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**Communist Party
of Great Britain
(Marxist-Leninist)**



**Free the Gaza
protestors!**

**Jail the
warmongers!**

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When Israel launched yet another predatory assault upon Gaza's defenceless civilian population a year ago, it triggered a worldwide wave of militant anti-zionist protest. The death toll rose to 1,434, there was deliberate targeting and near total destruction of the already strained civilian infrastructure, including water and sewage works, hospitals and ambulance services, schools, houses and a UN warehouse where much of the food for the 1.5 million imprisoned Gazans was stored.

In spite of all attempts to spin the media, the glaring evidence of brutality had even conservative observers accusing Israel's army of war crimes. Gerald Kaufman (Labour MP and long-time 'friend of Israel') declared his disgust, likening Israel's crimes to those committed by the Nazis against Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. Indeed, Israel's latest crimes in Gaza seem finally to have broken the currency of 'moral supremacy' upon which it has so heavily relied for its impunity in the past.

In Britain, anti-Israeli protest included demonstrations, university occupations and daily pickets of the Israeli embassy, merging the anti-war movement and anti-capitalist G20 protestors to form the beginnings of a vibrant anti-imperialist movement. The state was caught off guard, and felt compelled to act.

CPGB-ML members attended a spontaneously organised protest outside the Israeli embassy on the first day of the ground invasion. "Protest was heartfelt and spirited, but entirely peaceful," said one member, later arrested. "The police went out of their way to initiate confrontation, linking arms and pushing into protestors, kicking and punching us and arbitrarily arresting victims who offered the slightest – even verbal – resistance."

Journalists noted that "the police employed unusually violent tactics, even by the standards of other recent confrontations, such as the G20 protests". TV footage of these scuffles and arrests was then propagated worldwide with the false assertion that protestors had initiated violence.

From the outset, the aim was clearly to criminalise protest and intimidate sympathisers; one of several methods used to effectively deny the 'right to free speech' that is supposedly guaranteed in 'democratic' countries. Police teams have since spent millions on sifting through footage, identifying protestors and making dawn raids on their homes to arrest them, while beating and intimidating their families and communities.

Young Muslims have, once again, been disproportionately targeted. "Of 119 people arrested, 78 have been charged, all but two of them young Muslims (most between the ages of 16 and 19), according to Manchester University's Joanna Gilmore, even though such figures in no way reflect the mix of those who took part ...

"The protests near the Israeli embassy at the height of the onslaught were angry ... But a year later, it turns out that it's the sentences that are truly exceptional. In the past few weeks, 15 have been convicted, mostly of violent disorder, and jailed for between eight months and two-and-a-half years ...

"Nothing quite like this has happened since 2001, when young Asian Muslims rioted against extreme rightwing racist groups in Bradford ... In the Gaza protest cases, the judge has explicitly relied on the Bradford precedent and repeatedly stated that the sentences he is handing down are intended as a deterrent." (Seumas Milne, *The Guardian*, 25 February 2010)

"Dennis intends his punishments to be a deterrent. To deter us from what? Having the temerity to believe we live in a democracy and are free to march?" (Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *The Independent*, 8 March 2010)

In fact, those sentenced were tricked and bullied into pleading guilty by the prospect of suspended sentences and reduced charges. A CPGB-ML member, when interviewed following his illegal detention at the embassy protest, was presented with completely fabricated statements by police officers he had never met. It is clear that such perjury has become standard operational procedure for political policing in Britain.

British media propagate the idea that only 'Muslim extremists' oppose Anglo-American-sponsored Israeli atrocities; that they are an 'enemy within' and deserve all they get. The aim is to halt the growth of anti-Israeli and anti-imperialist feeling among British workers by demagogic appeals to chauvinist ideas, and actually to create Islamophobia, not just as a weapon against the Muslim community (who have family and cultural ties to the current victims of Anglo-American imperialism) but as a weapon to divide, weaken and control the entire British working class.

The CPGB-ML condemns the British government's ongoing support for Zionism. We call for breaking off all diplomatic ties with Israel. We condemn the political and racist policing of anti-Israel demonstrations and call for a full investigation into the conduct of the police at demonstrations and against demonstrators, including violent raids and routine perjury.

We condemn the racist, politically motivated and unjust sentences imposed by John Dennis on young people whose only 'crime' is to have a keen sense of justice and of their public duty to voice it. We must learn to give effective and collective legal support and advice to demonstrators, including an understanding that the British state is not an unbiased and neutral entity, but the active representative of the British ruling class.

Self defence is no offence! If arrested, refuse to plead guilty for crimes you have not committed! The British state is the guilty party, and if it is foolish enough to institute proceedings against us, we must use the publicity generated to try the imperialists for their crimes – whether on the streets of London, or of Palestine – before the court of opinion of the British working class, which will be the ultimate judge. All of our actions and words must help British workers to understand their interest in overthrowing the present corrupt and decadent order.

Long live Palestine! No to Islamophobia! Victory to the resistance! Refuse to be intimidated; fight state terrorism!

28 March 2010

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