

# RIM Committee Statement in Support of the Uprising in Palestine

(February 1988)

Once again the Middle East commands the world's attention. But this time it is not strutting sheiks, feudal monarchs and reactionary demagogic Ayatollahs who hold centre stage, nor even the imperialists themselves, despite the massive military arsenals both blocs are pushing around the Gulf as part of their preparations for world war. All of this reactionary mess has been challenged by the stormy wind that swept out of another corner of the region: the mighty uprising of the Palestinians.

The battlecries of this new generation of the Palestinian revolution is a gust of fresh air in the Middle East, turning upside down much that passed for accepted truth. Although revolutionary struggle on this terrain has never stopped, the imperialist experts had read last rites to the Palestinian movement, some Israelis proclaimed that after their invasion of Lebanon the Palestinian question had become simply an "internal" Israeli problem, and the PLO leadership itself was sliding even further down the slopes of open surrender. Then the youth hit the streets, arming themselves with whatever was at hand, bricks, slingshots, Molotov cocktails, as they swore their willingness to fight till victory, even at the cost of their lives. What class-conscious proletarian does not burst with joy to see Israel's arrogant stormtroopers tremble before the fearlessness of the youth of Palestine!

The Zionists met the revolt with no mercy. They flooded the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza with heavily armed troops, they imprisoned, tortured and gunned down even ten-year-olds, beat old men and women, and before the eyes of the world set about breaking the arms and hands

of thousands. This was further testimony to what Israel's entire history amounts to: from its founding in terror and war against the native Palestinian people up through the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, Israel has been a settler colonial state, the most important setup of imperialism in the Middle East following World War 2. It is a vicious, bestial enforcer of reaction not only in this region but around the world.

The youth and the revolt they are at the forefront of have been forged out of the resistance of a nation to extreme colonial exploitation and oppression, including an international plan initiated by the victor imperialists in the aftermath of World War 2 to annihilate an entire people for the sake of ensuring their hegemony in the Middle East. The imperialists know that they face a new generation of revolutionaries who, unlike the established leaders of the Palestinian resistance movement, do not seek some accommodation in their rotten system and their disintegrating setup in the Middle East but are out to avenge all the crimes committed against this people. These youth and the revolt they are leading are cherished by the revolutionary internationalists, who are keenly aware of the opportunities that this development presents for shattering the grip of imperialism on millions of the oppressed. Spreading support for this struggle among proletarians and oppressed worldwide and battling the efforts of imperialists and reactionaries to distort and isolate it is a most heart-lifting, and a most welcome internationalist duty.

It is not only the Zionists who fear the uprising; the imperialist-backed reactionary Arab regimes have already rounded up many Palestinians in their own countries

and suppressed demonstrations of solidarity. While passing showy declarations of support for the Palestinian people, they desperately seek to stamp out the sparks of revolution which fly from Palestine and enflame their own subjects, who deeply support the Palestinian cause and understand that it is closely linked to the struggle for liberation in their own country.

While U.S.-backed Israeli stormtroopers meet the revolt with an iron fist, the imperialists and reactionaries employ counter-revolutionary dual tactics and step up talk of peace conferences and "reforms." The U.S. imperialists have even tried to distance themselves from Israel's brutal suppression, but it is well known that the Zionist state of Israel is a bloody dog trained by its master to understand that a public "no" means bite even harder. Their tactics include working hand-in-hand with Arab reactionaries like Hussein to consolidate a "responsible" Palestinian leadership favourable to the imperialist initiatives. Hana Siniora, editor of the Arabic Jerusalem daily paper *al-Fajr*, was released from an Israeli prison and ordered to Washington to "attend a conference on the Middle East" by the Israeli Prime Minister himself. Mubarak and Hussein have made highly publicized tours promoting an "international peace conference," with prominent support from U.S. Secretary of State Schultz. They create hope of a political settlement in order to encourage the idea that it is not the masses but the imperialists themselves who will decide Palestine's destiny and thus to reduce the masses to the role of a pressure group whose highest aspiration is supposed to be persuading the U.S. to use its influence to

“reform” Israel. As Mubarak declared, “We are giving hope to the people in West Bank and Gaza that there will be a solution.” Lenin observed that reactionaries make *promises* of reforms exactly when they are in deep trouble — more than ever, that is the time to step up the struggle to do them in.

The spontaneous movement cannot go on indefinitely. Advancing the revolution requires that those who today are throwing rocks and straining to go over to more effective forms of struggle must be trained so that tomorrow they are conscious soldiers in an army waging a genuine liberation war led by a proletarian vanguard capable of bursting through the reformist politics that have come to dominate the Palestinian movement and moving towards actually smashing the settler colonial state. If not, then sooner or later the imperialists will be able to regain the initiative and quench the flames of revolt, even if only temporarily. Seizing this kind of kindling to set Palestine ablaze with revolutionary war is impossible without a revolutionary headquarters based on the science and ideology of the proletariat, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. This the Palestinian revolution has never had.

Instead, various fronts have dominated the Palestinian political landscape. As the *Declaration* of the RIM says, analysing the experience of such fronts: “History demonstrates the bankruptcy of an ‘anti-imperialist front’ (or similar ‘revolutionary front’) which is not led by a Marxist-Leninist party, even when such a front or forces within it adopt a ‘Marxist’ (actually pseudo-

Marxist) colouration. While such revolutionary formations have led heroic struggles and even delivered powerful blows to the imperialists they have been proven to be ideologically and organisationally incapable of resisting imperialist and bourgeois influences. Even where such forces have seized power, they have been incapable of carrying through a thorough-going revolutionary transformation of society and end up, sooner or later, being overthrown by the imperialists or themselves becoming a new reactionary ruling power in league with the imperialists.”

