RIM Committee Statement in Support of the Uprising in Palestine

(February 1988)

Once again the Middle East commands the world’s attention. But this time it is not strutting sheiks, feudal monarchs and reactionary demagogic Ayatollahs who hold centre stage, nor even the imperialists themselves, despite the massive military arsenals both blocs are pushing around the Gulf as part of their preparations for world war. All of this reactionary mess has been challenged by the stormy wind that swept out of another corner of the region: the mighty uprising of the Palestinians.

The battlecries of this new generation of the Palestinian revolution is a gust of fresh air in the Middle East, turning upside down much that passed for accepted truth. Although revolutionary struggle on this terrain has never stopped, the imperialist experts had read last rites to the Palestinian movement, some Israelis proclaimed that after their invasion of Lebanon the Palestinian question had become simply an “internal” Israeli problem, and the PLO leadership itself was sliding even further down the slopes of open surrender. Then the youth hit the streets, arming themselves with whatever was at hand, bricks, slingshots, Molotov cocktails, as they swore their willingness to fight till victory, even at the cost of their lives. What class-conscious proletarian does not burst with joy to see Israel’s arrogant stormtroopers tremble before the fearlessness of the youth of Palestine!

The Zionists met the revolt with no mercy. They flooded the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza with heavily armed troops, they imprisoned, tortured and gunned down even ten-year-olds, beat old men and women, and before the eyes of the world set about breaking the arms and hands of thousands. This was further testimony to what Israel’s entire history amounts to: from its founding in terror and war against the native Palestinian people up through the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, Israel has been a settler colonial state, the most important setup of imperialism in the Middle East following World War 2. It is a vicious, bestial enforcer of reaction not only in this region but around the world.

The youth and the revolt they are at the forefront of have been forged out of the resistance of a nation to extreme colonial exploitation and oppression, including an international plan initiated by the victor imperialists in the aftermath of World War 2 to annihilate an entire people for the sake of ensuring their hegemony in the Middle East. The imperialists know that they face a new generation of revolutionaries who, unlike the established leaders of the Palestinian resistance movement, do not seek some accommodation in their rotten system and their disintegrating setup in the Middle East but are out to avenge all the crimes committed against this people. These youth and the revolt they are leading are cherished by the revolutionary internationalists, who are keenly aware of the opportunities that this development presents for shattering the grip of imperialism on millions of the oppressed. Spreading support for this struggle among proletarians and oppressed worldwide and battling the efforts of imperialists and reactionaries to distort and isolate it is a most heart-lifting, and a most welcome internationalist duty.

It is not only the Zionists who fear the uprising; the imperialist-backed reactionary Arab regimes have already rounded up many Palestinians in their own countries and suppressed demonstrations of solidarity. While passing showy declarations of support for the Palestinian people, they desperately seek to stamp out the sparks of revolution which fly from Palestine and enflame their own subjects, who deeply support the Palestinian cause and understand that it is closely linked to the struggle for liberation in their own country.

While U.S.-backed Israeli stormtroopers meet the revolt with an iron fist, the imperialists and reactionaries employ counter-revolutionary dual tactics and step up talk of peace conferences and “reforms.” The U.S. imperialists have even tried to distance themselves from Israel’s brutal suppression, but it is well known that the Zionist state of Israel is a bloody dog trained by its master to understand that a public “no” means bite even harder. Their tactics include working hand-in-hand with Arab reactionaries like Hussein to consolidate a “responsible” Palestinian leadership favourable to the imperialist initiatives. Hana Siniora, editor of the Arabic Jerusalem daily paper al-Fajr, was released from an Israeli prison and ordered to Washington to “attend a conference on the Middle East” by the Israeli Prime Minister himself, Mubarak and Hussein have made highly publicized tours promoting an “international peace conference,” with prominent support from U.S. Secretary of State Schultz. They create hope of a political settlement in order to encourage the idea that it is not the masses but the imperialists themselves who will decide Palestine’s destiny and thus to reduce the masses to the role of a pressure group whose highest aspiration is supposed to be persuading the U.S. to use its influence to
promises adopted such revolutionary im-perialist of landscape. RIM domi-
nated Thought. quarters able to quench the flames able
tics straining to who trained not, go on indefinitely. There
domination of a genuine liberation war led by
d a proletarian vanguard capable of
bursting through the reformist poli-
tics that have come to dominate the
Palestinian movement and moving
owards actually smashing the sett-
er colonial state. If not, then so-
other or later the imperialists will be
able to regain the initiative and
quench the flames of revolt, even if
only temporarily. Seizing this kind
of kindling to set Palestine ablaze
with revolutionary war is impos-
sible without a revolutionary head-
quartes based on the science and
ideology of the proletariat,
Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung
Thought. This the Palestinian revolu-
tion has never had.

