



meanwhile, as reported by Israeli radio on January 26th, hundreds of settlers are leaving the Gaza Strip under the impact of the uprising; the number of police stations has been greatly reduced after the resignation of the 300 Palestinian policemen who were replaced by only 38 Israelis. At the same time, the Givati Brigade went on strike in January to protest the detention of four of their troopers for investigation of the murder by beating of a resident of Jabalia camp in August.

From the other side, the peace movement has staged large demonstrations urging the government to find a political solution. Democratically inclined Israelis had been questioning the use of plastic bullets since last autumn, and with the advent of the new measures, Shinui MK Rubenstein called on soldiers to disobey orders to fire on stonethrowers, while Energy Minister Shahal termed the new rules for opening fire «possibly illegal.»

Added to this are the manpower problems experienced by the Israeli military as the result of such long-term, concentrated deployment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Experts agree that this is a vicious cycle: At first, the younger combat troops were sent to confront the uprising; with its continuation, they were called back for needed training, and reservists became the bulk of those expected to suppress the intifada; however, they proved to be more sensitive to the practical and moral problems involved in fighting a whole population. Also, this entailed doubling reserve duty time, which has caused discontent, forcing Rabin to promise to cut it back again.

In view of these factors, added to the Israeli government's lack of ability and/or will to compromise its Zionist ambitions, we can only anticipate con-

tinued use of the military option, perhaps with modifications as proposed by Major General Barak. To solve the Israeli army's manpower problem, he proposed «flying squads» (*International Herald Tribune*, January 31st). This idea of top-trained commandos, fewer in number but covering more territory, can only mean officially constituted death squads in practice.

FIGHTING THE DEATH CAMPS

The situation of the political detainees has figured prominently in the recent events of the intifada. The detainees' own struggle has escalated substantially with hunger strikes and other forms of protest. This has been bolstered by solidarity from outside; relatives have become more militant in their protests; larger numbers of democratic Israelis have demonstrated against administrative detention; and there have been international protests as well.

The sheer number of detainees has contributed to this build-up. Already last fall, figures reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 14th), showed that one out of 83 Palestinians had been detained. This means the Zionist occupation authorities are arresting Palestinians at a rate seven times higher than the apartheid regime has arrested blacks in South Africa since the 1986 state of emergency (one in every 600 people).

In January, West Bank lawyers estimated that 40,000 Palestinians have been jailed at one time or another since the uprising began. Currently, there are about 6,000 political detainees; only about eight per cent of them are convicted; roughly one-third are administrative detainees, while the rest await being charged and tried. On December 1, 1988, Amnesty International released a report condemning the Israeli policy of administrative detention, and adopted 18 administrative detainees as prisoners of conscience. The organization is investigating a further 104 cases of Palestinians believed to be detained only for non-violent expression of their views.

The situation has been heightened by continuing mass arrests, as on the night

of February 8th, when the occupation troops snatched 175 Hebron residents from their homes, preceding according to prepared lists of names. The 175 were held for 16 hours in a local soccer stadium, evoking images of the 1st year of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, before scores were taken away to detention centers and the rest sent home. While Rabin's new policy will not end the intifada, it will transport even more of its activists into the prisons, as witnessed by the trials after his announcements, handing out up to three years for stonethrowing, even when no injury had been incurred.

To the subhuman conditions in the detention centers run by the Israeli army is added ongoing torture and the policy of opening fire on detainees at the least sign of protest, making these centers into death camps where the detainees' lives are constantly at risk. At least 15 Palestinians were killed in detention during the first year of the uprising, and incidents of opening fire on the detainees are on the rise.

On January 3rd, West Bank lawyers went on strike protesting the lawlessness of the Israeli occupation authorities' arrest and detention policy. «Our offices continue to serve as missing persons bureaus,» said the lawyers, citing a long list of Israeli practices which rule out the concept of due process, while leading to abuse of the detainees and preventing lawyers from functioning with a minimal degree of professional integrity. Gaza lawyers had previously been on strike, and the Palestinian lawyers' boycott of court appearances was joined by progressive Israeli lawyers and by detainees in Ansar III (in the Naqab desert of South Palestine) and those in Megiddo military prison in the Galilee.

The situation in the detention centers has become increasingly explosive. A hunger strike in Ansar III, protesting the miserable conditions, was met by soldiers opening fire on the detainees on January 8th, injuring one. Again on February 9th, soldiers attacked Ansar III prisoners, injuring ten, two of them by shooting.

In contrast to most Ansar detainees, those in Megiddo have been allowed family visits. However, relatives were several times turned away in December