Today, Yasir Arafat and the established leadership of the PLO, instead of unmasking the imperialists’ duplicitous manoeuvring and fanning the flames of the revolt, act as energetic aides of imperialism as they try to contain the revolt. Arafat has publicly called on the militants to refrain from going over to armed activity because, he says, this would give the Palestinians a bad image. In the eyes of *whom*? For the oppressed of the world, going over to a genuine war of liberation with actual prospects of defeating Israel would be a very good image indeed! But Arafat’s concerns are elsewhere: in the corridors of Washington, London, Paris, Bonn, Moscow, and Riyadh. For the flames of revolt, Arafat holds out not fuel, but water. Such policies are part of the strategy of the PLO to arrive at a settlement with Israel, in particular to try and get a Palestinian “mini-state.” This strategy is insidious most of all because it covers up the truth that without the violent destruction of the Israeli state there will be no

liberation for the Palestinian people. In its resolution of support of the Palestinian revolution, the Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations, which formed the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement in 1984, stated that liberation “will only be achieved with the victory of the armed struggle of the masses under the leadership of the proletariat against imperialism, social-imperialism and their lackeys.” No state which is concocted out of a political settlement brokered by the imperialists — and such a settlement is highly unlikely — will belong to the people, and any such state would undoubtedly be an auxiliary to Israel and/or one of the other lackey regimes in the region. Moreover, with this kind of capitulationist politics and world outlook in command, the revolutionary warfare necessary for achieving liberation will never develop.

Arafat’s “left” cousins like pro-Soviet (and pro-Syrian) George Habash and Nayef Hawatmeh disagree mainly over *which* imperialist or reactionary regional power they prefer to subordinate themselves to. The leadership of the PLO regard the armed struggle as their “wild card” in their manoeuvring with the Great Powers, and so distort the armed struggle into a means of bringing pressure on the imperialists to negotiate and reduce the fighters themselves to bargaining chips. Is it any wonder the youth often mock what they call the “Cadillac revolution”?!

The absence of a genuine proletarian vanguard organisation and line is the principal reason why, despite tremendous sacrifices and the

heroic struggle of its fighters and the great support which this cause has won among the oppressed worldwide, the Palestinian revolution has failed to make important strides towards the actual destruction of the Israeli state, even in certain junctures that presented tremendous historical opportunities. A proletarian party armed with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is essential to lead the revolution in such a way that it will rely on the Palestinian masses and the oppressed masses in other Arab countries, whose boundless revolutionary energy yearns for sustained activity, and unite with the revolutionary proletarians and oppressed throughout the world. Instead of this, these false leaders, whimpering about "practicality," put the movement at the mercy of the Arab regimes and the imperialists and social-imperialists and their various rivalries and intrigues.

Such treachery is all the more criminal as this uprising has proved again the truth of Mao Tsetung's analysis that, whatever their tactical strength, the imperialists and reactionaries are paper tigers. Despite their vaunted military prowess and their up-to-the-minute U.S.-supplied weaponry, the Zionist army has shown its weakness in the face of this mass revolt. How well would these cowardly thugs be doing if the thousands of youth in the streets today were part of a trained and organised red army of liberation targeting them with something more than stones and fighting with a military strategy and tactics appropriate for defeating Israel! The situation today urgently raises the responsibility of the revolution-

aries themselves: the problem for the revolution is not that there is any lack of energetic fighters for liberation, but that there is no genuine revolutionary headquarters to lead these fighters! Aren't thousands in the camps burning with the desire to take the struggle to a *higher* level against the Israelis?

The most pressing task facing the Palestinian revolutionaries today is the construction of a proletarian vanguard. The Palestinian revolutionaries can count on the support and assistance of all genuine revolutionary communists, especially of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement itself — indeed, the *Declaration* of the RIM is an excellent initial basis for charting the path of the Palestinian revolution and gathering the forces for a vanguard.

However great and real the obstacles might be, when have the objective conditions for fulfilling this task been better? The imperialists and the regimes in the Middle East are in crisis, and an entire generation is seeking a philosophy on the battlefield, amidst blood and fire. What banner will guide them? That of the Islamic fundamentalists, who pass their days decrying the imperialists but with the fall of night crawl into bed with them? Or will the discredited reformism of Arafat be allowed to gather new life?

The situation cries out for the creation of a force that takes up the science of the proletariat, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, which traces the root cause of the oppression of the Palestinian people to the imperialist system itself, and which can deal with the politi-

cal and ideological complexities of the class struggle in Palestine, as it is conditioned by the world situation, and thus sweep away the confusion in the minds of the revolutionary masses so as to arouse them to fight not only for their national rights and homeland but for a social revolution against all exploitation and oppression, so that the Palestine that must and will be established on the ashes of the Zionist settler state will not be an ugly mirror image of present societies in the Middle East, with Palestinian bigshots in charge, or with a mere switch of imperialist overlords, but will be a new democratic society ruled by the former oppressed and exploited, on the path to socialism and communism, a red base area of world proletarian revolution providing a splendid example to the oppressed of the world of what a people's war waged by a revolutionary army under the leadership of a proletarian party can give birth to. The road is tortuous, difficult and laden with sacrifices — but there is no other way to liberation. It is along this road that the oppressed of the world expect the revolutionary Palestinians to advance. Comrades, we have nothing to lose and a world to win; as part of this process, you have the opportunity to take great strides towards wrenching a revolutionary Palestine out of the grip of imperialism!

Long Live Palestine!

For the Destruction of the State of Israel!

Long Live Communism!

The Committee of the  
Revolutionary Internationalist  
Movement