controlled most of the Middle-East. Having defeated Germany, and therefore the Ottoman empire as well, the British and French split the spoils between them, with France taking Lebanon and Syria, while Britain took Palestine, and today's Iraq and Jordan, in addition to Egypt.

During the war, however, the British had encouraged Arab nationalism as a means of weakening the Ottoman empire. They knew, however, that once the Ottoman empire was defeated, the Arab nationalists would inevitably turn against the British Empire. So even before the end of the war, the British government sought to use Zionism as a counterweight to Arab nationalism. They encouraged the Zionist leaders who were canvassing support for large-scale Jewish emigration to Palestine. And, in 1917, the Balfour Declaration publicised British support for "a national home for the Jewish people". This, it must be said, did not prevent the British government from promising at the very same time a "great Arab kingdom" to the Arab nationalist leaders as a reward for their fight against the Ottoman empire.

Not that the Balfour declaration led to an immediate flow towards Palestine. In fact, it took no less than the Great Depression and Hitler's seizure of power in Germany for the previous trickle of settlers to turn into a significant flow.

Obviously the British government's support for the Zionist cause had nothing to do with any humanitarian concern for persecuted Jews. In fact Balfour himself had campaigned vocally some years before against allowing East European Jewish

refugees into Britain. No, the Declaration was only part of Britain's traditional "divide and rule" colonial policy. It was meant to play off Jew against Arab in the same way as in India, for instance, Muslims and Hindus were set at each other's throats.

Thus the hope created by Britain's promises of an Arab federation which would span the entire Arab world was shattered by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Instead, it created a network of small states which were almost completely artificial as a glance at a map of the Middle East shows - the borders between Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia being mostly by straight lines. In these states, Britain and France installed semi-feudal monarchs in power who were little more than puppets of their imperialist masters. These regimes were hated by their populations, both by the Muslim Arab majority and by the various minorities - Jewish, Christian Arabs, etc.. But they fulfilled their purpose, which was to split the Arab population so as to deprive it of any sense of strength.

Blocking common consciousness

There were signs, nevertheless, that a common consciousness could have developed across cultural and ethnic boundaries around the general hostility to imperialist rule over the Middle East. In 1918, for instance, the Jerusalem Arab community signed a petition stressing their desire to live peaceably, as they said, "with our brothers the Israelites". The following year a Syrian Congress claimed to represent Jews, Muslims and Christians alike. Above all there was the development of Communist parties, some of them quite prominent, as in Syria, which were inspired by the class-based alliance of all nationalities that had been so successful in the Russian revolution.

British imperialism, however, made no mistake on that account and took no chances. All through their thirty-year rule over Palestine, until 1947, every political force which diverged from a narrow nationalist perspective and aimed at unifying the poor classes of the region against imperialism and its local agents, was ruthlessly suppressed.

It was thus Britain's policy which sowed the seeds of the future conflict between Arabs and Jewish settlers over Palestine and, eventually, of the process which resulted in the



Palestinians were turned into refugees in their own country

dispossession of the Palestinian Arabs.

By the end of World War II, the extent of the genocide against the Jewish population by the Nazis emerged brutally. For most of Europe's population, this was a stunning and frightening discovery. Of course the rulers of the Western victorious powers had known it all along. But they had chosen to keep it quiet. They had ignored numerous calls to rescue the Jewish victims and refused help to the many Jewish resistance movements which had sprang into existence throughout Eastern Europe - like for instance the ghetto uprisings in Warsaw and Lodz.

The Western imperialist powers remained consistent in their policy after the end of the war. It is estimated that, by 1947, there were 450,000 Jewish refugees scattered across Eastern Europe, who had nowhere to go back to. Between them, the USA and the richer West European countries could easily have welcomed and assimilated such numbers. Instead, the imperialist governments only allowed entry to a selected handful. Predictably, this policy led to a revival of the Zionist utopia, with large numbers of Jewish refugees turning to Palestine for the protection and support that was refused to them by the imperialist powers.

The new immigrants to Palestine had to bypass Britain's refusal to allow them in by resorting to clandestine methods. Those who got caught were jailed in another kind of concentration camps, British this time, set up in Cyprus. Many others became the forerunners of today's Third World boat-people, as the ships on which they

were trying to reach Palestine were turned away by all ports on the Mediterranean coast.

By then the Jewish minority had risen to one-third of the 1.8 million population of Palestine. It had become a highly structured community, complete with political parties ranging from the far-right to the far-left. And it was now strong enough to feel confident of its ability to take on the British rulers of Palestine. It had several armed organisations. The most important of these was Haganah - "defence" in Hebrew - a militia organised by the social-democratic Mapai party (or Labour party) whose policy was, until very late, to seek Britain's support.

In reaction to Haganah's accommodation to British imperialism, more radical armed organisations had developed on the Zionist far-right. The best-known among them was Irgun, which made extensive use of terrorist methods and trained many of Israel's future leaders, like for instance Menahem Begin and Itzhak Shamir who were to become prominent, years later, for their vocal attacks against terrorism - that of the Arab nationalists, of course.

The struggle of the Jewish settlers against imperialist rule in Palestine could have been aimed at freeing the Palestinian population as a whole from the grip of imperialism. The leading role played by the Zionist organisations in this struggle ensured that this was not the case, however. Instead, its aim was from the very beginning the setting up of a separate Jewish state - which amounted to pointing to the Arab

population as enemies since there was to be no space for them in the future state.

Thus even the social-democrat Mapai leaders, as early as 1940, posed the question in the following terms: ". . . the only solution is Palestine, or at least Western Palestine without Arabs... and there is no other way but to transfer all the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries. . . Not one village, not one tribe should be left behind". And yet Mapai was probably the most "moderate" wing of the Zionist movement!

Having failed to contain the growth of Jewish nationalism and being frightened of a possible Arab nationalist backlash as a result, the British government resorted to a trick which has become all too common by now - they ditched the responsibility onto the United Nations, or to put it another way, they got the UN to formulate and endorse the compromise that British ministers were too scared to suggest themselves. This involved the setting up of two separate states in Palestine, one Jewish and one Arab. The deadline for their independence was to be 15 May 1948, by which time Britain's rule over Palestine would be brought to an end.

The official rationale for giving in to the Zionist leaders was to stop the looming civil war carried out by the Zionist far-right. Predictably however, the announcement that a Jewish state was to be set up only resulted in the raising of the stakes. Instead of a looming civil war, outright warfare broke out as the Zionist militia proceeded to shift the balance of forces as much as possible in their favour before the deadline.

Irgun was most prominent in this respect. They would go into an Arab village and give a few hours for the population to collect their belongings and leave. Recalcitrants were given the "Mauser treatment" from the name of the German guns, which Irgun had a large supply of: they were just shot on the spot, sometimes by the dozen, sometimes the whole village as was the case of the 254 inhabitants of Deir Yassin in April 1948.

Irgun's aim was to terrorise the Arab farmers into abandoning their villages and their lands and they stopped at nothing to achieve it. In the name of



Mahmoud Sala: stripped and executed in the street by Israeli soldiers, March 2002

the right of the Jewish victims to compensation, the Zionist far-right just used against the Palestinian Arabs the very same methods that the Nazis had used against the Jewish population in Germany.

Meanwhile, the Arab states had mobilised their troops. But their intervention to defend the Palestinian Arabs was, to say the least, lukewarm. None of these reactionary regimes cared in the least for the Palestinian Arabs of course. If they intervened at all, it was for fear of being accused by their own public opinion of having agreed to the setting up of a Jewish state on what they still considered officially as Arab land.

By the same token, by declaring a "Holy War" against the Jewish state, the Arab rulers diverted the deep frustration in the population away from their imperialist masters. The corruption and lack of resolve shown by the Arab regimes allowed the comparatively weaker Jewish militia to hold their ground. Eventually this first Israeli-Arab war came to an end through a series of armistices signed between Israel and each Arab state during the year 1949.

In fact, long before the end of the war, a secret agreement had already been reached between the Zionist leaders and King Abdullah of Jordan. This came to light when, following the end of the fighting, Abdullah occupied most of the land set aside by the United Nations for the planned Palestinian Arab state, without Israel having anything to say against it. Two years later, Abdullah was to declare this land

- more or less today's West Bank - as part of Jordan. Meanwhile Egypt had taken over another part, the Gaza strip.

Thus, despite the UN partition plan of Palestine, no Arab Palestinian state ever came to existence. What Israel had left of Palestine was shared between Egypt and Jordan. The new state of Israel occupied a territory nearly 50 per cent larger than in the UN's plans. Only 133,000 of the 850,000 Arabs who had lived there before

remained in Israel. The rest, over 600,000 people, had become landless and resourceless refugees who were scattered between the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the neighbouring countries.

The Zionist nightmare

The policy of the Zionist leaders in setting up the state of Israel had been blatantly criminal. Nonetheless the support for this policy among the Israeli population was the distorted expression of aspirations which were not reactionary by themselves.

The old Jewish settlers aspired to escape at last from the grip of imperialism, but they failed to realise that their best allies to achieve this end would have been the Arab masses. Likewise the newer generation of Jewish refugees aspired to having a land of their own far from the scene of the mass genocide engineered by Hitler's regime.

But, while three years after the end of World War II this aspiration was unquestionably legitimate, it did not have to be satisfied at the expense of the Palestinian Arabs. There was enough space in Palestine for the Jewish and Arab populations to coexist on the same land, without having to set up separate states, let alone a state built openly against the Arabs, as Israel was.

Despite the deeply reactionary character of the new state, its initial structure reflected somehow the legitimate aspirations that existed in its population. It also reflected the widespread illusion that Israel offered at last a chance to implement ideals of peace, freedom, generosity and social justice. For instance, the "kibbutzim",



David Ben Gurion, 1886-1973: Israel's first leader

the collective farms set up after the model of the Russian kolkhoz, and the industrial co-operatives which mushroomed over the first decade of Israel's existence, reflected the socialist ideas which were dominant among Zionist supporters. It was even common in those days to refer to an "Israeli socialism", all the more so as for nearly thirty years, the social-democratic Mapai remained continuously in power.

Yet at the same time, Israeli society was also shaped by the process that had led to its formation and the siege mentality which was its main expression. Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, ensured that Israel would remain a state for the Jews only, where Arabs would always feel alien. Thus, while the "law of the Return" allowed every Jew from any part of the world to "ascend", i.e. to return, to Israel, all Palestinian Arabs who had fled the country in 1948 for fear of their lives had to apply for naturalisation and take an oath of loyalty to the Zionist state.

Besides, the very fact that Israel was set up as a Jewish state gave a paramount importance to the Jewish religion, far more than what it actually represented for the population as a whole. No-one ever dared to fight religious prejudices openly, not even those parties which were supposed to be atheist, for fear of being accused of betraying the besieged Jewish state.

As a result Israeli society became increasingly plagued by the most reactionary obscurantism, to the point of fuelling the growth of sizeable Jewish

Deir Yassin massacre

Early in the morning of April 9, 1948, commandos of the Irgun (headed by Menachem Begin) and the Stern Gang attacked Deir Yassin, a village with about 750 Palestinian residents. The village lay outside of the area to be assigned by the United Nations to the Jewish State; it had a peaceful reputation. But it was located on high ground in the corridor between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Deir Yassin was slated for occupation under Plan Dalet and the mainstream Jewish defense force, the Haganah, authorized the irregular terrorist forces of the Irgun and the Stern Gang to perform the takeover.

In all over 100 men, women, and children were systematically murdered. Fifty-three orphaned children were literally dumped along the wall of the Old City, where they were found by Miss Hind Husseini and brought behind the American Colony Hotel to her home, which was to become the Dar El-Tifl El-Arabi orphanage.

Part of the struggle for self-determination by Palestinians has been

to tell the truth about Palestinians as victims of Zionism. For too long their history has been denied, and this denial has only served to further oppress and deliberately dehumanize Palestinians in Israel, inside the occupied territories, and outside in their diaspora.

Some progress has been made. Westerners now realize that Palestinians, as a people, do exist. And they have come to acknowledge that during the creation of the state of Israel, thousands of Palestinians were killed and over 700,000 were driven or frightened from their homes and lands on which they had lived for centuries.

New Zealand anti-imperialists organised a national day of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, on April 9 this year, with meetings in several cities. For further info contact the directory on p20.

There is also an international website on Deir Yassin at:
<http://www.deiryassin.org/>

fundamentalist parties. And likewise the implicit anti-Arab racism which had been the very foundation of Israel soon gave birth to other deep-rooted racisms within the population - for instance against the Jewish immigrants who came from Mediterranean countries in the 50s.

In the end, the Israeli state and the Zionist organisations were able to channel and divert the generous enthusiasm and the aspirations of the initial Israeli population to serve interests alien to them. The collective characteristics of Israel's early days gradually disappeared to be replaced by a fully-fledged capitalist society, similar in many ways to that which the early Jewish settlers had wanted to escape from.

At the same time, the state of Israel had developed into a monster of its own kind - a sort of imperialist micro-state, which acts right at the heart of the Middle-East, as a permanent military auxiliary for imperialism in general, and US imperialism in particular, in charge of maintaining law and order and political stability in the unstable but oil-rich countries of the region.

Playing this role can only increase

even further its isolation in the region, it effectively makes Israel a mere hostage of imperialism.

The Six-Day War

By 1967 Israel had developed into a fully-fledged, militarised state heavily funded by the USA. The Six-Day War which took place that year is a graphic example of, on the one hand, the role of imperialist policeman played by Israel in the region and, on the other hand, the permanent threat that the Zionist logic represents for the population.

The war was preceded by a long period of tension arising from rival Israeli and Syrian schemes for diverting the waters of the river Jordan, and increasing border confrontations between Syrian forces, units of Palestinian guerrillas and Israeli troops. In themselves these were not reasons for all-out war. What was crucial was the increasingly bellicose war-mongering of the Zionist hardliners and the willingness of the USA to use the opportunity to smash the relative independence displayed by the Syrian regime towards imperialism.

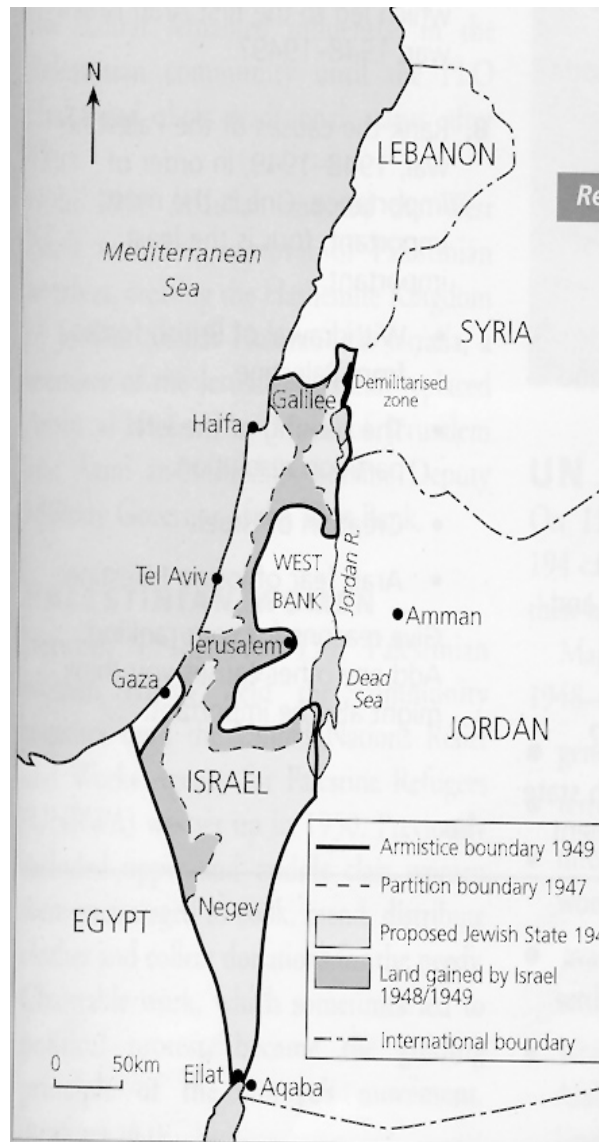
The previous period from 1963 to

1966 had seen a waning of the militant zionism of the founding period. Ben Gurion had been forced to resign and government passed into the hands of a younger generation of politicians who made some gestures towards the Israeli Arabs and talked about settling the Palestinian issue. This corresponded with the wishes of the broad mass of the Jewish population who no longer felt under constant Arab threat and wanted peace. It was the tentative steps made in this direction which propelled the zionist right into overdrive. General Moshe Dayan, for instance, fulminated against "levantinisation" and old Ben Gurion thundered "We do not want the Israelis to turn into Arabs". He drew closer to Menahem Begin, the ex-Irgun terrorist leader. The government buckled under the pressure, despatched a punitive raid which destroyed 125 buildings, including a school and a dispensary, in a Jordanian border village. The stage was set for a new major confrontation.

All of the Arab countries declared war on Israel. In the case of the King of Jordan he was a reluctant combatant but had no option as over half of Jordan's population were Palestinian. As to Israel, its main target was the same as that of imperialism - Syria.

The victory of the Israelis was assured from the moment they launched a pre-emptive air strike against the Arab states on 5 June 1967 and destroyed their airforces on the ground. Israel's armies were successful on every battle front. Within 6 days the defeat of the Arab states was total. Israel occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank - both part of Jordan - the Gaza Strip and the Sinai desert - which were part of Egypt - and the Syrian Golan Heights.

UN Resolution 242 called on Israel to return the Occupied Territories in exchange for the Arab states' recognition of Israel. But as it made no mention of a Palestinian state it was unacceptable to the Arab regimes. Israel stuck to its guns and the USA stood aside.



Israel's occupation of Arab territories had two objectives. One was probably to set an example and to show the Arab states as well as their populations that any provocation against Israel, any opposition to its diktats, would be met with drastic retribution. The other objective was to start implementing the zionist demand for a "Greater Israel" while providing the Israeli capitalists, who found the limits of the Israeli market too tight, with a bit more elbow room.

But by occupying these territories, the Israeli state created a series of potential sources of explosion. First because, like in 1948, they forced 280,000 Palestinian Arabs from the West Bank to flee to Jordan, thereby creating in Jordan an explosive situation which was soon to come to a head. And, second, because even after

this massive emigration, Israel now included on its own territory nearly half-a-million of the Palestinian Arabs who had been dispossessed by the setting up of the Israeli state and who, therefore, had accounts to settle with this state.

The rise of the PLO

Predictably the Six-Day War was a major recruiting agent for the still small Palestinian nationalist groups.

One of these groups, al-Fatah, had been created in 1959 by Yassir Arafat, a young building engineer who had set up a very profitable business in the building trade in Kuwait. As opposed to other leading Palestinian figures like Georges Habache and Nayef Hawatmeh, who saw themselves as Arab nationalists, Arafat's ambitions were strictly limited to Palestine. In fact the name, "al-Fatah" was simply the acronym of "Palestinian National Liberation Movement" written in reverse order. In other words, Arafat's aim was the establishment of a Palestinian state under Palestinian rule, no more, no less. And to begin with, Arafat aimed at establishing al-Fatah as a recognised nationalist organisation among the Palestinians themselves and, above all,

among the Arab rulers whose financial and political backing would be vital in the future.

