

against fascism and exploitation - for liberation. Historically this is a well-known pattern, exposed not only by Palestinian experience; Europe's history itself provides clear evidence. Today banks in Europe might well want to buy Picasso's famous 'Guernica', the picture of the fascist slaughter of the Spanish population during the civil war in 1936, but it was most certainly not those forces who supported Picasso in 1936. At the best they closed their eyes to the growth of fascism; in all too many cases, they directly supported. This is not an exceptional example; the history of the world is virtually littered with examples like this.

It is not in American or European banks you find the art of Mansour, but in



Suleiman Mansour's painting "Jamal al Mahamel" - the old man carrying Jerusalem, symbolizing the Palestinian problem.

"Palestine" - Suleiman Mansour



almost every Palestinian home. The Palestinian people have no patience with an artist whose work is marginal to their struggle, but find their reality and encouragement in works like those of Mansour.

As the fascists fought Picasso and his art, as they relentlessly persecuted other artists who are today among the most respected and known, 'Israel' is constantly persecuting Mansour and his art, along with other Palestinian artists. As the fascists of Europe during the 30s and 40s, the Zionists know very well that the power of art is strong, and speaks very directly to the oppressed masses. Again and again, the Zionists have raided Mansour's home, destroyed his paintings, put him under house arrest; they have confiscated his pictures on exhibition, and hundreds of posters, and even arrested booksellers who sold them. Others are quite simply threatened by frequent raids of their bookshops. Mansour has been imprisoned, and always been denied an exit permit when he tried to travel abroad. Is this any better than the cultural policy of Hitler's Germany? True, the Israelis never used gas chambers to kill thousands of people; in Lebanon they used cluster bombs and carpet bombings. In the process, they completely demolished the Palestinian Plastic Arts Centre in Beirut, destroying 12 of Mansour's pictures among many others. Unlike Hitler, they did not have to burn pieces of art one by one. However, as the European fascists, they destroy art, aiming to destroy the will to fight, to live freely in proud independence. Yet they have not succeeded in reaching this aim, for they are not able to understand the strength of a people who want to be free.

Already in 1980, Mansour became a regular cartoonist for the English weekly edition of the Jerusalem newspaper *Al Fajr*. Mansour says: "Cartoons are an outlet for my political thoughts. Since the invasion of Lebanon, I have been doing nothing but political cartoons. But a cartoon is not enough. The colour, texture, vastness of a painting - you can put more anger into it." Yet the cartoons have a different effect. Mansour's cartoons are precise political analysis. With a few lines, they point out not only the brutality of oppression, but also the weaknesses of the liberation movement itself, the weaknesses we must face in order to overcome and ultimately win what we are struggling for: liberation, identity and pride.