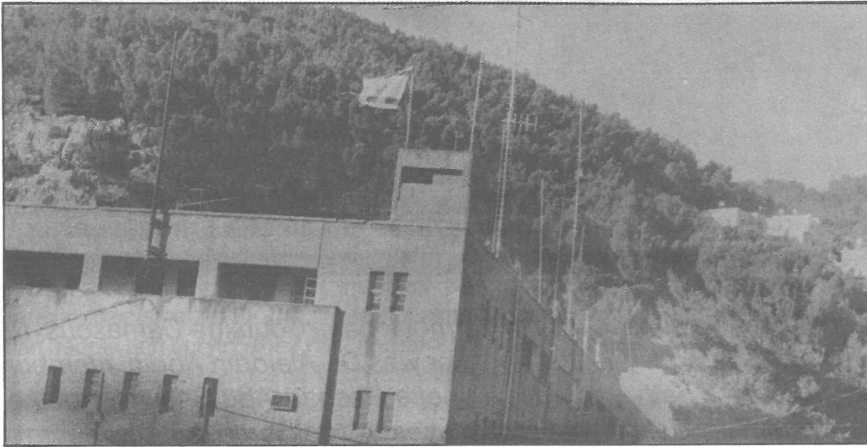


Prisoners' Day

In mid-April, there were demonstrations, school strikes and public meetings throughout occupied Palestine, in solidarity with the political prisoners in the Zionist jails. Over 2000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees went on a one-day hunger strike, while youth in camps and villages threw stones at the occupation troops.



Zionist jail

On the occasion of Prisoners' Day, the Committee for the Defense of Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israeli Jails issued a memorandum. Following are some basic and current facts about the Zionist occupation's policy of imprisoning Palestinian citizens, as stressed in the memorandum:

* Since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, over 320,000 Palestinian citizens have been subject to interrogation and detainment. This included men, women, children and old people. The period of their detention ranged from a few months to life imprisonment. The occupation authorities acknowledge only 170,000 detentions, as stated by Rafi Suissa, head of the Israeli prison administration, to *Al Hamishmar* newspaper in December 1985.

* The number of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails is, on an average, 3,500 at any given time. This does not include administrative detainees, or those arrested for preventive detention. This number usually multiplies in periods of mass uprisings.

* In most of the world, a sentence of life imprisonment is counted as 20-30 years. However, according to the Israeli law, it is 99 years for political prisoners.

* According to official Israeli figures, the number of those detained during the first six months of 1984, on charges of stone-

throwing, was 800.

* In September 1985 alone, 102 persons were detained. In November and December of 1985, prison sentences and fines were passed on 388 citizens. The sentences ranged from a few months to life imprisonment, while the fines imposed totalled 73.5 million Israeli shekels. In January 1986, fines were imposed on 151 citizens, totalling 14.7 million shekels. In February 1986, this number rose to 185 citizens with fines totalling 17 million shekels. This indicates the escalation of the oppressive measures taken by the occupation authorities against Palestinian citizens.

* In the light of the problem of overcrowding in the jails, Amnon Shahak, commander of the central region, issued an order in July 1985, to build a temporary prison of tents on a hill near Jnaid prison in Nablus, to accommodate new prisoners. Shahak issued a similar order, for making a tent prison for children, near Al Fara'a.

On July 24, 1985, the Israeli newspaper *Davar* reported that the Israeli Prison Administration is building a new prison for Arabs arrested for the first time, whose sentences exceed five years. In August 1985, the Ministry of Police and the Prison Administration applied for additional funds for building more prisons, because the current ones cannot absorb the increasing number of

political prisoners.

On January 13, 1986, Israeli radio reported that the prison administration is currently considering moving 500 Palestinian prisoners to special sections in the army's military prisons. This would be in tents, aiming at absorbing 1000 Palestinian prisoners who make the prisons overcrowded. It was also reported that a new prison will soon be built in northern Palestine.

Israeli «law and order»

In the summer of 1985, the occupation authorities again began applying the law of administrative detention which is based on the British Emergency Laws of 1945. This law permits the military authorities to detain any citizen for six months, renewable any number of times, without specifying charges. There were more than 120 administrative detentions from June to September 1985, according to official Israeli reports, but the real number is much higher.

On March 21, 1986, the Israeli newspaper *Hadashot* wrote about the arrest of children, from 12 to 18 years of age, whereby they are faced with the worst kinds of torture. It is reported that there are now approximately 200 Palestinian youngsters in Al Fara'a alone. The newspaper added that, according to the military laws in force in the occupied territories, it is possible for a military judge to impose a sentence of six months on anyone aged 12 to 14, and one year for those aged 14 to 16, while there are no limits for sentences passed on those above this age.

Earlier a law was issued, known as the Tamir law, which stipulates that a conviction can be made on the basis of the testimony of witnesses, in the absence of a confession from the accused, regardless of the fact that the witnesses might be children, police or soldiers in the occupation army.

81 dead under torture

The memorandum also enumerated the new methods of torture being practiced by the Zionist interrogators, and the prisoners' demands for improvement of their drastically deteriorating conditions. (See *Democratic Palestine* no. 14.) The memorandum concluded with the names of 81 Palestinian martyrs who have died under torture in Zionist jails, been shot on the pretext that they were trying to escape, or murdered slowly by deprivation of needed medical treatment, since the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. ●