Soon the Arab regimes became conscious and wary of the increasing nationalist agitation among Palestinian refugees. In order to keep this agitation under their control and to counter the various small radical nationalist groups such as al-Fatah, the leaders of the Arab League launched the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1964. Shukaary, who they nominated to run it, was a notoriously corrupt reactionary who had been a functionary of the Arab League for a long time. And, of course, they ensured that the new PLO would enjoy the funding and the facilities required to achieve the high profile which the small radical groups could not afford to have.

The defeat of the Arab states in

1967 was a turning point because it discredited the Arab rulers in the eyes of the vast majority of the Palestinian refugees. All of a sudden there was a space to fill. And Arafat, who had organised al-Fatah's first armed commando only two years before, jumped in to fill the vacuum. The weakening of the Jordanian regime allowed al-Fatah to organise new commandos inside the Jordanian refugee camps from where attacks could be launched into Israel. The first, although very modest, military success was achieved in March 1968, when one of Arafat's commandos fought a twelve-hour battle with an Israeli unit. Overnight, recruits started to flow towards al-Fatah whose troop numbers sprang suddenly from 700 to 3000. Less than a year later, this allowed Arafat to take over control of the PLO during its fifth congress held in Cairo in February 1969.

Drawing on the examples of Vietnam and Algeria, Arafat promised a long guerrilla war in which the Arab states would play a supporting role. Although, unlike his predecessor at the head of the PLO, Arafat was always careful to retain his independence towards the Arab rulers, occasionally playing one against the other, but never tying his political future to any one leader in particular.

The potential strength of the Palestinian refugees, and what worried the Arab rulers so much, was their overwhelming proletarian status, their militancy and radicalism, and the fact that they were concentrated in large numbers within the refugee camps which provided them with a form of natural organisation. Above all, the fact that they were scattered across the Middle-East, from Jordan, Syria and Lebanon to Iraq and Kuwait, as well as within the Israeli-occupied territories themselves, made a powerful ferment possible on the scale of the whole region which could have drawn into action entire sections of the Arab population in all these countries. But of course, for this to happen, the Palestinian refugees had to be equipped with a perspective that was meaningful for the Arab masses right across the Middle-East, a policy that had therefore to address the destitution of these masses as well as their hatred for the Arab rulers.

But to offer such a policy was not at all what the PLO leaders intended, including Arafat himself. Their narrow-minded Palestinian-only nationalism



Arafat's cap in hand approach has gotten the Palestinians nothing but a kick in the teeth

whose sole aim was the setting up of a Palestinian micro-state, and their respect for, and reliance on the Arab regimes meant they had nothing to offer the Arab masses as a whole. In that respect the PLO marked a step backward from bourgeois nationalists like Nasser in Egypt who, at least, inspired popular mass movements which transcended national borders and threatened the semi-feudal monarchies. In so doing, despite their stubborn Palestinian nationalism, Arafat and the PLO were actually undermining the Palestinian cause itself, by preventing the Palestinian refugees from gaining potential active allies in the Arab masses.

The PLO from Jordan to Lebanon
Nevertheless the radical actions of the PLO brought it into headlong conflict with King Hussein of Jordan. The Palestinian refugee camps in and around Jordan's capital, Amman, had been swollen by many thousands in the aftermath of 1967. The camps were a ferment of rebellion and posed a deadly threat to Hussein's feudal regime, all the more so as the slum-dwellers of Amman looked on them as their ally in their own struggle against the regime. Hussein feared the possibility of Palestinian and Jordanian masses jointly overthrowing the Hashemite monarchy. And though the PLO had no intention of kicking out Hussein, they could not afford not to be part of this movement, if they wanted to build their

credibility.

In September 1970 a left faction in the PLO under the leadership of Georges Habache hijacked four Western airliners and blew three of them up in Jordan. It was a spectacular move and was greeted enthusiastically by refugees and slum-dwellers alike. This provided Hussein with the pretext he had been waiting for. With the tacit understanding that the US would intervene, if necessary, "to tip the military balance" as President Nixon remarked, Hussein demanded that the PLO surrender its weapons. When they refused to hand them over, heavy fighting broke out between the PLO and Jordanian troops. A small contingent of Syrian tanks invaded in support of the PLO but without air cover. The Syrian air force chief, Assad, refused to order in his planes and the Syrians withdrew. For Assad it was the first move in a coup d'etat after which he would establish one of the Middle East's longest-lived dictatorships - and certainly no friend to the Palestinian masses.

The stage was set for the massacre which followed. Despite the assurances of the PLO's leadership that their militias existed only to combat Israel, more than 3,500 Palestinian refugees, including many PLO fighters, were killed on Hussein's orders during what the Palestinians came to call "Black September". When Hussein's soldiers rampaged through Amman looking for PLO fighters often hidden in the slums, the slum-dwellers fought alongside the PLO. Many were murdered in their own homes. This was a serious defeat for the PLO and the organisation was forced to flee to Syria and later Lebanon. But in the confrontation, Arafat had managed to prove his responsibility and respect for the established order: first by refusing to call the Jordanian population to join ranks with the Palestinian refugees in an uprising to overthrow the regime; and second by taking part in a "reconciliation" meeting with Hussein the day after the massacre. This demonstration of respect for the existing institutions and order was, undoubtedly, the starting point of Arafat's long career as a trustworthy politician from the point of view of the Arab rulers as well as of imperialism.

In Lebanon the PLO joined 150,000 Palestinian refugees living near Beirut and in parts of South Lebanon. This "Switzerland of the Middle East" - so-called because of its banks and wealthy

bourgeoisie - was a former French protectorate and the French bourgeoisie still retained close links with the ruling feudal Christian families who dominated a largely Muslim population.

In fact Lebanon was a fine balance of different ethnic and religious groupings. With Arabs already in a big majority, the arrival of more Palestinians, in great numbers - and prepared to fight - was bound to tilt the balance. It led to an upsurge of support for the left in the elections of 1972. On the ground it was reflected in strikes and demonstrations in solidarity with the PLO. By 1975 South Lebanon was known to journalists as "Fatahland", such was the extent of the PLO's influence.

In Spring 1975 the far-right Falange, which grouped together Christians and was modelled on Mussolini's fascism, started attacking the PLO. Worried by the restlessness of these troublesome intruders, and with the blessing of the French and leading Christian families, the Falange sought to put paid to the PLO as Hussein had done previously. The gunning down of a busload of Lebanese and Palestinian Muslims who were travelling through a Christian suburb of the capital, Beirut, sparked off a civil war that was to rage for 19 months.

Christian massacres of Palestinian and Lebanese slum-dwellers forced the PLO out of its policy of semi-isolationism into siding with the self-styled "progressist" Lebanese National Movement which was under attack. This alliance of the Lebanese and the Palestinians proved too strong for the Falangists. It unleashed a tremendous popular movement resulting in the ransacking of government offices, the occupation of empty flats and houses in West Beirut by the poor and attacks on prisons leading to the freeing of prisoners. Genuine "liberated" zones were created where the only authority recognised was that of the progressist/PLO alliance.

In January 1976 the Lebanese army broke up. The Muslim elements had a unified leadership and took charge of the garrisons in the Muslim-dominated part of the country. By March they controlled two-thirds of the country. It was at this point that Syria intervened - not on the side of the Muslims but to assist the Christian elements who were in danger of total defeat. For a second time Assad showed his treachery to the Palestinians and, in this instance, the



Lebanese poor. The Syrian regime had introduced various reforms to bolster its image at home. But in the region they intended to preserve the status quo even if it meant in reality, as in Lebanon, working hand in glove with the Israelis.

But with elements of the PLO also intervening to "restore order", the PLO leadership showed their own hostility to the actions of the masses. The PLO were stepping into the shoes of the Falange, one of whose aims had been to have them expelled from Lebanon! It was a drastic revelation of the intentions of the moderate PLO leadership who were prepared to use their own militants in a counter-revolutionary role in order to impress Arab and Western bourgeoisie alike of their "responsibility" in the social sphere.

When the civil war finally ended, between 60-80,000 people had lost their lives, 130,000 had been injured and, in a population of 3.25m, 1.35m had lost their homes. Meanwhile Syrian troops remained to ensure the "peace".

The PLO confronts Israel in Lebanon

The entrenchment of the PLO in South Lebanon in the so-called "Fatahland" enabled PLO commandos to carry out regular raids into Northern Israel. After one such raid, in March 1978, 32 Israelis were killed. Four days later the Israeli military retaliated and carried out a punitive raid, the first time that PLO and Israeli armies had confronted each other on battlefield. 20,000 Israelis troops were supported by planes dropping cluster bombs. In the process the Israelis killed 700 people and a

further 160,000 were made homeless. The grip of the PLO had been broken along the frontier. The Israelis now set up an enclave to be policed by an Israeli-armed Christian militia.

In 1979 the Camp David peace agreement between Israel and Egypt gave back to Egypt the land she had lost in 1967. By returning the Sinai Desert to Egypt and with Egypt signing separate economic agreements with the USA, Israel virtually removed the danger of attack from the Arab states and was therefore free to reinforce its grip on the Occupied Territories and even to embark on an expansionist policy, as in Lebanon in 1982.

In 1981 the Israeli airforce made an unsuccessful attempt to kill Arafat by bombarding the PLO's headquarters in Beirut. Then, in June 1982, Israel undertook a full-scale invasion of Lebanon, although its scale was initially hidden from the Israeli population by referring to it as an "operation". Under this onslaught the PLO was forced to retreat. The Israelis also took on the Syrian troops stationed in the Bekaa Valley and used the opportunity to destroy the Syrian airforce and defences around Damascus.

The PLO fighters withdrew to West Beirut offering stiff resistance in the process. Unwilling to sustain the high casualties which street by street fighting would have entailed, the Israeli army resorted to Dresden-style bombing to try and flush out PLO. Thousands of Lebanese civilians were killed in process.

With international indignation at Israeli aggression mounting, the USA intervened and had talks with Arafat to organise the evacuation of the PLO to Damascus. The widespread anger

amongst the Palestinians and their supporters at what was seen as desertion by the leadership was only compounded by what followed.

The assassination of the Falange president, Bashir Gemayel, by a Syrian secret service agent was the excuse for Israel and their Christian allies to carry out atrocities against the local population. This culminated in the massacres of the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps carried out by the Israeli-armed South Lebanese militias. 1300 defenceless women and children were murdered cold-bloodedly with the blessing of the Israeli invasion forces commander.

In the wake of these massacres, protests erupted in Israel and a full investigation was carried out. But although Israeli Defence Minister Sharon was forced to resign and the consensus on Israeli war aims was broken for the first time since 1948, the Israeli state had succeeded in its main aim of forcing the PLO out of Beirut. The eradication of the PLO as a serious military threat had been accomplished.

Yet the Israeli army stayed on, thereby showing that Israel was determined to consolidate its hold on Lebanon and to keep it. And the civil war carried on, this time between the Falange, supported by the Israeli army, and the poor Muslims led by pro-Syrian and fundamentalist groups.

The Israelis' losses were also increasing, even if they were negligible by comparison with those of the other side. Still by the autumn of 1983 more than 500 Israelis were dead and inside Israel opposition to the war was growing. The military commanders were forced to begin what amounted to a retreat. By 1985 the Israelis had completed their withdrawal. But with more than 750 killed in a country where even a handful of dead was considered grounds for national mourning, the whole enterprise was considered by many to have been a criminal folly. All the more so as the decline of PLO influence had apparently only paved the way for the much more radical Hezbollah backed by the Iranian fundamentalist regime. And although Israel retained their Christian mercenaries in the buffer zone of South Lebanon, they proved unable to stop attacks on border settlements or the regroupment of PLO sections. As a result an intermittent war in South Lebanon has gone on ever since.

Thus for all their military triumphs, the Israeli adventure was a failure: if



Israeli terrorist and premier Ariel Sharon

Israeli stubbornness had contributed to the collapse of pan-Arabism, Israeli terror in the Lebanon had assisted the growth of a potentially more radical replacement. The role of Iran and the rising tide of fundamentalism, in addition to the ending of the dominant position of the pro-Israeli Christians, were ominous developments. Moreover, Iran's ally Syria, another inveterate foe of Israel as long as she retained the Golan Heights, had confirmed her dominant role in Lebanon. But for the tiny population of the former "Switzerland of the Middle East" the war has been a catastrophe with more than 200,000 dead and 800,000 forced into exile between 1975 and 1988.

From Intifada to compromise

With the bulk of the PLO removed as far away as Tunis, the influence of the PLO in the Occupied Territories, and the refugee settlements generally, appeared to wane. But as the Palestinian people's opposition to Israel stemmed from loss of homeland, lack of freedom and the intolerable conditions of the refugee camps, the opposition itself did not go away. In fact as the Arab populations of the Gaza strip and the West Bank steadily grew, so the problems which the Israeli occupation forces confronted grew steadily worse.

The daily humiliations by army patrols; high unemployment, total poverty and restrictions on those who could work in Israel but were not allowed to live there, made life in the Occupied Territories unbearable for a new generation of young Palestinians. An initial confrontation in Gaza in

December 1987 quickly spread out to include all the Occupied Territories. Confrontations then spread to include those Arabs living in Israel, by then numbering some three-quarters of a million.

As what came to be known as the Intifada developed the image of young Palestinian Arabs, some as young as 12 or 13, battling it out with armed Israeli soldiers became a regular occurrence on TV screens across the world. Stones against bullets and scarves to protect against tear gas made for a one-sided contest. Except that in the densely-packed shanty towns with their maze of alleys and escape routes, the youngsters had numerous ways of ambushing their foe and making good their escape.

In the Occupied Territories frequent general strikes and boycotts had a thoroughly disrupting effect on the Israeli economy. In Gaza in particular with its vast population numbering around a million crowded into 136 square miles, there was a large working class which poured over the border at 4am every morning to do much of the work in the factories and the sweatshops in the greater Tel Aviv region.

In such an uncontrollable situation the PLO saw its chance. King Hussein of Jordan, probably acting under American pressure, abandoned any claims to the West Bank (which he had held between 1948 and 1967) to pave the way for the creation of a Palestinian mini-state. In November 1988 the PLO recognised those UN resolutions implying recognition of the state of Israel. A landless state of Palestine was proclaimed by the PLO and followed by a world-wide diplomatic offensive to have it recognised. In May 1989 Arafat declared "void" the PLO's charter which had declared Palestine "indivisible". The stage was being set for a deal but the USA and Israel had still to be persuaded to be part of it.

The Gulf War, and Arafat's propagandistic support for Saddam Hussein, suspended the process. But it did not change the situation in the Occupied Territories, while the mood of the majority of the Israeli population became ever more disenchanted. The widespread opposition of Israeli youths to serving in the Occupied Territories affected army morale. The Israeli elections in 1992 brought back Labour to office after a campaign in which the party leader Rabin had indicated a willingness to negotiate with the PLO.

And clearly this was one factor in Labour's victory.

But Labour was not just talking about negotiation for electoral reasons. They obviously had the backing of the Israeli bourgeoisie as well as that of imperialism. There were a number of reasons for this. One was economic: the Intifada was weighing more and more heavily on an economy which was already close to bankruptcy.

The other reasons were political. In fact the PLO was in a position of weakness, partly discredited among the population. Its leadership was far from being recognised amongst the new generations thrown up by the Intifada. At the same time, the PLO still had a local apparatus, they controlled most of the Palestinian town councils, directly or through allies, which gave them a certain leverage in the Occupied Territories, if not among the youth. It also had a long-established apparatus of cadres - the 5,000 or so who staffed the PLO's headquarters in Tunis and its extensive diplomatic representation across the world - which was used to operate as a state machinery, away from the pressure of the masses.

On the other hand, the radical wing of the Intifada was increasingly turning towards the fundamentalist groups. And while Arafat's respect towards the established order was known and tested, it was not the case with the fundamentalist leaders who, in addition, had loyalties which went far beyond the framework of Palestine - to Syria or Iran. And there was no guarantee as to their future attitude, especially if the support they enjoyed kept increasing.

Eventually the Israeli rulers chose to negotiate with a partner they knew rather than to take the risk of an untested partner being forced on them by the balance of forces in the future. At the same time, by offering a deal to Arafat and the PLO, Rabin was rescuing them from their relative discredit, boosting their popularity among the Palestinian population and limiting, for a while at least, the rise of the fundamentalists. On the other hand, Arafat's weakness meant that he was in no position to impose his own conditions on the Israeli government and the PLO's lower credit with the most radical elements of the Intifada meant that the deal would not encourage them to step up their action - which is always a possibility when a fight is taking place.



12-year-old Mohammed al-Dura is sheltered by his father, Jamal, while they are pinned down and shot at by Israeli forces. The boy was eventually killed and his father paralysed.



Will the Palestinian masses go along with the deal?

The content of the deal which was reached, at least for the immediate future, is well-known. A Palestinian authority has taken over control of slightly over half of the Gaza strip - the rest remaining under Israeli control for the sake of the 3000 Israeli settlers established there, while 850,000 Palestinians must make do with the rest - and of the immediate surroundings of the town of Jericho, in the West Bank. This temporary set up should last "no more than five years". This is how blurred the agreement remains for the time being.

On the other hand this agreement does show the immediate preoccupations of the Israeli government. It provides for the establishment of a Palestinian police force under PLO responsibility, while the overall responsibility for military security and the safety of the Israeli population remains in the hands of the

Israeli army. In other words, it amounts to inviting Arafat to show what he can deliver in terms of restoring law and order. The fact that the Gaza strip, with its 600,000 refugees leaving in squalid camps, was included in the deal is not a coincidence - it is in the Gaza strip that the frustration of the Palestinian poor is the highest. As to Jericho, a quiet town which has been left largely untouched by the Intifada, it will provide a cosy head office for the embryonic Palestinian state machinery and a safe one, as it well away from the direct pressures of the Palestinian masses.

Who will benefit from the deal in the short term? First of all the PLO cadres who have been waiting for so long in exile for some crumbs of power. There will be jobs and positions for them. The Palestinian middle-class will gain also the possibility of using its money freely in Israel, if they wish to do so. So will, by the way, the Arab millionaires who were so far banned from having any business dealings with Israel and the Israeli capitalists themselves who will gain access to all Arab markets.

But there will be no benefit whatsoever for the Palestinian poor, despite the fact that they have provided the bulk of the PLO fighters for nearly three decades and all the Intifada demonstrators. The refugee camps will remain what they were, only the police watching them will be Palestinian instead of being Israeli. Their poverty will not change. The lucky 23,000 Gaza Palestinian workers who have the privilege to have a pass allowing them to go and work in Israel, will not be offered better jobs than those they have already - the lowest among the low in the Israeli economy. And when entering Israeli territory they will still have to endure the harassment of the Israeli soldiers, who have the authority to decide ultimately who is allowed through and who is not. As to the overwhelming majority of those who have no legal right to work in Israel,



Israeli state bulldozes over Palestinian rights



Who's who in Palestine?

Sean Noonan provides a snapshot of Palestinian organisations

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

The PLO was originally created by then head of the Arab League and president of Egypt, Nasr, in 1964 to represent Palestinian interests in the League. Ahmad Al Shokeri was appointed by the Arab League to head the PLO and represent it in the League. In 1969 the PLO was taken over by Yassar Arafat's Fatah party and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Over time the PLO has become increasingly the almost exclusive instrument of Yassar Arafat himself and by extension his Fatah political party. The PFLP and a number of other smaller groups retain their membership in the PLO but their role is mostly nominal and symbolic.