Instead, various fronts have
dominated the Palestinian political
landscape. As the Declaration of
the RIM says, analysing the experience
of such fronts: "History dem-
strates the bankruptcy of an ‘anti-
imperialist front’ (or similar ‘revo-
utionary front’) which is not led by
a Marxist-Leninist party, even when
such a front or forces within it
adopt a ‘Marxist’ (actually pseudo-
Marxist) colouration. While such
revolutionary formations have led
heroic struggles and even delivered
powerful blows to the imperialists
they have been proven to be ideolo-
gically and organisationally incap-
able of resisting imperialist and
bourgeois influences. Even where
such forces have seized power, they
have been incapable of carrying
through a thorough-going revolu-
tionary transformation of society
and end up, sooner or later, being
overthrown by the imperialists or
themselves becoming a new reac-
tionary ruling power in league with
the imperialists."

Today, Yasir Arafat and the esta-
blished leadership of the PLO, in-
stead of unmasking the imperialists’
duplicitous manoeuvring and fan-
ing the flames of the revolt, act as
energetic aides of imperialism as
they try to contain the revolt.
Arafat has publicly called on the
militants to refrain from going over
to armed activity because, he says,
this would give the Palestinians a
bad image. In the eyes of whom?
For the oppressed of the world,
going over to a genuine war of libe-
ration with actual prospects of
defeating Israel would be a very
good image indeed! But Arafat’s
concerns are elsewhere: in the cor-
rridors of Washington, London,
Paris, Bonn, Moscow, and Riyadh.
For the flames of revolt, Arafat
holds out not fuel, but water. Such
policies are part of the strategy of
the PLO to arrive at a settlement
with Israel, in particular to try and
get a Palestinian “mini-state.” This
strategy is insidious most of all
because it covers up the truth that
without the violent destruction of
the Israeli state there will be no
liberation for the Palestinian peo-
ple. In its resolution of support of
the Palestinian revolution, the
Second International Conference of
Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organ-
isations, which formed the Revolu-
tionary Internationalist Movement
in 1984, stated that liberation “will
only be achieved with the victory of
the armed struggle of the masses
under the leadership of the prole-
triat against imperialism, social-
imperialism and their lackeys.” No
state which is concocted out of a
political settlement brokered by the
imperialists — and such a settlement
is highly unlikely — will belong to
the people, and any such state
would undoubtedly be an auxiliary
to Israel and/or one of the other
lackey regimes in the region.
Moreover, with this kind of capitu-
lationist politics and world outlook
in command, the revolutionary war-
fare necessary for achieving libera-
tion will never develop.

Arafat’s ‘left’ cousins like pro-
Soviet (and pro-Syrian) George
Habash and Nayef Hawatmeh disa-
gree mainly over which imperialist
or reactionary regional power they
prefer to subordinate themselves to.
The leadership of the PLO regard
the armed struggle as their “wild
card” in their manoeuvring with the
Great Powers, and so distort the
armed struggle into a means of
bringing pressure on the imperialists
to negotiate and reduce the fighters
themselves to bargaining chips. Is it
any wonder the youth often mock
what they call the “Cadillac revol-
ution”?!

The absence of a genuine prole-
tarian vanguard organisation and
line is the principal reason why, de-
spite tremendous sacrifices and the
The Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement