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**Communist Party
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**Palestine is
a British
working
class issue!**

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Not just a humanitarian question

Karl Marx, commenting on the relationship between Britain and Ireland, famously wrote that *"the nation that oppresses another nation forges its own chains"*. By this, he meant that, so long as the British working class continued its complicity in the exploitation and subjugation of the Irish people, so long as they continued to benefit economically from Ireland's labour and resources, its objective role would be to *strengthen* British capital, and consequently delay its overthrow.

The same principle applies today: so long as the British working class goes along with the actions of British imperialism for the sake of the few crumbs that it gets by way of payment for this complicity, it will remain impotent in the struggle against British capitalism and for socialism. This simple truth, seemingly obvious, is widely misunderstood or ignored in the British 'left'. However, to continue to ignore it is to forever submit ourselves to the mercy of capital.

British imperialism has always been a key supporter of the Zionist project. The concept of Israel, obscure and lacking in historical legitimacy, got enthusiastic support from Britain only because a Jewish state in the heart of the Middle East offered the perfect antidote to the rising Arab nationalist movement.

European colonialists had long been plundering the Arab lands, taking huge amounts of oil and paying a pittance for it. Arab nationalism was emerging as a significant threat to this cosy arrangement. A Jewish state, set up to collaborate with imperialism in the region, promised to be a bastion of colonial reactionary interest, *"an Ulster"* in the Middle East, ready to act quickly against any Arab popular movement that threatened the profits of the major oil, armaments and other monopolies. This fact is amply proven by the Israeli invasion of Egypt following the nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1957. Although, since the six-day war in 1967, the US has become the dominant economic sponsor and political beneficiary of Israel, Britain continues to supply money, arms and political support.

The relative strengths of British imperialism and the British working class are, by definition, inversely proportional: the weaker British imperialism, the stronger the British working class, and vice versa. British imperialism is weakened by Palestinian liberation, and, consequently, the British working class is duty-bound to support the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. This duty is borne not merely out of humanitarian considerations, but primarily as part of our own ongoing struggle against British capital.

Maintain Palestinian unity

It has long been Israel's aim to divert the Palestinian national liberation struggle by generating inter-factional strife and causing Palestinian civil war. Israelis attack the Palestinian leadership from all angles - making absurd demands that they 'crack down' on their own militants, while simultaneously providing assistance to those who criticise the same leadership 'from the left', labelling them as sell-outs and claiming that they are in league with Zionism to stamp out Palestinian militancy.

Both 'right' and 'left' attackers sermonise constantly about the 'lack of democracy' in the Palestinian Authority. Their ceaseless allegations of corruption etc have now acquired the force of popular prejudice, and are repeated with inordinate zeal by the social democrat, Trotskyist and liberal press alike. In our view, the 'left' criticism of the Palestinian movement is unwarranted and ill-advised, and ultimately serves to play into the hands of imperialism and Zionism, whose clear intention it is to

spread division and dissent amongst Palestinians.

The Palestinian leadership is charged with the incredibly difficult job of balancing the two central aspects of the Palestinian struggle - diplomacy and armed struggle. Thus far, they have done this with admirable dexterity. As internationalists, our job is not to do the Israeli state's dirty work and help sow divisions among Palestinians; rather, our job is to give our fullest support to all those who are struggling daily against Zionism, and to do what we can to promote unity in the Palestinian movement.

Israel must face the inevitable

Ultimately, the question of whether the Intifada will continue lies with Israel. Palestinians have demonstrated time and time again that they are willing to make what is objectively a quite extraordinary compromise in order to gain freedom from occupation and a Palestinian state. The demands that are almost universally accepted amongst the Palestinian population are: complete Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territories and full Palestinian statehood based on the territories held before the 1967 war - ie, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip (21 percent of historic Palestine) and East Jerusalem, with the right for refugees to return to their homes in Israel/Palestine.

This compromise, which seems to the observer to be hugely generous (you steal my whole country, and I allow you to keep 79 percent of it), has proven not to be enough for the Israelis. They understand that an independent, secular Palestine next to their fascist little US puppet of a state would spell very tough times, since its primary effect would be to bring to the fore the intense class contradictions within Israeli society itself.

Furthermore, the creation of a Palestinian state under any circumstances would be seen across the world, and rightly so, as a resounding victory for a people who were chosen by imperialism to be historical victims of the quest for oil and domination of the Middle East, but who were able to regroup, gather their strength and wage a successful struggle against a vicious nuclear power on the US payroll. Such a David and Goliath struggle gives courage to the billions of oppressed worldwide, but makes the imperialists shudder in their shoes.

However, despite all the above, the fact is that over 1,000 Israelis have now been killed since the beginning of the second Intifada, and this is prompting the Israeli people to be increasingly unwilling to accept the fascistic actions of their state. The solution is clear for all to see - withdraw from Palestinian territories and everyone lives in peace; continue the illegal, unjust, imperialist occupation and your war will find its way to your bars, your buses, your homes, your sons and your daughters.

Play your part!

The British working class must do everything within its power to support the cause of Palestinian liberation. The sooner Palestine is free, the sooner we ourselves can be liberated.

We must join with the Palestinian people in demanding an immediate end to the occupation of all land stolen since 1967; the establishment of a viable Palestinian state on the whole of Gaza and the West Bank, with East Jerusalem as its capital; equal rights for Palestinians within Israel; the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes; destruction of the 'green line wall'; release of all political prisoners; an end to all settlements in Gaza and the West Bank; and an end to the despicable Jerusalem land grab that is currently taking place.

Victory to the Intifada!