In terms of political programme the PLO has always, at least officially, called for a single, secular, democratic state in all of British Mandate Palestine as the only viable settlement to the Arab-Israeli struggle. However, as a matter of practice this "single state" position was shelved at an Arab League summit at Rabat, Morocco in 1974.

At this summit the PLO was recognized as the "sole and legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people and adopted an "interim strategy" that called for a temporary two-state settlement and implementation of all UN resolutions dealing with Israel-Palestine which included the ending of Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, the establishment of a Palestinian state in those territories, and (crucially) the right of the, now 3.5 million, Palestinians to return to their homes.

Palestinian National Authority (PNA, more often abbreviated PA)

In 1994 as part of the U.S. brokered two-part Oslo Accords, negotiated between Israel and Yassar Arafat in 1993-1994, Arafat became head of the Palestinian National Authority (PA), the semi-autonomous pseudo-state set up to run municipal functions of the occupied territories and to police the Palestinian people while leaving Israel in control of the physical territory and natural resources of the West Bank and

Gaza. The PA has nominal control over roughly 30 percent of the West Bank and Gaza.

Corruption and repression are the most notable features of the PA. For example, in 1997 literally one half of the PA budget went unaccounted for as Arafat and his cronies (who came with him from Tunisia in 1995) siphoned off funds for their own personal gain as public workers went over a year without pay, infrastructure decayed and over 60 percent of Palestinians subsisted on less than \$US2 a day.

The levels of corruption within the PA had become so embarrassing that by the late 1990s many donor countries and organizations refused to disperse funds directly to the PA and sought to find alternative mechanisms for funding Palestinian charity and "civil society" organizations.

The one aspect of the PA where resources are spent lavishly is security. The PA has the largest per capita police force in the world with over 50,000 police and nine intelligence agencies for a population of 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Between 1995 and September 2000, working for a PA security apparatus was essentially a form of welfare for members of Arafat's Fatah political party, buying off discontent within Fatah's ranks with a regular paycheck.

The PA's jurisdiction legally expired in 1996, when according to the Oslo Accords a Palestinian "state" would be recognized by Israel. However, Arafat unilaterally extended the mandate of the PA until the year 2000 in an effort to "maintain stability and continuity" while the Oslo peace process was still underway. Unsurprisingly, as of March 2002 the PA has yet to have elections, since both Israeli and Palestinian survey research shows popular support for Arafat and the PA in the current Intifada at below 25percent among Palestinians.

Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah)

Fatah is numerically the largest and best-funded Palestinian political party, accounting for between 25-35 percent of popular support among Palestinians. Fatah was formed in 1965, drawing

they will carry on trying their luck by looking for illegal underpaid jobs in the black economy. For in Gaza itself, deal or not, there will be no more jobs than there are now. In fact there may be even fewer, as some Israeli administrations have decided to stop paying those they employed in Gaza - 7,000 public service employees for instance have been told that Israel will not pay them, while the PLO has not yet got the financial resources to take over.

Both the Israeli and PLO leaders seem to expect that a quick improvement of the economic situation will defuse the present explosive situation. Maybe. But not without large subsidies from the West which, so far, are not forthcoming, not even on paper. Definite foreign assistance seems limited, so far, to such things as the training of senior police officers by Britain and lawyers by France! But even if the money did come, it would still leave the Palestinian people with a ridiculously minute country, totally unworkable economically, even to cater for the needs of its present population, let alone to accommodate the millions of Palestinian refugees scattered all over the Middle-East.

**For ongoing
information on the
Palestinian struggle
check out:**

www.electronicintifada.com

from elements of Palestinian student organizations, Palestinian nationalists and former members of the Muslim Brotherhood organization. Yassar Arafat has been the head of Fatah since its inception and has always maintained a high level of personal control over and discipline within Fatah.

Fatah's political program is identical to the PLO's, officially seeking a single, secular and democratic state in the long term but working towards a short term interim "two-state settlement" with Israel. Fatah's base of support is both deep and wide, drawing backing from wide swathes of the Palestinian people and international recognition. However, over time the political trajectory of Fatah's leadership has progressively diverged from the impulses of the Fatah's base, reflecting the inherent differences of interest between the tiny Palestinian capitalist class, and the mix of refugees, peasants, workers, professionals and small business owners that make up the rest of Palestinian society.

In the current Intifada these tensions are growing within Fatah. The leadership dodges and weaves between accommodation with Israel and supporting the Intifada, while seeking ultimately to restore some semblance of the Oslo Peace Accords aimed at achieving a semi-autonomous Bantustan-style statelet in slices of the West Bank and Gaza segregated by Israeli settlements, by-pass roads and the massive Israeli security infrastructure.

In contrast, a small but growing number of grassroots Fatah activists are seeking to tap into the popular sentiments of total resistance to the Israeli presence in any part of the West Bank and Gaza.

Popular support for Fatah does not directly translate into popular support for the Palestinian Authority. A good portion of Fatah's popular support in the current Intifada is due to resistance activities carried out by the more militant factions within Fatah such as the Al Asqua Brigades and Tanzim.

Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas)

Hamas is the second largest Palestinian political organization, with between 15 to 25 percent support among Palestinians. Ahmed Yassin is the spiritual leader of Hamas and



Ahmed Yassin and Khalid Mashal

Khalid Mashal is the head of the HAMAS political bureau.

Hamas grew out of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1987. Prior to the 1980s Islamicism as a political ideology did not have deep roots in the Mediterranean-oriented, secular-leaning and mixed Muslim-Christian religious culture of Palestine. However, following the failure of bourgeois Arab nationalism, the stagnation (and later collapse) of the Soviet Union, and with generous aid from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, Islamicism began to gain ground in Palestinian society throughout the 1980s and continues to grow today.

Notably, prior to becoming Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood collaborated with the Israeli intelligence agency, Shin Beit, during the mid 1980s. The Muslim Brotherhood used weapons provided by Shin Beit to launch a series of bloody attacks on Fatah and the Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Aside from attacking secular nationalists and leftists, prior to the 1987-93 Intifada, the Muslim Brotherhood did not join in the struggle against Israel. During this time the Muslim Brotherhood's primary activities were cultural, educational and charitable.

With the rise of popular resistance to the Israeli occupation during the first Intifada Hamas began to lose support as people flocked to the secular and leftist organizations that were actively engaged in resistance to occupation. In response, Hamas was created as a vehicle for orthodox Islamicists to take part in the first Intifada of 1987-1993.

Ideologically Hamas taps into and cultivates the backward currents of Islamicism that seeks to restore a mythical Islamic state invoking the principles of Sharia Islamic law. The base of support for Hamas is strongest

in the refugee camps, the urban poor and impoverished peasants.

Hamas is not a member of the PLO and competes with it for leadership of the Palestinian people. However, the track record of the Hamas leadership is not as militant or radical as mainstream press accounts suggest. Hamas is in the habit of making sure it does not cross the

"red line" of full-blown opposition to Arafat and the PLO. Some analysts attribute this red line effect to the purse strings of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States that officially oppose Israel but are more concerned about the risks a wider regional conflict would pose to the stability of their own U.S. client regimes.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

Combined, the Palestinian left is supported by between 10 and 15 percent of the Palestinian people. The largest and leading left party in Palestine is the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), which split from the PFLP in 1969, coming in a distant second ahead of a number of smaller groupings such as the Palestinian People's Party (former Moscow-oriented CP), and the strictly militarist PFLP-GC (which also split from the PFLP in 1969). The PFLP, formed in 1967, is the third largest political party in Palestine and grew out of the pan Arab nationalist movements of the 1950s and 1960s.

The formation of the PFLP was largely in response to the failure of bourgeois Arab nationalism in the 1967 war with Israel and the success of Marxist-oriented anti-colonial struggles gaining ground around the world at that time. George Habash was the head of the PFLP from 1967 to 1999, when he stepped down in order to encourage internal democracy within the PFLP. Habash was briefly replaced by Abu Ali Mustapha who became General Secretary of the PFLP until his assassination by the Israeli Army in August of 2001.

Ahmed Saadat is now General Secretary of the PFLP. At the time of this writing Saadat, and over 180 other PFLP activists are under arrest by Arafat's PA, at the behest of Israel.

Getting involved

There are anti-imperialist groups functioning in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

Christchurch

The Middle East Information and Solidarity Collective meets every second Wednesday evening on campus. For info on meetings, email jwe21@it.canterbury.ac.nz or write to us at P.O. Box 513, Christchurch.

Check the revolution website:

www.revolution.org.nz

The MidEast Collective site:

www.middleeastsolidarity.org

We are currently organising video and powerpoint showings, meetings, leafleting, stalls and pickets around the city.

Wellington

Contact: Paul (021-454-037) or Jared (3829766) or email: hujjarvis@lycos.com

Auckland

The Anti-Imperialist Coalition meets every Wednesday in the Auckland Trades Hall. For further info, ph **025-2800080**, or e-mail:

anti_imperialist@hotmail.com

Their website is at:

www.geocities.com/anti_imperialist_coalition/

Other areas

If there's no anti-imperialist group in your area, get in touch with us and we can help you set one up.

Auckland and Christchurch have downloadable leaflets and other resources such as videos and pamphlets.

Christchurch is also putting together powerpoint shows on the sanctions on Iraq and the Palestinian struggle. Plus we have cheap pamphlets and copies of this bulletin, which can help you get off the ground.

Anti-imperialist e-group

You can also subscribe to the anti-war/anti-capitalist e-group at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/antiwar_anticap_nz

As the situation of the Palestinians worsens by the day, and with the United States, fully backed by NZ, threatening fresh interventions around the world, the need for an anti-imperialist movement is especially urgent. Don't delay - get involved now!

Continued from p19

9A



PFLP leader Ahmed Saadat

Israel has demanded that Arafat arrest and put on trial those responsible for the October 2001 assassination of Israeli cabinet minister Ze'evi in retaliation for the Israeli Army's assassination of Abu Ali Mustapha.

The PFLP espouses a Leninist flavored version of Marxism and calls for a single, secular, multiethnic, and socialist state in all of British Mandate Palestine. The PFLP has left the executive of the PLO in protest over Arafat's accommodations with Israel on a number of occasions, only to return

at a later date. The PFLP's role within the PLO is that of a junior partner in the PLO and secular socialist opposition within the Palestinian national liberation movement. Nevertheless, the PFLP's credibility, in Palestine and in the Arab world generally, is greater than its size.

The PFLP is respected for its success in organizing among refugees, peasants, intellectuals (such as Ghasan Khanafani and Naji El-Ali), students, and the small trade union movement, as well as its military effectiveness (including figures such as Lelah Khalid, Ilich Ramiriz Sanchez and Koso Okomoto). However, PFLP has not been successful in translating this intellectual and military respectability into a coherent political movement capable of pushing the Palestinian national liberation struggle into a more explicitly anti-imperialist or fully socialist direction.

Islamic Jihad

Islamic Jihad is generally recognized as the fourth largest Palestinian political party, with support ranging from 5 to 10 percent of Palestinians. Islamic Jihad began as a movement among Palestinian students in Egypt during the 1970s and 1980s who sought to bridge the gulf between nationalists who rejected Islam and Islamicists with no agenda towards

Palestine.

Later, in the 1980s, Islamic Jihad drew inspiration from the Iranian Revolution, Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as financial support from Iran and Syria. The founder and first head of Islamic Jihad, Fathi Shakaki, was assassinated by Israel. Islamic Jihad is currently headed by the former university professor Ramadan Shalah.

Like Hamas, Islamic Jihad draws its strongest support from the refugee camps, urban poor and impoverished peasants. Politically, Jihad's program is in line with the Syrian-Iranian stance towards Israel, involving a stronger stance (at least in word if not deed) in opposition to Israel than either Fatah or Hamas. Importantly, while Islamic Jihad is undoubtedly an Islamicist party, Jihad's emphasis is religiously less sectarian and more "National-Islamic" than Hamas.

Islamic Jihad calls for a "democratic" accommodation with Palestine's Jewish residents, does not call for the implementation of Islamic Sharia law on Palestinian society as a whole, and seeks "brotherhood" with Palestinian Christians on the basis of shared nationhood, history and culture. Given Jihad's small size and short history it is unclear whether the populist "National" or religious "Islamic" tendencies is stronger in the party.

NZ anti-imperialists to run joint election campaign

revolution and the Workers Party of New Zealand, both of which are involved in anti-imperialist activities around the country, have recently come to an agreement to run a combined campaign in the upcoming general elections.

A basic platform has been agreed, while the two groups are also left free to campaign on the platform however they choose and bring in whatever elements of their own specific politics they want to. The joint campaign will be called the Anti-Capitalist Alliance. Its basic platform consists of six short points:

1. Opposition to all NZ and Western intervention in the Third World and all Western military alliances
2. Jobs for all with a living wage and shorter working week.
3. For the unrestricted right of workers to organise and take industrial action.
4. For the fullest democratic rights for workers and poor with no restrictions on their freedom of speech and political activity. For full equality for women and for Maori and other ethnic minorities, and gay men and women.
5. For working class unity and solidarity - open borders, full rights for migrant workers.
6. For a working people's republic.

It is hoped that we will be running candidates in at least

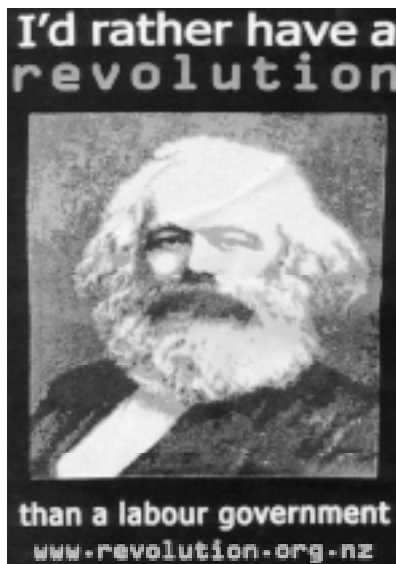
Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, in seats held by government ministers and also with a concentration on large working-class areas.

We expect few votes. However it does provide us with an opportunity to gain a wider hearing than usual, challenge the warmaking, anti-working class politicians who run the country, and draw more people into anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist activity.

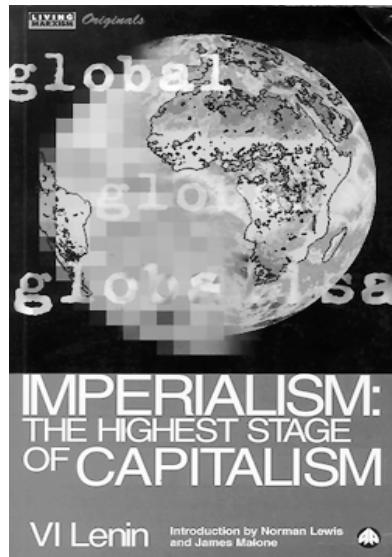
We urge people who like what they read in *revolution*, *MidEast Solidarity* and our other publications to get involved. Come and help spread the message that this is not the best of all possible worlds and that humanity collectively can achieve much more.

The campaign also desperately needs funds to get going. Donations can be sent to RM Club, P.O. Box 513, Christchurch, New Zealand. Cheques should be made out to RM Club.

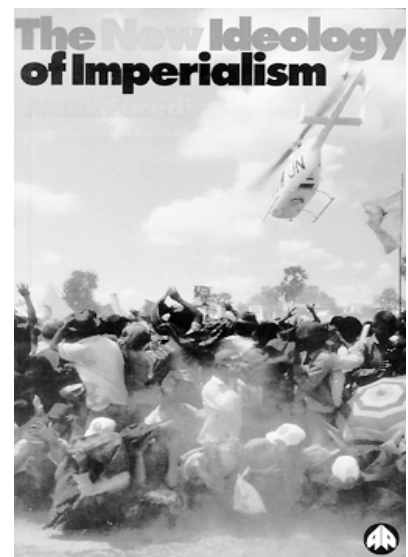
You can also help by buying books and t-shirts, as we are turning over our merchandise account to the election campaign. So when you buy a book or t-shirt, all the money goes to the election account.



revolution t-shirts come in gold and black backgrounds, in all sizes. \$25 for regular t-shirts and \$27.50 for fitted version. Price includes postage within NZ.



V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism: the highest stage of capitalism*, classic study, with a major new introduction covering the period since, \$17.50



Frank Furedi, *The New Ideology of Imperialism*, exposing the humanitarian ideology which masks Western power over the Third World, \$22.50

Cheques for books and t-shirts should be made out to RM Club, and sent to P.O. Box 513, Christchurch

www.revolution.org.nz

Palestine solidarity actions



Huge protest in Damascus

Secretary General Abdul Karim al-Iriyani led it and called on the Arab League to support the Intifada.

On March 31 Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi led a demonstration of more than 100,000 people in Tripoli and declared Arab countries must "open their borders and let through the Libyan volunteers to Jerusalem."



Members of Brazil's landless peasants' movement burn US flag in pro-Palestinian protest

Since Israel's all-out invasion of the Palestinian territories, millions of Arabs from Iraq to Morocco have taken to the streets daily to support their sisters and brothers under attack. Tens of thousands in Muslim countries like Iran, Turkey, the Sudan and Bangladesh, but also in Western Europe, southern Russia and Japan, also protested Israeli violence and its patron, the United States government.

Yemen, Syria, Iraq: mass demos

In Yemen, Syria and Libya, the demonstrations were massive and militant. In Damascus hundreds of thousands marched. On March 26, hundreds of thousands of Yemenis took to the streets of the capital Sanaa, according to the French Press Agency, chanting "Freedom of Jerusalem is a must," "No to capitulation" and "Let's resist in Iraq and Palestine." The official SABAA news agency estimated that 1.5 million people took part in the march. General Popular Congress

Street fighting in Egypt; general strike in Jordan

Egyptian television covered the Israeli occupation of Ramallah live. It was reported that a scene in which an Egyptian driver, who was dying after the Israeli Defense Forces had shot him, asked the person filming him to take care of his son caused people to openly weep in the streets and coffee shops where they were watching.

But they didn't just weep. They got out into the streets and fought the cops. Over 50,000 Egyptians protested March 31 and April 1, most in Cairo but also in northern cities in the Delta. In Cairo, the cops tried to control the demonstrators with tear gas and water cannons. When they were turned back from the Israeli Embassy, they attacked a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet. Nine police injured by thrown stones and 16 demonstrators went to the hospital. Thirty demonstrators were arrested.

The slogans of the protest challenged the collaboration and collusion between Israel and the United States and called on Egypt to break off the relations it had established with the Zionist state in 1979.

Street protests in Egypt have been illegal and harshly repressed ever since President Sadat's assassination in 1981. For Egyptian cops to attack Egyptian students to protect the Israeli Embassy while the Israeli army was attacking Palestinians in Ramallah adds to the political crisis in Egypt. Egypt is the largest and most influential Arab state.

Some 100,000 Iraqis marched in

Baghdad on March 30 denouncing Israel's "savage attacks" against the Palestinians. A general strike was called on April 1 in Jordan in solidarity with the Palestinian people and to back up calls for a boycott of U.S. goods and a holy war against Israel.

