

The «Peace Initiative» and the Iron Fist

Two Sides of the Same Coin

On April 10 an Israeli carrying an Uzi machine gun approached four Palestinians on a Jerusalem street in the old city, and opened fire at close range without provocation. Mohamad Shawish, 25 years old, was killed instantly when he was hit with seven bullets in the head and chest, and his three companions were seriously wounded.

A newly-formed Israeli Jewish terrorist group calling itself Sicarii claimed responsibility for the attack.

A few days later Nadir Dana, 15 years old, was shot to death by an Israeli settler in Hebron (Al Khalil). The killer, Ben Lulu from the nearby Kiryat Araba settlement, was detained for two days and then released.

A few days after that incident a seven-year-old Palestinian boy was kidnapped by a settler from Neve Yaacov (located in the West Bank town of Beit Hanina) and sexually assaulted. The boy identified the assailant as a man with a beard wearing a Yamaka (a cap worn by religious Jews).

On April 13, a new massacre was carried out by Israel adding to the long list of massacres which began with the formation of the terrorist Jewish groups even before the establishment of the state of Israel.

This time the massacre was committed against the population of Nahalin, a village 13 kilometers west of Bethlehem, which incidently was the site of a previous massacre at the hands of the same perpetrators.

One of the victims was a 17-year-old paraplegic boy in a wheelchair. Three days after the Nahalin massacre, the formation of the «rapid intervention force» was announced by settlers in the occupied territories. Uri Ariel, chairman of the council of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza, said that many units of the force are already in existence and more are being formed. He added that the Israeli army «had no problem with them.»¹

According to Knesset member Yossi Sarid, other terrorist vigilante groups

such as «Kulanu» (all of us) are being formed.

The Israeli army which is itself a conglomeration of similar terrorist organizations which converged in 1948 to form what has become known as the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), cannot but sanction the activities of these vigilante groups, otherwise they would deny their own heritage.

Palestinian children have not escaped from the new wave of Israeli repression. An eight-year-old boy was shot to death in Jabalya Camp in Gaza. During the funeral procession, Israeli soldiers opened fire on the mourners killing a five-year-old boy and wounding scores of others.

The escalation of Israeli brutality during the month of May resulted in the deaths of 35 Palestinians, the highest toll in 1989.

On May 6, the first day of a three-day Moslem holiday signifying the end of the holy month of Ramadan, a total of 266 people were injured in Gaza alone, most of them upon their return from the cemetery where it is customary to give respect to the martyrs and dead on this holiday.

According to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) figures, the number of Palestinians injured for the month of May in Gaza alone is 2,743.

On the backdrop of this Israeli hysteria, Yitzhak Rabin was given yet more powers within the «legal system» whereby he can now detain any Palestinian for whatever reason and without trial for one year instead of six months. The process of deportation has also been shortened and expedited.

As if this is not enough, the notorious Yitzhak Mordachai who was formerly the military commander of the Southern region was appointed as the new military commander of the West Bank.

PALESTINIAN RESPONSE

The Palestinians have held their ground in the face of this frenzy with

even more determination to continue the confrontation of the occupiers in defense of their land and their own existence.

The United National Leadership (UNL) of the intifada has finally united with HAMAS (Islamic resistance movement) on a program coordinating the confrontation of the occupation, this move led to the consolidation of the intifada.

On May 5 Milad Antoine Shahin, a 12-year-old boy, was ordered by the Israeli troops to get off the streets or else they will shoot him. Milad opened his shirt and challenged the soldiers refusing to obey their command. He was shot three times in the chest and died on the way to the hospital.

These acts of daily resistance and sacrifice are not extraordinary. They constitute a normal reaction by any people under the yoke of colonization or occupation and with the escalation of Israeli repression and terrorism, the Palestinian people are left with no choice but to confront these measures.

In this context, Palestinians have heeded the calls of the United National Leadership of the intifada by escalating their resistance throughout the occupied territories, which included the destruction of Israeli military vehicles, attacking soldiers and executing collaborators.

The new phase of increased Israeli brutality began simultaneously with the declaration of the Shamir plan, and is part and parcel of the new «Israeli peace initiative.»

In the words of Shamir, «We must prove to the people of the intifada that it is not an alternative, that we can suppress it, we can break it.»²

The Shamir plan is in fact no more than a camouflage of the stepped-up brutality, it's designed to absorb the international criticism and condemnation of its practices, and to deflect attention from the ruthlessness of the army.

The intifada has stripped Israel of its propaganda weapons of accusing the Palestinians of being terrorists and