The Jordanian government has had to allow the spontaneous feelings of its citizens, a majority of whom are Palestinian, to be expressed in the streets, even though the Jordanian monarchy has warm diplomatic relations and a long border with Israel.

Jordanian state television, as quoted by the BBC, even said, "For the second consecutive day, Amman and a number of cities and refugee camps witnessed marches that hailed the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and condemned the criminal Israeli acts against the Palestinian people and their sacred issue and legitimate



Egyptians take to the streets



Protest in a Gaza Strip refugee camp

national authority.”

According to the French press, about 20,000 people marched in Amman. There were numerous militant protests in and around refugee camps, where burning barricades were set up and traffic was stopped. There were some skirmishes with the cops, but none as serious as the ones in Egypt.

Marches in the camps

Tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees demonstrated on March 29 in refugee camps in Lebanon to denounce the assault on Ramallah.

An estimated 30,000 refugees marched at the refugee camps of Rashidiyeh, Bass, Burj Shamali and Ainal-Helweh in southern Lebanon. More than 20,000 refugees demonstrated at the Shatila and Burj Barajneh camps south of Beirut while 6,000 people marched at the Beddawi camp in northern Lebanon. Shatila was the site of an infamous massacre of Palestinians orchestrated by Ariel Sharon in 1988.

On April 1, according to the German press agency Deutsche Presse-Agentur, hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinians demonstrated outside the heavily guarded U.S. Embassy. Demonstrators were led by four ambulances and doctors of the



London protest

Palestinian Red Crescent, whose volunteers had been stopped from evacuating the wounded and the dead in the besieged town of Ramallah. The protesters were stopped by Lebanese antiriot police 100 feet away from the embassy, located in Awker, northeast of Beirut.

Protests even occurred in statelets like Bahrain and Kuwait, whose feudal rulers are totally dependent on the good wishes of the United States. Leaders throughout the Arab world are watching their streets as thousands protest what they see as Israeli

aggression and the “passivity” of their governments in protecting the Palestinians. These protests, if they grow, could shake their hold on power.

There have been protests in most major cities in Latin America from Mexico City to Quito, Ecuador and Santiago, Chile. For instance, thousands demonstrated in Santiago on April 6 (see pic at bottom of page). Landless peasants in Brazil have also protested in support of the Palestinians (see pic previous page).

There have been protests across Europe and the United States, too. Among the biggest in Europe have been an April 6 protest in the Swiss capital, Berne, which drew 9,000 and an 18,000-strong march in Paris the same day. April 6 also saw hundreds of Arab-Americans rallied at Crawford High School football stadium in Crawford, Texas, near Bush’s ranch, where Blair and Bush were meeting at the time. Pickets at Israeli consulates in Chicago and Detroit have drawn up to a thousand people, while a March 30 protest in Washington DC drew 3,000.

The above is edited and slightly added to from an original article by **Greg Dunkel** in the US weekly left paper *Workers World*



Clockwise from top left: 9,000 at April 6 protest in Berne, Switzerland; hundreds in Crawford, Texas; Indonesian protest; thousands in Santiago, Chile;



Civil liberties after September 11

Right across the Western world governments are hurriedly introducing repressive legislation undermining free speech, freedom of association, liberty of the person, privacy of information and due process of law. **James Heartfield** provides an overview of just some of the 'highlights' from selected countries

USA

Military courts for terrorist suspects
The USA Patriot Act -Administrative detention of non-citizens committing offences (including violation of visa conditions if they cannot be deported)-Reduction of judicial supervision over official surveillance of telephone and internet communication; criminalisation of membership and support for 'terrorist groups'; vague legal definition of terrorist group to include any 'violent activity' including by domestic groups; secret surveillance of private financial information with no judicial scrutiny; removal of almost all restrictions on police access to information on students

Britain

Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Bill-Indefinite detention of foreign 'suspected terrorists'; law against incitement of religious hatred; forcible photographing of arrested suspects; police power to demand removal of clothing that obscures identity; expansion of jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence police - unrestricted access for police to electronic and telephone communication data for all investigations; new offence of failure to supply police with information regarding terrorism; powers to seize funds belonging to suspected terrorists

Canada

Anti-Terrorism Act - Wide definition of terrorism including acts committed out of jurisdiction; legal designation of 'terrorist groups' and criminalisation of participation in them; increased police surveillance powers over electronic data; widening the Official Secrets Act - new offence of failure to supply police with information regarding terrorism; preventative detention of suspected terrorists; criminalisation of computer hacking; new 'hate propaganda' offences



Western bombs and sanctions, along with economic exploitation, kill millions in the Third World. Now the Western terrorists are using new repressive legislation to block dissent.

Australia

Increased police surveillance powers over electronic and telecommunications data; deployment of military against asylum seekers; restrictions on legal appeal rights of asylum seekers; offshore detention camps for asylum seekers; legal immunities against suit and prosecution for secret services and political police; offence to identify secret service personnel; authorisation for intelligence services to spy on Australian citizens overseas

Germany

New offence of membership of foreign 'terrorist group'; increased police surveillance powers over electronic data; ending immunities enjoyed by religious groups; power for domestic deployment of army

The new powers being taken share a pattern. In every country interior and justice ministries insist that these new laws are needed to deal with the 'changed threat' that terrorism represents after September 11. This is not true anywhere, and in the case of Britain at least this claim is deliberately misleading.

The British bill includes some

powers that the government has tried to get through parliament before without success, such as widening the arrest powers of the Ministry of Defence police. It also includes powers such as the unrestricted access of police to electronic communication records, which are not restricted to investigations of terrorism. These are simply being introduced 'under cover' of September 11.

Moreover, Home Secretary Blunkett told parliament on 15 October that there was 'no immediate intelligence pointing to a specific threat to the UK'. He has now told Labour MPs that the state of emergency that he will formally announce is only a 'technical' state of emergency. 'Technical' because there has to be a state of emergency declared to permit the government to introduce indefinite detention of terrorist suspects under Clause 23 of the Bill without violating the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Convention allows the government to derogate from its Article 5, which protects the liberty of the person, only on the grounds that there is a national emergency. Technical is one word for it, cynical would be another, but either way the detention

New Zealand

Civil rights are under attack with a range of extremely repressive laws being pushed by the Government. One of the most repugnant pieces of legislation is the Terrorism Suppression Bill which if passed will abolish basic rights which have been won in the past by hard struggle.

The Terrorism Bill was first introduced in April last year. Following the September 11 events Foreign Minister Goff tried to insert secret clauses into the Bill. This aroused widespread opposition and he backed down a little to allow a few weeks for submissions on the clauses (see *The Spark* 18 November 2001).

The Bill in its entirety should be scrapped. For a start it expands the powers of the state to suppress dissent by defining terrorism in broad

terms but completely legitimises state terror. In fact it is a replica of fascist laws being pushed by Washington and this highlights the position of the New Zealand state as a junior partner in the US-led imperialist bloc. Will Clark and co. decide now to follow President Bush who has declared that foreigners suspected of terrorism will be tried in military courts and can be executed?

The Bill also curtails many civil rights including the right to a public trial and the right for the accused to know his accuser and to have access to the evidence which may be deemed 'classified' and never revealed. The state will have the power to act on behalf of secret service agencies such as the CIA - an organisation notorious for its drug-running and coup-plotting.

One of the most objectionable aspects of the Bill is it gives extreme powers to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister who can designate a

person as a terrorist on the say-so of a spy agency. Designated or accused individuals have little protection under the Bill.

Behind the declarations of 'preventing terrorism' the real aim of the Bill is to suppress protest movements and prevent international support for liberation struggles by making illegal any financial and moral assistance to those organisations listed as 'terrorist'. It imposes huge sentences, beyond those of similar charges under standard criminal law. It could also be used to deny entry permits to NZ to representatives of any number of liberation movements whom groups in NZ might like to invite for speaking tours.

The above is slightly edited from an article in the NZ left-wing fortnightly *The Spark*, December 5, 2001



As the Western powers prepare fresh interventions abroad, attacks on civil liberties at home are escalating

power is plainly unrelated to any new terrorist threat. The Australian attorney general has also confessed that his security apparatus has been unable to discover any terrorist targeting of Australia, nor is it clear in what sense Canada and Germany are facing an emergency.

Terrorising opposition

It is worth remembering that anti-terrorism laws have never been

effective against determined conspiracies, but they have always served to repress wider political opposition. Two decades of the UK's Prevention of Terrorism Act entirely failed to prevent the actions of the IRA; but then the vast majority of the hundreds of Irish people arrested and detained under its draconian provisions were never charged with anything. Its effect was rather to intimidate political supporters of Irish republicanism in

mainland Britain.

It is in this context that the new indefinite detention power of the British and American interior ministries should be seen. Part 4 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill allows the UK Home Secretary to detain indefinitely any foreigner who has been refused asylum but who cannot lawfully be deported to his country of origin because he would face torture or execution, and so his deportation would violate Article 3 ECHR.

It is enough that the Home Secretary 'suspects' that the person is involved with terrorists or has 'links' to others whom the Home Secretary suspects of being terrorists. This power is very wide ranging indeed.

When combined with the very broad and vague definition of terrorism already legally enacted in the Terrorism Act 2000, the new power means that the Home Secretary can detain indefinitely any foreign citizen who is a critic of a regime which the British government supports, but which routinely persecutes its political opponents.

The trend in Britain, which leads the world in this respect, is towards the criminalisation of all unauthorised exile political activity. The Terrorism Act already allows the Home Secretary to designate certain organisations as terrorist groups. Under the Act it is a criminal offence to be a member of or raise funds for or assist in any way such

Civil liberties

Continued from previous page

an organisation.

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), for example, is one of the organisations that have been proscribed under the act. Apart from being the largest of the groups resisting decades of oppression of the Kurds by NATO member Turkey, the PKK is the dominant organisation among Kurdish exiles living in Britain and one of the largest political parties in Europe.

The new offence of incitement of religious hatred is also a political weapon. Although widely criticised as a sop to Muslim sensitivities, its most likely initial victims will be Islamists. Muslim activists are already facing prosecution under the UK's existing race discrimination laws for criticising Israel.

This repressive trend appears to have gained more legal authority following the decision last October by the House of Lords in the case of Rehman, a Muslim cleric whom the government wished to deport to India.

In this case, the UK's highest court endorsed a concept of the 'interests of national security' that includes threats towards other states.

The 'interests of national security' is now a means to suppress the political organisation of people exiled in the West who represent no threat to the life of the UK or to the British state.

**Defend
civil
liberties -
get
involved
now, see
details p20**

British lawyer speaks out

Gareth Peirce is probably Britain's leading human rights lawyer. Among many cases, she acted as solicitor for some of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four, along with other cases of Irish people stitched up in Britain. Recently Irish socialist and republican **Patricia Campbell** spoke to Gareth about civil liberties and detention post-September 11. And remember this is Helen Clark's model, Tony Blair, overseeing the draconian measures.



GP: In 1998, after the bombings in Nairobi and Darussalam and also Omagh, parliament was recalled for a day and legislation was rushed through on the basis that it was necessary and would allow for prosecutions for conspiring to commit acts abroad or be involved in serious crime and alleged terrorist acts. In fact, that legislation has never been used although it's two-years-old.

And, again, legislation pushed through parliament, including last year's Terrorism Act, which effectively criminalises a whole range of movements here and liberation struggles in many parts of the world. People involved in resistance to truly appalling regimes were all criminalised.

All that was waiting in the wings. There was not a lack of legislation! But what happened after September 11 was that it was said that there were people who could not be deported – since they'd face torture – and that these people also couldn't be prosecuted here because there was insufficient evidence, but plenty of 'intelligence'. So they introduced internment for them instead, and that has been a truly wicked piece of legislation.

Think too, we've been told that we needed all of that previous legislation to deal with people here supposedly assisting terrorism abroad. And yet it was never used. It's very odd, but people haven't been detained under that legislation. Instead, people have been rounded up – who are all, bar one, asylum-seekers – as scapegoats. The legislation will ensure that they are not put on trial, just interned.

The allegations against them are appalling, with appalling consequences for their families. They are locked up, on the face of it for life, without trial, and they are branded 'international terrorists'.

They are in Belmarsh Prison here,

in the Special Secure Units (SSUs) and they are locked up 22 hours a day. The current prison regime is even worse than it was five years ago when it drove people to mental and physical annihilation. And they are locked up for no reason at all. One just sees further writing on the wall if this works and if these people don't win their challenge.

The government had to lodge notice of derogation with the European Court of Human Rights, with the Council of Europe, saying that there was a national emergency threatening the life of the nation, so that it could dispense with the protections of Article 5 (no detention without trial). So, they've claimed there is a national emergency threatening the life of the nation, when there clearly isn't. That is absolute rubbish!

If they get away with it, one will see more and more secret trials, because they are heard by judges who are going to hear most of the evidence in secret as it's based on so-called 'intelligence'.

This legislation has been sitting in a cupboard somewhere with nobody thinking ever in a million years would they get it past parliament and, instead, it was rushed through without a squeak.

You watch people crumble in front of your eyes and they are facing the prospect that this is going to go on for ever, because there will never be a resolution by trial as they are detained without trial.

The intelligence services must be chuckling with absolutely massive satisfaction. No more the necessity of bothering with a trial and no more needing to get evidence. They can proffer any old rubbish, behind closed doors in secret to a judge, and the detainee is never going to know.

The above is taken from issue #9 of the Irish journal *Fourthwrite*

Get with the revolution

The events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent Western onslaught on Afghanistan, are stark reminders of the nature of the world we live in. Capitalism is a system of exploitation, oppression, alienation and violence.

While capitalist development and technology brings humanity together on a scale never before witnessed, capitalist social relations divide us on a scale never seen before either.

While creating more wealth than has ever been amassed in human history, capitalism creates greater inequality than ever before by spreading that wealth around more unevenly than humanity has ever known.

The richest 225 individuals on the planet have combined assets of over \$NZ2.5 trillion. This is greater than the total annual income of nearly half of the population of the whole world. The net worth of the top ten billionaires alone is greater than the combined national income of the 48 poorest countries added together.

Across the world three billion people – about half of all humanity – struggle to live on \$NZ5 a day. One in five human beings don't expect to live beyond 40. Around 300 million people live in 16 countries where life expectancy has actually decreased in the past 25 years

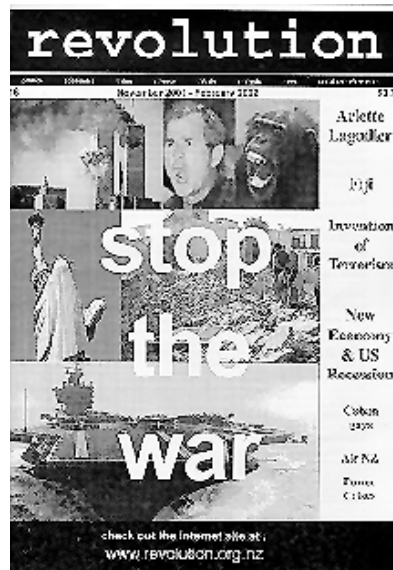
In New Zealand, the past several decades have seen a marked erosion in overall incomes and living standards, while a handful of people at the top of society have become richer than ever.

In 1971, three percent of the population owned 20 percent of the wealth; by the early 1990s, this three percent owned 37 percent of the wealth. Yet average household income in wages and salaries between 1982 and 1996, measured in 1996 dollars, fell from \$34,000 to \$31,500 - a decrease of around ten percent (*Household Economic Survey, 1996*). Given that this includes the household incomes of the upper salary earners, the loss of income of most workers was much greater. Thus, for instance, the average wage in Christchurch is now around \$20,000 (*Press, September 1, 2001*).

At *revolution*, we want to build a political movement which challenges



revolution, Marxist and anti-imperialist quarterly magazine. \$3.75 per copy, or \$22 for a six-issue subscription, within NZ. Packed full of info for understanding the world in order to change it. Cheques for *revolution* should be made out to Radical Media Collective and sent to P.O. Box 513, Christchurch



this state off affairs.

We know that the only reason the system staggers on - at our expense - is because too many people believe they can't really change things. This is largely the result of the dominance of capitalist ideology, but it is also a result of the failure of the left to make a convincing case against capitalism in its heartlands in the West.

Too often the left has merely tagged along behind Labour-type parties and single-issue reform movements. It has provided no real, revolutionary critique of the system and the forces which prop it up.

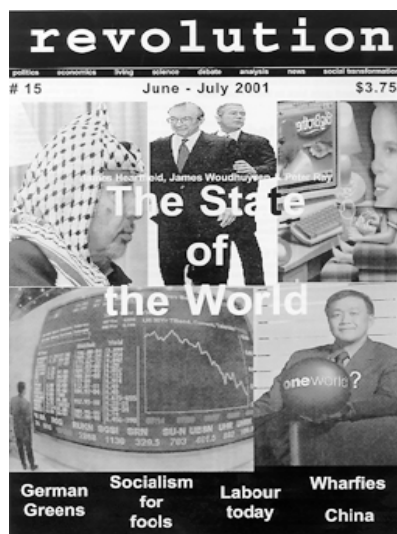
We started *revolution* magazine in 1997 to begin to try to turn this situation around, at least in NZ. Now

we are setting out to build a political movement to start more effectively putting our ideas into practice.

We have already initiated a lot of Middle East solidarity work, we produce both this bulletin and *revolution* magazine, and bulletins for workplaces, women's liberation and socialism, and campus.

Come and join us.

The first step is taking out a subscription to *revolution* magazine and finding out more about our ideas. If you like the mag, and are inclined to be a do-er, rather than someone who just sits and watches the world go by, then you'll want to get involved with us in building a new left movement in NZ. One serious about revolutionary ideas and fundamental social change.





Prisoners from the Western assault on Afghanistan, held at the United States base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba

Where will the West strike next?

From one end of the globe to the other, the Western powers are using a variety of pretexts to intervene in Third World countries. From 'the war on drugs' (Colombia) to the 'war on weapons of mass destruction' (Iraq), to the 'war on terror' (any Third World country), we are being bombarded with rationalisations for Western intervention.

Yet, the biggest problem that people in the Third World face is precisely Western military intervention and economic plundering. The oppressed peoples of the world need the West to get its boot off their necks.

In the West, the majority of people have no stake in our leaders' wars on the peoples of the rest of the world. What do workers in New Zealand, for instance, gain from the fact that our government is part of the UN sanctions which have killed hundreds of thousands of people in Iraq?

In fact by going along with this state of affairs workers in NZ and other imperialist countries are crippling their ability to fight their own governments and employers. It simply it is not possible to fight at home for the things we need while going along with depriving people abroad of the same

things.

We don't know where NZ and the other Western powers will strike next - but wherever it is we need to side with the Third World country they attack and help the Third World strike a blow for its own self-respect and independence.

We need to breath new life into slogans such as 'Workers of the World Unite' and 'An Injury to One is an Injury to All' and understand that these include the peoples of the Third World.

If our rulers are weakened by setbacks in their wars on the peoples of the Third World, then it will be easier for us to fight our battles here at home.



In NZ and other advanced capitalist countries, workers continue to be screwed by governments led by politicians like Clark, Blair and Bush. Instead of supporting their wars on the poor of the world, we need to unite with the poor of the world against them.